

The Covenant Rendering

A Modern English Bible from the Hebrew and Greek

Translated by Aaron Blonquist

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Old Testament source text: Westminster Leningrad Codex (WLC)

New Testament source text: Nestle-Aland / UBS Greek New Testament

Introduction

The Covenant Rendering is a fresh English translation of the Bible produced directly from the Hebrew and Greek source texts. It aims to bring the meaning, weight, and texture of the original languages into clear, modern English without sacrificing the literary power of the ancient texts. Where older translations sometimes obscure meaning behind archaic phrasing, and where modern paraphrases sometimes flatten the richness of the original, this rendering seeks the middle ground: faithful to the source, readable in English, and honest about the choices a translator must make.

Every translation is an interpretation. The Covenant Rendering does not pretend otherwise. Where a Hebrew or Greek word carries a range of meaning that no single English word can capture, the translator notes explain what was chosen and why. Where the ancient text is genuinely ambiguous, the ambiguity is preserved rather than silently resolved. The goal is not to replace other translations but to offer a rendering that takes the reader as close to the original as English allows, then trusts them to think.

This is the Reading Layer: clean English text with verse numbers, chapter preambles for context, and translator notes for those who want to go deeper. The Hebrew, Greek, and comparative apparatus exist in the full digital edition. Here, the text breathes on its own.

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Summary: *Matthew 1 opens with a genealogy tracing Jesus's lineage from Abraham through David to Joseph, establishing Jesus as heir to both the Abrahamic covenant and the Davidic throne. The genealogy is structured in three groups of fourteen generations, spanning the patriarchal era, the monarchy, and the exile-to-Messiah period. The chapter then narrates the circumstances of Jesus's birth: Joseph discovers Mary is pregnant, resolves to divorce her quietly, but an angel appears in a dream explaining that the child is from the Holy Spirit. Joseph obeys and takes Mary as his wife, and the child is named Jesus — 'for he will save his people from their sins.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Matthew's genealogy is theologically structured rather than merely historical. The three sets of fourteen generations (Abraham to David, David to exile, exile to Christ) create a deliberate pattern that may reference the numerical value of David's name in Hebrew (d-v-d = 4+6+4 = 14). Four women are included — Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba ('the wife of Uriah') — each with irregular or scandalous circumstances, preparing the reader for Mary's own unexpected pregnancy. The fulfillment quotation from Isaiah 7:14 introduces Matthew's distinctive pattern of citing Hebrew Scripture as fulfilled in Jesus. The Greek parthenos ('virgin') translates the Hebrew almah ('young woman'), a translation choice already made by the Septuagint that Matthew adopts and applies to Mary.*

Translation Friction: *The genealogy contains well-known discrepancies with Old Testament records and Luke's genealogy. We render the Greek as given without harmonizing. The name Ἰησοῦς (Iesous) is the Greek form of the Hebrew Yeshua/Yehoshua ('the LORD saves'), and the angel's explanation in verse 21 depends on this etymology. We transliterate Greek terms in key_ terms entries using standard conventions. The phrase 'before they came together' (v. 18) is a Greek euphemism for sexual union, which we render transparently.*

Connections: *The genealogy connects to Genesis 12 (Abrahamic covenant), 2 Samuel 7 (Davidic covenant), and the exile narratives of 2 Kings 24-25. The Isaiah 7:14 quotation establishes Matthew's fulfillment theology that runs through the entire Gospel. The naming of Jesus connects to the Hebrew salvation vocabulary (yeshuah) central to the Old Testament. Joseph's dream-revelation anticipates the pattern of divine dreams in chapter 2.*

¹The record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham: ²Abraham fathered Isaac, Isaac fathered Jacob, and Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers. ³Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez fathered Hezron, and Hezron fathered Ram. ⁴Ram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nahshon, and Nahshon fathered Salmon. ⁵Salmon

fathered Boaz by Rahab, Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth, and Obed fathered Jesse. ⁶Jesse fathered David the king. David fathered Solomon by the wife of Uriah. ⁷Solomon fathered Rehoboam, Rehoboam fathered Abijah, and Abijah fathered Asaph. ⁸Asaph fathered Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat fathered Joram, and Joram fathered Uzziah. ⁹Uzziah fathered Jotham, Jotham fathered Ahaz, and Ahaz fathered Hezekiah. ¹⁰Hezekiah fathered Manasseh, Manasseh fathered Amos, and Amos fathered Josiah. ¹¹Josiah fathered Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. ¹²After the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah fathered Shealtiel, and Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel. ¹³Zerubbabel fathered Abiud, Abiud fathered Eliakim, and Eliakim fathered Azor. ¹⁴Azor fathered Zadok, Zadok fathered Achim, and Achim fathered Eliud. ¹⁵Eliud fathered Eleazar, Eleazar fathered Matthan, and Matthan fathered Jacob. ¹⁶Jacob fathered Joseph, the husband of Mary, from whom Jesus was born — the one called Christ. ¹⁷So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David to the deportation to Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ are fourteen generations. ¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ came about in this way. His mother Mary had been pledged in marriage to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But while he was considering this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³"Look, the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call his name Emmanuel" — which means, "God with us." ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary as his wife, ²⁵Recognized her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son — then he called his name JESUS.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek biblos geneleos ('book of genesis/origin') echoes Genesis 2:4 and 5:1 in the Septuagint, signaling that Matthew views Jesus's arrival as a new act of creation. 'Generation' in the KJV is misleading in modern English; 'genealogy' captures the Greek sense of a record of origins.
1. Both 'son of David' and 'son of Abraham' are theological claims, not merely genealogical ones — Jesus is heir to David's throne and to Abraham's covenant promise.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 2:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The Greek egenesen ('fathered, begot') is rendered consistently as 'fathered' throughout the genealogy rather than the archaic 'begat.' The name Ioudas is rendered 'Judah' (the patriarch) rather than 'Judas' (the later form), since this refers to the Old Testament figure.
3. Tamar is the first of four women named in the genealogy. Her story (Genesis 38) involves deception and a levirate-like union with Judah — an irregular beginning that Matthew includes deliberately. The mention of women in an ancient genealogy is unusual and theologically purposeful.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 38 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Nahshon was the leader of the tribe of Judah during the wilderness period (Numbers 1:7, 2:3). His inclusion reinforces the Judahite royal lineage.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 1:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Rahab and Ruth are the second and third women in the genealogy. Rahab was a Canaanite prostitute from Jericho (Joshua 2); Ruth was a Moabite widow (Ruth 1). Both are Gentile women whose inclusion foreshadows the Gospel's universal scope. The traditional identification of this Rahab with the Jericho Rahab is assumed by Matthew though not explicit in Old Testament genealogies.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ruth 1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Matthew pointedly refuses to name Bathsheba, calling her 'the wife of Uriah' — a phrase that keeps Uriah's wrongful death in view. This is the fourth woman in the genealogy, and the most politically charged. David is the only figure given the title 'the king' (ton basilea), marking the genealogy's structural midpoint.
7. The SBLGNT reads 'Asaph' rather than 'Asa,' which may reflect a scribal identification of the king with the psalmist Asaph, or may be a textual variant. We follow the SBLGNT reading.
8. Three kings are omitted between Joram and Uzziah: Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah (cf. 1 Chronicles 3:11-12). Matthew's genealogy is telescoped to achieve the fourteen-generation structure, a common practice in ancient Near Eastern genealogies.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Chronicles 3:11-12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. These names follow the standard English forms from the Old Testament rather than the Greek transliterations. Ahaz and Hezekiah represent a dramatic father-son contrast in the Kings narrative — Ahaz was one of Judah's worst kings, Hezekiah one of its best.
10. The SBLGNT reads 'Amos' rather than 'Amon,' which may reflect a scribal confusion with the prophet Amos, or may be an intentional variant. We follow the SBLGNT. In the Old Testament record, Amon/Amos reigned only two years before being assassinated (2 Kings 21:19-26).
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Kings 21:19-26 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
12. The Greek metoikesias ('deportation, removal, exile') refers to the Babylonian exile of 586 BC. Jeconiah (also called Jehoiachin) was the last king before the exile. Historically, Josiah was Jeconiah's grandfather, not his father — Jehoiakim is skipped, another instance of Matthew's telescoping.
13. Zerubbabel led the first return from exile and oversaw the rebuilding of the temple (Ezra 3-6). His inclusion connects Jesus to the post-exilic restoration hope. The lineage from this point forward is less well attested in Old Testament records.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezra 3-6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
15. From Abiud onward, the names in Matthew's genealogy do not appear in Old Testament records. These represent the intertestamental period for which Matthew had access to sources no longer extant.
16. The name Zadok (Sadok) recalls the famous high priest of David's era (2 Samuel 8:17), though this is a different individual. The priestly resonance may be intentional within Matthew's genealogical design.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Samuel 8:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
18. The name Eleazar recalls Aaron's son and successor as high priest (Numbers 20:28). Matthan is a shortened form related to Mattaniah ('gift of the LORD'). These final pre-Joseph names carry priestly and theophoric resonances.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 20:28 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. The grammatical shift is decisive: every previous entry uses the active 'fathered' (egennesen), but here the passive egennethee ('was born') replaces it. Joseph does not 'father' Jesus; Jesus 'was born from' Mary. The relative pronoun 'from whom' (ex hes) is feminine singular, referring to Mary alone. Matthew's grammar carefully preserves the virgin birth claim while maintaining Joseph's legal paternity through the Davidic line.
21. The threefold repetition of 'fourteen generations' (dekateσσαρες geneai) is Matthew's structural key. The number fourteen may relate to the numerical value of David's name in Hebrew (dalet-vav-dalet = 4+6+4 = 14), making the entire genealogy a numerical proclamation that Jesus is David's heir. The actual count requires some flexibility — the third section has only thirteen names as listed — which confirms that the scheme is theological rather than strictly mathematical.
22. The word genesis here means 'birth' or 'origin,' echoing verse 1. The phrase 'pledged in marriage' (mneesteuthesees) indicates a formal betrothal that was legally binding in Jewish practice — more than modern engagement but prior to cohabitation. 'Before they came together' (prin ee synelthein) is a euphemism for sexual union. The phrase ek pneumatos hagiou ('from the Holy Spirit') attributes the conception directly to divine agency.
23. The Greek dikaios ('righteous, just') is the same word used for covenant faithfulness throughout the Septuagint. Joseph's righteousness manifests not in strict legal enforcement but in mercy — he could have exposed Mary to public shame and legal penalty, but chose discretion. The verb apolusai ('to release, divorce') confirms that betrothal carried the legal weight of marriage.
24. The address 'son of David' (huios David) is significant — the angel reminds Joseph of his royal lineage precisely at the moment when he is about to sever the legal connection between that lineage and the child. The Greek angelos kyriou ('angel of the Lord') echoes the Hebrew malak YHWH of the Old Testament theophanies. Dreams as vehicles of divine revelation connect Joseph to his Old Testament namesake (Genesis 37, 40-41).
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 37 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The name Iesous (ἰησοῦς) is the Greek form of the Hebrew Yeshua/Yehoshua, meaning 'the LORD saves' or 'the LORD is salvation.' The angel's explanation — 'for he will save (sosei) his people' — is a direct etymology of the name. The command to Joseph to name the child establishes his legal paternity and thus the Davidic succession.
27. This is the first of Matthew's fulfillment formulas (a pattern repeated throughout the Gospel: 2:15, 2:17, 2:23, 4:14, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35, 21:4, 27:9). The passive pleerothee ('might be fulfilled') indicates divine purpose — the events did not merely happen to coincide with prophecy but occurred in order to fulfill it.
28. Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14 from the Septuagint, which uses parthenos ('virgin') to translate the Hebrew almah ('young woman of marriageable age'). The Hebrew term does not inherently mean 'virgin' (the specific Hebrew word for virgin is bethulah), but the Septuagint translators chose parthenos, and Matthew adopts this reading as prophetically significant. 'Emmanuel' (Hebrew Immanu-El, 'God with us') becomes a theological declaration — God's presence embodied in this child. Matthew bookends his Gospel with this theme (cf. 28:20, 'I am with you always').

23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 7:14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. Joseph's immediate obedience upon waking mirrors the pattern of Old Testament figures who respond to divine commands without argument (cf. Abraham in Genesis 22:3). The verb *prosetaxen* ('commanded') is stronger than the KJV's 'bidden' — this was a directive, not a suggestion.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 22:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The Greek *ouk eginōsken autēn* ('he did not know her') uses the biblical euphemism for sexual intercourse, corresponding to the Hebrew *yada*. We render the meaning transparently rather than preserving the euphemism. The word *heos* ('until') has been debated for centuries: it clearly states abstinence before the birth but does not grammatically require or exclude relations afterward. The SBLGNT does not include 'firstborn' (*prōtotokon*), which appears in some manuscripts — we follow the critical text.

2

Summary: *Matthew 2 narrates four episodes from Jesus's infancy: the visit of the Magi from the East who follow a star to find the newborn king, Herod's duplicitous scheme to locate the child, the holy family's flight to Egypt, and the massacre of infants in Bethlehem followed by the family's eventual settlement in Nazareth. Each episode is anchored by a fulfillment quotation from the Hebrew prophets, establishing Matthew's theological framework that Jesus's life recapitulates Israel's story.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The chapter contains four fulfillment quotations (Micah 5:2, Hosea 11:1, Jeremiah 31:15, and a composite prophetic reference to Nazareth) — more than any other chapter in Matthew. The Magi are Gentile astrologers, and their worship of Jesus anticipates the universal scope of the Gospel. Herod's massacre echoes Pharaoh's slaughter of Hebrew infants in Exodus 1, casting Jesus as a new Moses. The flight to Egypt and return deliberately mirrors Israel's own journey — Jesus embodies Israel's story in his own person.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'out of Egypt I called my son' (v. 15) originally referred to Israel as a nation in Hosea 11:1, not to an individual Messiah. Matthew's typological reading is not a prediction-fulfillment in the modern sense but a theological claim that Jesus recapitulates Israel's experience. We render the quotations as Matthew presents them without editorializing on the hermeneutical method. The 'star' (aster) in the Magi narrative has been variously interpreted as astronomical, astrological, or miraculous — the Greek text does not resolve the question, and we preserve the ambiguity.*

Connections: *The Magi narrative connects to Numbers 24:17 (the star of Jacob), Isaiah 60:1-6 (nations bringing gifts), and Psalm 72:10-11 (kings offering tribute). The flight to Egypt connects to the Exodus narrative and Hosea 11:1. Rachel weeping connects to Jeremiah 31:15 and the exile. The Nazareth reference may connect to Isaiah 11:1 (netser, 'branch') through wordplay.*

¹After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea during the reign of King Herod, wise men from the East arrived in Jerusalem, ² Declaring, Where is he that is born to be king of the Jews? since we have seen his star appear when it rose, and are traveled here to honor him. ³When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴He assembled all the chief priests and scribes of the people and inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what has been written through the prophet: ⁶'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" ⁷Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and determined from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. When you find him, report back to me so that I too may go and pay him homage." ⁹After hearing the king, they set out, and there — the star they had seen at its rising went ahead of them until it came and stood over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹The y entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling down, they worshiped him. Then, opening their treasure chests, they presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their own country by another route. ¹³After they had departed, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you,

for Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him." ¹⁴So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and withdrew to Egypt, ¹⁵Was there until the passing of Herod — that it could be fulfilled which had been spoken of the Lord by the prophet of old and stated, Out of Egypt have I called my son. ¹⁶When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men, he flew into a rage and sent soldiers to kill all the male children in Bethlehem and its surrounding region who were two years old and under, based on the time he had determined from the wise men. ¹⁷Then what was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: ¹⁸"A voice was heard in Ramah — weeping and great mourning — Rachel weeping for her children, and she refused to be comforted, because they are no more." ¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰Declaring, Arise, and take the little child and his mother, and go into Israel's territory — since those who threatened who were seeking the little child's life. ²¹So he got up, took the child and his mother, and entered the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee, ²³He arrived and dwelt in a city called Nazareth — that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He will be known as a Nazarene.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *magoi* ('magi, wise men') refers to Persian-origin astrologer-priests, not kings. The traditional 'three wise men' is not in the text — the number three is inferred from the three gifts. 'From the East' (*apo anatolon*) literally means 'from the rising [of the sun],' indicating Persia, Babylon, or Arabia. The genitive absolute construction 'Jesus having been born' (*tou Iesou genneethentos*) indicates the birth has already occurred — the Magi do not arrive at the manger.
2. The phrase 'king of the Jews' (*basileus ton Ioudaion*) will reappear at Jesus's trial and crucifixion (27:11, 37), forming a bitter *inclusio* across the Gospel. The Greek *proskynesai* can mean 'worship' (of God) or 'pay homage' (to a king) — the Magi may intend political respect, but Matthew's readers would hear deeper significance. 'At its rising' (*en tee anatolee*, singular) is better than 'in the east,' which would be the plural form — it refers to the star's heliacal rising.
3. The verb *etarachthee* ('was troubled, disturbed, agitated') is strong — the same word describes the disciples' terror at seeing Jesus walk on water (14:26). Herod's disturbance is political paranoia: he was not the legitimate Davidic heir and was fiercely protective of his throne. That 'all Jerusalem' shared his alarm reflects either the population's fear of Herod's violent reactions or their own unease at messianic claims that could provoke Roman intervention.
4. Herod consults the Jewish religious establishment — the chief priests (*archiereis*) and scribes (*grammateis*), the recognized experts in Torah interpretation. The imperfect tense *epynthaneto* ('was inquiring') may suggest repeated or persistent questioning. 'The Christ' (*ho Christos*) with the definite article indicates the expected Messiah as a known concept.
5. The perfect tense *gegraptai* ('it has been written and stands written') indicates the enduring authority of the prophetic text. The religious leaders know the scriptural answer immediately but show no inclination to act on it — a tragic irony that Matthew develops throughout the Gospel.
6. Matthew's quotation combines Micah 5:2 with 2 Samuel 5:2, modifying the original. Micah's Hebrew reads 'too small to be among the clans of Judah,' but Matthew reverses it to 'by no means least' — an interpretive rendering that emphasizes Bethlehem's dignity rather than its smallness. The verb *poimanei* ('will shepherd') draws on the ancient Near Eastern image of the king as shepherd, connecting Jesus to David, who was literally a shepherd from Bethlehem before becoming king.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Micah 5:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Samuel 5:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The adverb *lathra* ('secretly') reveals Herod's duplicity — he does not want the religious leaders or the public to know he is tracking this. The verb *ekribosen* ('determined precisely, ascertained exactly') shows calculated intent; he is establishing a timeline that will later determine the age range for the massacre (v. 16).
8. Herod's claim that he wishes to 'pay homage' (*proskyneso*) uses the same word the Magi used in verse 2. The dramatic irony is sharp — the reader knows Herod intends to destroy the child, not honor him. The word *paidion* ('young child') rather than *brepheos* ('infant') may suggest the child is no longer a newborn.
9. The star's behavior — going ahead and then standing over a specific location — goes beyond normal astronomical phenomena. The Greek *proegen* ('went ahead, led the way') and *estathee* ('stood, came to rest') describe purposeful guidance. Matthew presents this without rationalization, and we render it straightforwardly.
10. The Greek is emphatic to the point of redundancy: *echareesan charan megaleen sphodra* — literally 'they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.' This cognate accusative construction (rejoiced a rejoicing) intensifies the emotion. We condense this into 'overwhelmed with joy' to capture the force

without the awkward literalism.

11. The setting is a house (oikian), not a manger — consistent with the passage of time since the birth. Joseph is notably absent from the scene; only 'Mary his mother' is mentioned. The verb *prosekyneesan* ('worshiped') is the strongest form of homage. The three gifts — gold (royalty), frankincense (divinity/priesthood), and myrrh (burial/suffering) — have been read typologically since early Christianity, though Matthew does not allegorize them.
12. The verb *chrematisthentes* ('having been warned, having received a divine message') specifically denotes an oracular communication — this is not an ordinary dream but a divine directive. The Magi's obedience to the dream over Herod's command places divine authority above political authority, a theme Matthew develops throughout the Gospel.
13. The urgency is conveyed by three rapid imperatives: 'get up' (*egertheis*), 'take' (*paralabe*), 'flee' (*pheuge*). Egypt — Israel's ancient place of bondage — now becomes a place of refuge. The phrase 'the child and his mother' (repeated in vv. 14, 20, 21) consistently places Jesus first and omits Joseph's name, emphasizing the child's primacy and the fact that Joseph is the guardian, not the biological father.
14. Joseph's response is immediate — he departs that same night (*nyktos*, 'by night'). The word *anechoresen* ('withdrew') carries connotations of strategic retreat, the same verb used for Jesus's own tactical withdrawals later in the Gospel (4:12, 12:15, 14:13).
15. The quotation is from Hosea 11:1, where 'my son' originally referred to Israel as a nation being called out of Egyptian slavery at the Exodus. Matthew reads this typologically — Jesus recapitulates Israel's journey. As Israel was God's 'son' called from Egypt, so Jesus, God's Son, is called from Egypt. This is not prediction-fulfillment in the strict sense but typological correspondence: the pattern of Israel's story finds its ultimate expression in Jesus.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Hosea 11:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The verb *enepaichthee* ('was outwitted, mocked, tricked') is the same word used for the mocking of Jesus before his crucifixion (27:29, 31), creating a grim verbal connection between Herod's rage and Jesus's passion. The phrase *ethymothee lian* ('was exceedingly angry') describes murderous fury. The age threshold of two years (*dietous*) is based on Herod's calculation from verse 7, suggesting the star appeared up to two years before the Magi's arrival. 'Soldiers' is implied by the verb *apostellas* ('having sent') — Herod dispatched agents to carry out the order.
17. This fulfillment formula uses a different construction than verse 15 — 'then was fulfilled' (*tote epleerothee*) rather than 'in order that it might be fulfilled' (*hina pleerothee*). The shift may indicate that this event fulfilled prophecy as a tragic echo rather than as a divinely intended purpose — Matthew is careful in his language about the massacre.
18. The quotation is from Jeremiah 31:15. In its original context, Rachel (the matriarch buried near Bethlehem, Genesis 35:19) weeps for her descendants being taken into exile. Matthew applies the image to the murdered children — Rachel's weeping continues across the centuries. The phrase 'because they are no more' (*hoti ouk eisin*) is devastating in its simplicity. Ramah was a staging ground for the Babylonian deportation (Jeremiah 40:1), and Rachel's tomb was associated with the Bethlehem area.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 31:15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 35:19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 40:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. Herod the Great died in 4 BC by conventional chronology. The angelic appearance follows the same pattern as 1:20 and 2:13 — divine guidance through dreams. The historical present *phainetai* ('appears') adds narrative vividness.
20. The plural 'those who were seeking' (*hoi zetountes*) when only Herod has been mentioned echoes Exodus 4:19, where God tells Moses 'all those who sought your life have died' — another Moses-Jesus parallel. The phrase 'seeking the life' (*zetountes teen psychen*) is a Septuagintal idiom for murderous intent.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 4:19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The phrase 'entered the land of Israel' (*eiselthen eis gen Israel*) echoes the conquest narratives — Joshua 'entering' the promised land. Jesus's return from Egypt to Israel recapitulates the Exodus-to-Canaan journey.
22. Archelaus inherited Judea and was notoriously brutal — he was eventually deposed by Rome in AD 6 for excessive cruelty. Joseph's fear is historically well-grounded. Galilee was under the rule of Herod Antipas, who was comparatively less dangerous. The divine warning in a dream (*chrematistheis*) is the fourth dream-revelation in chapters 1-2, establishing dreams as Matthew's primary channel for divine guidance in the infancy narrative.
23. This is the most puzzling of Matthew's fulfillment quotations — no extant Old Testament passage says 'He will be called a Nazarene.' Three explanations are commonly offered: (1) a wordplay on *netser* ('branch') from Isaiah 11:1, connecting the Messiah to the 'branch of Jesse'; (2) a connection to *nazir* ('Nazirite, consecrated one'); (3) a reference to the general contempt associated with Nazareth (cf. John 1:46, 'Can anything good come from Nazareth?'). Matthew uniquely says 'prophets' (plural), suggesting a composite theme rather than a single text. The name *Nazoraïos* became a primary designation for Jesus and his followers.

23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 11:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

3

Summary: *Matthew 3 introduces John the Baptist as a wilderness prophet calling Israel to repentance in preparation for the coming kingdom of heaven. John's preaching, dress, and diet deliberately evoke the prophet Elijah. He confronts the Pharisees and Sadducees, warns that Abrahamic descent alone guarantees nothing, and baptizes the people in the Jordan. The chapter climaxes with Jesus's baptism, where the heavens open, the Spirit descends like a dove, and a voice from heaven declares Jesus to be God's beloved Son.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *John the Baptist bridges the Old and New Testaments — his message, dress (camel hair, leather belt), and wilderness setting deliberately mirror Elijah (2 Kings 1:8), and he quotes Isaiah 40:3 as his own mission statement. The baptism scene is one of the few passages where Father, Son, and Spirit appear simultaneously. The heavenly voice combines Psalm 2:7 ('You are my Son') with Isaiah 42:1 ('in whom I delight'), fusing royal and servant identities in a single declaration. John's insistence that 'I need to be baptized by you' reveals an awareness of Jesus's superior status that creates theological tension with Jesus's submission to the baptism.*

Translation Friction: *John's phrase 'brood of vipers' (genneemata echidnon) is shockingly hostile for a prophet addressing fellow Jews. We preserve the confrontational force. The phrase 'kingdom of heaven' (basileia ton ouranon) is Matthew's distinctive circumlocution for 'kingdom of God' — we preserve Matthew's form. Jesus's reason for being baptized ('to fulfill all righteousness') is theologically dense and deliberately left somewhat unexplained by the text. The phrase 'Spirit of God descending like a dove' (v. 16) is ambiguous about whether the dove is a visual form or a simile for the manner of descent.*

Connections: *Isaiah 40:3 (the voice in the wilderness) is the foundational text. Elijah typology connects to 2 Kings 1:8 and Malachi 4:5. The baptism connects to Israel's Red Sea crossing and Jordan crossing under Joshua. The heavenly voice draws on Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1. The Spirit descending connects to Isaiah 11:2 (the Spirit resting on the Messiah) and Genesis 1:2 (the Spirit hovering over the waters at creation).*

¹In those days, John the Baptist appeared, proclaiming in the wilderness of Judea, ²"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near!" ³This is the one spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, who said: "A voice crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'" ⁴Now John wore clothing made of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then Jerusalem and all Judea and the entire region around the Jordan went out to him, ⁶Received baptism by him in the Jordan, openly admitting their sins. ⁷But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Therefore produce fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. ¹⁰Already the axe is laid at the root of the trees. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one coming after me is more powerful than I am — I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor. He will gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." ¹³Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan, coming to John to be baptized by him. ¹⁴But John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?" ¹⁵But Jesus answered him, "Allow it for now, for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented. ¹⁶After Jesus was baptized, he immediately came up out of the water, and suddenly the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him. ¹⁷And just then a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, and I am completely delighted with him.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The historical present *paraginetai* ('appears, arrives') creates narrative immediacy — John bursts onto the scene. The title *ho baptistes* ('the Baptist, the one who baptizes') identifies John by his distinctive practice. The wilderness (*eremos*) of Judea is the barren region west of the Dead Sea, a place associated with divine encounter and prophetic calling throughout Israel's history.
2. The verb *metanoieite* ('repent') means a radical change of mind and direction, corresponding to the Hebrew *teshuvah* ('return'). The perfect tense *eggiken* ('has drawn near, has come close') indicates that the kingdom's approach has already begun — it is not merely future but pressing into the present. 'Kingdom of heaven' (*basileia ton ouranon*) is Matthew's distinctive phrase, using 'heaven' as a reverential circumlocution for 'God,' reflecting Jewish practice of avoiding direct use of the divine name.
3. The quotation from Isaiah 40:3 is foundational to all four Gospels' presentation of John. In its original context, the voice calls for a highway through the desert for God's return to Zion after the exile. Matthew applies this to John preparing the way for Jesus. The phrase 'in the wilderness' modifies 'crying out' (as in the Septuagint and the Gospels), though in the Hebrew of Isaiah 40:3 it modifies 'prepare' — 'in the wilderness prepare the way.' This difference in punctuation shifts the emphasis from the location of the preparation to the location of the prophet.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 40:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. John's appearance deliberately mirrors Elijah's description in 2 Kings 1:8 — a hairy garment with a leather belt. This visual allusion would be immediately recognized by Matthew's audience. Locusts were permitted food under Jewish dietary law (Leviticus 11:22). The wilderness diet emphasizes John's ascetic separation from settled society and his prophetic identity.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Kings 1:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 11:22. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The imperfect tense *exeporeueto* ('were going out') describes a continuous stream of people, not a single event. The hyperbolic 'all Judea' and 'the entire region' (*pasa*, repeated) conveys the scale of John's popular impact. The Jordan River region was associated with Israel's entry into the promised land under Joshua.
6. The verb *ebaptizonto* ('were being baptized') is imperfect passive, indicating an ongoing process. The Greek *baptizo* means 'to immerse, dip, submerge.' Confession of sins (*exomologoumenoi*) accompanied the immersion, making it a public act of repentance, not merely a ritual washing. Jewish purification rites involved water, but John's baptism was distinctive in linking immersion to moral repentance and eschatological preparation.
7. The phrase *genneemata echidnon* ('brood of vipers') is devastatingly hostile — they are not merely compared to snakes but identified as the offspring of venomous serpents. The rhetorical question implies that their appearance at the baptism is insincere — they are seeking to escape judgment without genuine repentance. The 'coming wrath' (*mellouses orgees*) refers to eschatological judgment. The Pharisees and Sadducees rarely appear together; their joint presence may indicate that both wings of the religious establishment are under indictment.
8. The singular *karpon* ('fruit') in the SBLGNT (versus the KJV's plural 'fruits') treats repentance as producing a unified result — a transformed life, not merely individual good deeds. The adjective *axion* ('worthy, fitting, corresponding to') demands that the fruit match the claim. John requires evidence, not merely words.
9. John strikes at the core of Jewish ethnic confidence — descent from Abraham was considered a guarantee of covenant standing. John insists that biological lineage without moral transformation is worthless. The reference to 'these stones' (*ton lithon touton*) may involve a wordplay in Aramaic (the spoken language): 'stones' (*avanim*) and 'children' (*banim*) sound alike. God's ability to create children from stones also evokes the creation of Adam from earth.
10. The present tense *keitai* ('is laid, is lying') indicates that judgment is not approaching — it has arrived. The axe is already positioned. The tree-and-fruit metaphor recurs throughout Matthew (7:16-20, 12:33, 21:19) as a standard image for the moral evaluation of people. Fire (*pyr*) represents eschatological judgment.
11. John contrasts his water baptism with the coming one's baptism 'with the Holy Spirit and fire' (*en pneumati hagio kai pyri*). Whether 'Spirit and fire' describes one baptism (the Spirit as purifying fire) or two (blessing for the repentant, judgment for the unrepentant) is debated. The sandal-carrying metaphor indicates slave-level service — John considers himself unworthy even of the lowest task for the one who follows him. The Greek *ischyroteros* ('more powerful, stronger') emphasizes raw divine authority.
12. The agricultural metaphor of winnowing — tossing grain into the air so the wind separates wheat from chaff — depicts divine judgment as a sorting process. The Greek *ptyon* ('winnowing fork/shovel') is a large fork used to throw grain. 'Unquenchable fire' (*pyri asbesto*) intensifies the judgment beyond ordinary burning — this fire cannot be extinguished. The imagery connects to Malachi 3:2-3, where the messenger's coming involves refining fire.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Malachi 3:2-3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The historical present *paraginetai* ('arrives') mirrors the same verb used for John's appearance in verse 1, creating a structural parallel. Jesus comes specifically for baptism (*tou baptisthenai*, a purpose infinitive), making this a deliberate, intentional act rather than a chance encounter.

14. The imperfect tense *diekolyen* ('was trying to prevent, kept preventing') indicates ongoing resistance, not a single objection. John recognizes the incongruity — the greater should baptize the lesser, not the reverse. This exchange is unique to Matthew and addresses the theological puzzle of why the sinless one submitted to a baptism of repentance.
15. Jesus's reply is his first spoken words in Matthew's Gospel. The phrase 'fulfill all righteousness' (*plerasai pasan dikaiosynen*) is theologically dense — it connects to Matthew's theme of fulfillment and to the concept of *dikaioyne* ('righteousness') that will dominate the Sermon on the Mount. The 'us' (*heemin*) includes both John and Jesus in a shared mission. 'Righteousness' here likely means conformity to God's will and purposes rather than personal moral achievement.
16. The opening of the heavens (*aneochtheesan hoi ouranoi*) echoes Ezekiel 1:1 and Isaiah 64:1 — moments when the barrier between heaven and earth is breached. The phrase 'like a dove' (*hosei peristeran*) is ambiguous: it may describe the Spirit's visual form or the gentle manner of descent. The verb *erchomenon* ('coming') combined with *ep' auton* ('upon him') echoes Isaiah 11:2, where the Spirit 'rests upon' the messianic branch. This is a royal anointing scene — the Spirit's descent constitutes Jesus's commissioning.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 1:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 64:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 11:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The heavenly voice combines two Old Testament texts: Psalm 2:7 ('You are my Son') — a royal enthronement psalm — and Isaiah 42:1 ('my chosen one in whom my soul delights') — the first Servant Song. The fusion declares Jesus simultaneously as Davidic king and Suffering Servant. Matthew has 'This is' (*houtos estin*, third person, a public declaration) where Mark has 'You are' (*sy ei*, second person, addressed to Jesus). The verb *eudokesa* ('I am well pleased, I have delighted') is aorist, possibly indicating a timeless or pre-temporal delight rather than a response to the baptism alone.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 2:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 42:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

4

Summary: *Matthew 4 opens with Jesus being led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. Three temptations probe whether Jesus will misuse his identity as God's Son — for personal comfort, for spectacle, or for political power. Jesus responds to each with quotations from Deuteronomy, reliving Israel's wilderness testing and succeeding where Israel failed. After the temptation, Jesus withdraws to Galilee, settles in Capernaum, and begins his public ministry with the proclamation: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' He calls his first four disciples — Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John — from their fishing nets, and begins a widespread ministry of teaching, proclaiming, and healing throughout Galilee.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The three temptations form a literary triptych, each answered with a quotation from Deuteronomy 6-8 — the section where Moses recounts Israel's wilderness failures. Jesus is presented as the true Israel who passes the test that the nation failed. The move to Capernaum fulfills Isaiah 9:1-2, connecting Jesus's ministry to the territories of Zebulun and Naphtali — the first regions lost to Assyrian conquest, now the first to see messianic light. The phrase 'kingdom of heaven' (*basileia ton ouranon*) is unique to Matthew among the Gospels; the other Synoptics use 'kingdom of God.' Matthew's Jewish audience would have understood 'heaven' as a reverential circumlocution for the divine name.*

Translation Friction: *The nature of the temptation narrative — whether visionary, literal, or theological — is debated. We render the Greek text as given without imposing a framework. The phrase 'the devil' (*ho diabolos*) translates a Greek term meaning 'slanderer' or 'accuser,' corresponding to the Hebrew *satan* ('adversary'). The quotation from Isaiah 9:1-2 in verses 15-16 follows the Septuagint rather than the Masoretic Text in some details.*

Connections: The temptation narrative connects to Israel's wilderness testing (Deuteronomy 6-8), the baptism of chapter 3, and the Sermon on the Mount that follows in chapters 5-7. The calling of the first disciples echoes prophetic call narratives (1 Kings 19:19-21, Elijah calling Elisha). The summary of Jesus's ministry in verse 23 sets up the Sermon on the Mount by establishing his authority as teacher and healer.

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. ²After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread." ⁴But he answered, "It is written: 'A person does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" ⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the highest point of the temple, ⁶says to him, If you be the Son of God, cast thyself down — for it is written, He will give his angels charge concerning you: and in their hands they will bear you up, lest at any time you dash your foot against a stone. ⁷Jesus said to him, "Again it is written: 'You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor, ⁹says to him, All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "Go away, Satan! For it is written: 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" ¹¹Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended to him. ¹²When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet and stated, ¹⁵"Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations — ¹⁶those who sat in darkness noticed remarkable light. And to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. ¹⁷From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ¹⁸As he was walking along the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers — Simon, who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew — casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹He said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹Going on from there, he saw two other brothers — James the son of Zebedee and his brother John — in a boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. He called them, ²²They immediately departed the ship and their Father, and followed him. ²³Jesus traveled throughout all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people. ²⁴News about him spread throughout all of Syria, and people brought to him all who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, the demon-possessed, epileptics, and the paralyzed, and he healed them. ²⁵Large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *peirasthēnai* can mean 'to test' or 'to tempt.' We render it 'tested' because the initiative comes from God's Spirit — this is a divine proving, not merely a satanic enticement. The passive *anēchthē* ('was led up') indicates Jesus did not go on his own initiative but was directed by the Spirit, connecting this directly to the Spirit's descent at his baptism (3:16).
1. The Greek *diabolos* ('slanderer, accuser') corresponds to the Hebrew *satan*. Matthew uses *diabolos* rather than *satanas* here, though both terms appear in the New Testament.
2. The 'forty days and forty nights' echoes Moses on Sinai (Exodus 34:28) and Elijah's journey to Horeb (1 Kings 19:8). The number forty is a standard biblical period of testing and preparation — Israel wandered forty years, the flood lasted forty days. The Greek *epeinasen* is simply 'he was hungry,' a masterful understatement after forty days without food.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 34:28. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 19:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The Greek *ei* ('if') with the indicative does not express doubt but assumes the condition is true: 'Since you are the Son of God' or 'Given that you are.' The temptation is not about proving identity but about misusing it. The tempter attacks at the point of legitimate physical need — hunger after forty days of fasting.
4. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3, which recounts how God fed Israel with manna to teach them dependence on his word. The Greek *anthrōpos* ('person, human being') is gender-neutral; 'person' captures this better than the KJV's 'man.' The phrase *gegraptai* ('it is written,' perfect tense) indicates permanent, authoritative force — what was written remains in effect.

4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 8:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The Greek pterygion ('little wing') refers to the highest point or parapet of the temple complex. Josephus describes the southeastern corner of the temple platform as having a dizzying drop into the Kidron Valley. 'The holy city' (tēn hagian polin) is Jerusalem, identified by its theological title rather than its name.
6. The devil now quotes Scripture — Psalm 91:11-12 — but omits the phrase 'to guard you in all your ways,' subtly distorting the promise from general providential care to a demand for spectacular intervention. The temptation is to force God's hand through presumptuous action rather than trusting his timing.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 91:11-12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16, which references Israel's testing of God at Massah (Exodus 17:1-7). The verb ekpeiraseis ('put to the test') is an intensified form of peirazō — it means to test in a demanding, presumptuous way. The word palin ('again') indicates Jesus is not countering Scripture with Scripture but completing its meaning — both passages stand together.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 6:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 17:1-7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Greek doxan ('glory, splendor') here refers to the visible magnificence of earthly power — wealth, armies, architecture. The offer of 'all the kingdoms' is the most audacious temptation: political power without the cross. No literal mountain provides a vantage point to see all earthly kingdoms; the scene is visionary or symbolic.
9. The Greek proskynesēs ('worship, bow down before') implies full prostration — the posture of total submission reserved for deity. The temptation strips away all pretense: the devil offers a shortcut to universal dominion that bypasses suffering and the cross, but the price is idolatry. The conditional ean ('if') with the subjunctive presents this as a genuine offer.
10. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13. The word Satana is the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew satan ('adversary') — Jesus uses the name directly for the first time, dropping the circumlocution 'tempter' and 'devil.' The verb latreuō ('serve, render religious service') denotes devoted worship-service, not mere obedience. The command hypage ('go away') is sharp and authoritative.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 6:13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The Greek diēkonoun ('ministered, served, attended') is the imperfect tense, indicating ongoing service — the angels continued to care for him. This verb is the root of 'deacon' (diakonos). The angelic ministry recalls Elijah being fed by an angel after his own wilderness ordeal (1 Kings 19:5-8). The irony is deliberate: the provision Jesus refused to seize by miracle is now given to him by the Father.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Kings 19:5-8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The Greek paredothē ('was handed over, delivered up') is the same verb later used for Jesus's own betrayal and arrest (10:4, 17:22, 26:2). Matthew's use of this word for John foreshadows Jesus's fate — the forerunner's path prefigures the Messiah's. 'Withdrew' (anechōrēsen) suggests a deliberate strategic move, not flight.
13. Capernaum (Kfar Nachum, 'village of Nahum') on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee becomes Jesus's base of operations. The Greek parathalassian ('by the sea') identifies the town's lakeside location. Matthew specifies the tribal territories of Zebulun and Naphtali to set up the Isaiah quotation that follows.
14. This is Matthew's second fulfillment formula (cf. 1:22). The move to Capernaum is presented not as a retreat from danger but as a prophetic fulfillment — geography itself serves God's redemptive plan.
15. Matthew quotes Isaiah 9:1-2 (8:23-9:1 in the Hebrew numbering). 'Galilee of the nations' (Galilaia tōn ethnōn) reflects the mixed Jewish-Gentile population of the northern region. The phrase hints at the universal scope of Jesus's mission — he begins not in Jerusalem but in a border region where Jew and Gentile mingle. 'The way of the sea' (hodon thalassēs) refers to the ancient trade route Via Maris.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 9:1-2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The Greek kathēmenoīs can mean 'sitting' or 'dwelling, living' — the sense is of a settled condition, not a momentary posture. 'Shadow of death' (skia thanatou) echoes the Hebrew tsalmaveth of Psalm 23:4 and Isaiah 9:2. The verb aneteilen ('has risen, dawned') is used of sunrise — the light that breaks upon Galilee is described in the language of a new dawn.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 9:1-2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 23:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. Jesus's opening proclamation is identical to John the Baptist's in 3:2, establishing continuity between the forerunner and the Messiah. The Greek *metanoieite* ('repent') means a fundamental change of mind and direction — not merely feeling sorry but reorienting one's entire life. The perfect tense *ēngiken* ('has come near, has drawn close') indicates that the kingdom has already begun to arrive, not merely that it will come someday.
17. Matthew's 'kingdom of heaven' (*basileia tōn ouranōn*) is equivalent to Mark's and Luke's 'kingdom of God.' Matthew uses 'heaven' as a reverential circumlocution for God's name, following Jewish convention.
18. The Greek *amphiblēstron* refers to a circular casting net thrown from shore or from a shallow-water position, distinct from the dragnet (*sagēnē*) of 13:47. The parenthetical 'who is called Peter' (*ton legomenon Petron*) introduces the name by which readers will know him. The Sea of Galilee is technically a freshwater lake (approximately 13 miles long by 8 miles wide), but the Greek *thalassa* ('sea') follows the Hebrew convention of calling any large body of water *yam*.
19. The call *deute opisō mou* ('come after me') uses the language of rabbinic discipleship — following a teacher physically implied intellectual and moral formation. 'Fishers of people' (*halieis anthrōpōn*) is a metaphor drawn from their actual trade. The Greek *anthrōpōn* is gender-inclusive ('people'), not restricted to males.
20. The adverb *eutheōs* ('immediately, at once') emphasizes the radical, unhesitating nature of their response. The Greek *diktia* ('nets') represents their entire livelihood. Matthew narrates the call with dramatic compression — there is no negotiation, no request for time, no farewell.
21. The Greek *katartizontas* ('mending, preparing, putting in order') suggests the brothers were repairing nets after a fishing expedition. The detail that they are with their father Zebedee heightens the cost of their response — they leave not only their trade but their family. The Greek *ploion* is a fishing boat, not a large vessel.
22. The cost escalates from the first calling: Simon and Andrew left nets (equipment), but James and John leave both the boat (a more substantial capital asset) and their father (family obligation). Matthew highlights what discipleship requires — not merely adding Jesus to one's life but reordering all other loyalties.
23. This summary verse presents Jesus's ministry in a threefold pattern: teaching (*didaskōn*), proclaiming (*kēryssōn*), and healing (*therapeuōn*). This triad recurs in 9:35, forming an *inclusio* around the Sermon on the Mount and the miracle collection. The 'good news of the kingdom' (*to euangelion tēs basileias*) is Matthew's phrase for the content of Jesus's preaching — the announcement that God's reign is arriving. The Greek *malakian* refers to weakness or infirmity as distinct from *nosos* (disease).
24. The Greek *selēniāzomenous* (literally 'moon-struck') refers to those suffering from what was associated with lunar cycles — likely epilepsy. The KJV's 'lunatick' comes from the same etymology but is no longer a medical term. The list moves from general ('various diseases and pains') to specific conditions, demonstrating the comprehensive scope of Jesus's healing power. Syria (the Roman province encompassing the region north of Galilee) indicates that Jesus's reputation extended beyond Jewish territory.
25. The five regions listed encompass a wide geographic sweep — from Galilee in the north, through the Decapolis (a league of ten Greco-Roman cities east of the Jordan), to Jerusalem and Judea in the south, and the Transjordan region. This crowd becomes the audience for the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5-7. The inclusion of the Decapolis (heavily Gentile) again hints at the universal scope of Jesus's ministry.

5

Summary: *Matthew 5 opens the Sermon on the Mount, the first of five major teaching discourses in Matthew's Gospel. Jesus ascends a mountain (echoing Moses on Sinai), sits (the posture of authoritative teaching), and addresses his disciples while the crowds listen. The chapter contains the Beatitudes (5:3-12), the salt and light sayings (5:13-16), Jesus's declaration that he has come not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it (5:17-20), and six 'antitheses' in which Jesus deepens the Torah's demands — addressing anger (5:21-26), lust (5:27-30), divorce (5:31-32), oaths (5:33-37), retaliation (5:38-42), and love of enemies (5:43-48). The chapter culminates in the command to 'be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Sermon on the Mount is structured as a new Sinai revelation. Just as Moses ascended the mountain to receive the Torah, Jesus ascends to deliver its definitive interpretation. The Beatitudes reverse worldly valuations — the poor in spirit, the grieving, the meek, and the persecuted are declared blessed. The antitheses ('You have heard... but I say to you') do not contradict the Torah but radicalize it, moving from external behavior to internal disposition. Jesus claims an authority that surpasses Moses: not 'Thus says the LORD' but 'I say to you.' The Greek *teleios* ('perfect') in verse 48 means 'complete, mature, whole' — not sinless perfection but wholehearted devotion.*

*Translation Friction: The relationship between Jesus and the Torah in 5:17-20 is one of the most debated passages in the New Testament. We render the Greek as given without resolving the tension between 'not one iota will pass from the Law' and the apparent modifications that follow. The antitheses vary in structure — some quote the Torah directly, others cite popular interpretations ('You have heard it was said'). We preserve these distinctions. The teaching on divorce (5:31-32) involves the contested term *porneia*, which we render transparently with a note on the semantic range.*

Connections: The mountain setting connects to Sinai (Exodus 19-20), the Beatitudes echo the Psalms (especially Psalm 37) and Isaiah 61, the Law-fulfillment passage connects to Matthew's ongoing concern with the Torah's continuing validity, and the antitheses prepare for the conflicts with religious leaders in later chapters. The command to love enemies (5:44) will be tested in the Passion narrative.

¹When he saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²He opened his mouth and began to teach them, saying: ³Blessed are the poor in spirit — because heaven's kingdom belongs to them. ⁴Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵Blessed are the meek — for they will receive the earth. ⁶Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. ⁷Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. ⁸Blessed are the pure in heart — since they will see God. ⁹Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. ¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. For in the same way they persecuted the prophets who came before you. ¹³You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its flavor, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. ¹⁷Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one iota or one stroke of a letter will pass from the Law until everything has been accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever sets aside one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever practices and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ²¹You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder,' and 'Whoever murders will be subject to judgment.' ²²But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Whoever says to his brother, 'Raka!' will be answerable to the council. And whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the fire of Gehenna. ²³So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴Leave there your gift prior to the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. ²⁷You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into Gehenna. ³⁰And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into Gehenna. ³¹It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' ³²But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. ³³Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall fulfill your oaths to the Lord.' ³⁴But I say to you, do not swear at all — not by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵Nor by the earth. Since it is his footstool — neither by Jerusalem. Since it is the city of the remarkable King. ³⁶Neither shalt you swear by your own head, because you canst not turn a single hair white or black. ³⁷Let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No.' Anything beyond this comes from the evil one. ³⁸You have heard that

it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' ³⁹But I say to you, do not resist the evildoer. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him as well. ⁴⁰If someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴²Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. ⁴³You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵So you can become true children of your Father which is in heaven — since he makes his sun rise on both evil people and good people, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The definite article to oros ('the mountain') suggests a specific location, though Matthew does not name it. The Sinai typology is deliberate — Moses went up the mountain to receive the Law, Jesus goes up to interpret it with final authority. Sitting (kathisantos) was the standard posture for an authoritative Jewish teacher; standing indicated informal conversation.
2. The phrase 'opened his mouth' (anoixas to stoma autou) is a Semitic idiom signaling the beginning of a solemn, formal discourse — not merely casual speech. It appears in the Septuagint for prophetic and wisdom utterances (Job 3:1, Daniel 10:16). The imperfect edidasken ('was teaching, began to teach') suggests an extended teaching session.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Job 3:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 10:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The Greek makarioi ('blessed, fortunate, happy') does not merely describe an emotion but declares a state of divine favor. The 'poor in spirit' (ptōchoi tō pneumati) does not mean lacking in spiritual vitality but recognizing one's spiritual poverty and dependence on God. The Hebrew background is anawim — the humble poor who depend entirely on God. Luke's parallel (6:20) simply has 'the poor,' but Matthew's 'in spirit' clarifies the inner disposition.
4. The Greek penthountes ('those who mourn, grieve') refers to deep grief — the kind associated with death or catastrophic loss. The passive paraklēthēsontai ('will be comforted') is a divine passive: God himself will be the one who comforts. This echoes Isaiah 61:2-3, where the Messiah comes 'to comfort all who mourn.'
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 61:2-3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. This Beatitude quotes Psalm 37:11 almost verbatim. The Greek praeis ('meek, gentle, humble') does not mean weak but describes power under control — strength expressed with gentleness. Moses is called the meekest man on earth (Numbers 12:3), yet he was a formidable leader. The Greek gēn can mean 'earth' or 'land' — in the Psalm 37 context it referred to the promised land, but Jesus universalizes the promise.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 37:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 12:3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The Greek chortasthēsontai ('will be satisfied, filled') originally described the feeding of animals — it means filled to capacity, fully satiated. The metaphor of hunger and thirst for righteousness (dikaioσynēn) implies a desperate, survival-level craving, not casual interest. Matthew's 'righteousness' (dikaioσynē) encompasses both right relationship with God and just conduct — the Hebrew tsedeq/tsedaqah.
7. The Greek eleēmones ('merciful, compassionate') and eleēthēsontai ('will be shown mercy') share the same root (eleos), creating a wordplay: mercy given is mercy received. The principle of reciprocity runs throughout the Sermon (cf. 6:12, 6:14-15, 7:1-2). The divine passive again indicates God as the source of mercy.
8. The Greek katharoi tē kardia ('pure in heart') echoes Psalm 24:4 — 'the one with clean hands and a pure heart.' The heart (kardia) in biblical thought is the center of will, thought, and moral decision, not merely emotion. Purity here means undivided loyalty, sincerity, and integrity. The promise 'they will see God' (ton theon opsontai) is extraordinary — in the Old Testament, seeing God was considered fatal (Exodus 33:20).
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 24:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 33:20 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The Greek eirēnopoioi ('peacemakers') is a compound word appearing only here in the New Testament. It describes those who actively create peace, not merely those who avoid conflict. The designation 'sons of God' (huiioi theou) means they share the character of God, who is the ultimate peacemaker. In the ancient world, the Roman emperor was called a 'peacemaker' — Jesus quietly reassigns the title.

10. The perfect participle *dediōgmenoi* ('those who have been persecuted') indicates an ongoing state resulting from past action — these are people who live under persecution as a condition of their lives. The return to 'kingdom of heaven' creates an inclusio with verse 3, framing the eight Beatitudes as a unified whole. Persecution for righteousness — not for foolishness or stubbornness — is the qualifying condition.
11. The shift from third person ('blessed are those') to second person ('blessed are you') makes this final Beatitude directly personal and marks the transition from the formal blessings to direct address. The three verbs — insult (*oneidisōsin*), persecute (*diōxōsin*), say evil (*eipōsin pan ponēron*) — escalate from verbal abuse to active pursuit to character assassination. The qualifying phrase *pseudomenoi* ('falsely, lying') is critical: the blessing applies only to false accusations.
12. The two imperatives *chairete* ('rejoice') and *agalliasathe* ('be overjoyed, leap for joy') intensify one another. The word *misthos* ('reward, wages') does not imply merit-based earning but God's generous response to faithfulness. By linking the disciples with the persecuted prophets, Jesus places them in the prophetic succession — they are heirs to the same tradition of faithful witness that was met with hostility.
13. The Greek *mōranthē* (from *mōrainō*, 'to become foolish, to become tasteless') creates a double meaning — salt that loses its taste has become 'foolish.' In the ancient world, salt preserved food from decay, flavored meals, and was used in covenant rituals (Leviticus 2:13, Numbers 18:19). If the preserving agent itself fails, nothing can restore it. The rhetorical question 'how can it be made salty again?' expects the answer 'it cannot.'
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 2:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 18:19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. In the Old Testament, Israel was called to be 'a light to the nations' (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6). Jesus transfers this vocation to his disciples. The image of a city on a hill (*polis epanō orous keimenē*) may evoke Jerusalem, built on Mount Zion, visible from great distances. The claim is stunning — Jesus's followers are now assigned the role that Israel was given through the prophets.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 42:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The Greek *modion* ('measuring basket,' about 8.75 liters) was a common household item. The *lychnos* ('oil lamp') was a small clay vessel with a wick — the primary source of indoor light in first-century homes. The *lychnia* ('lampstand') elevated the lamp to maximize its reach. The image is purely practical — hiding a light source defeats its purpose.
16. The purpose of visible good works is not self-promotion but theocentric: the goal is that observers glorify 'your Father in heaven' (*ton patera hymōn ton en tois ouranois*). This phrase — 'your Father in heaven' — is distinctive to Matthew and occurs repeatedly in the Sermon on the Mount. The Greek *kala erga* ('good works, beautiful deeds') denotes works that are both morally good and visibly attractive.
17. The Greek *katalysai* ('to destroy, demolish, abolish') is a strong term — literally 'to loosen down, dismantle.' Jesus denies any intent to dismantle the Torah. The verb *plērōsai* ('to fulfill, to fill up, to bring to completion') is debated: does it mean 'to obey perfectly,' 'to bring to its intended goal,' 'to fill with deeper meaning,' or 'to bring about what it prophesied'? The ambiguity may be intentional — Jesus fulfills the Law in all these senses. 'The Law and the Prophets' (*ton nomon ē tous prophētas*) is a standard designation for the entire Hebrew Scriptures.
18. The Greek *amēn legō hymin* ('truly I tell you') is Jesus's characteristic formula for solemn pronouncements — it is unprecedented in Jewish teaching, where *amēn* typically concludes a statement rather than introducing one. The *iōta* is the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet (corresponding to the Hebrew *yod*, the smallest Hebrew letter), and *keraia* ('horn, serif, stroke') refers to the tiny decorative strokes that distinguish similar Hebrew letters. The double negative *ou mē* ('not at all, by no means') is the strongest form of negation in Greek.
19. The Greek *lysē* ('loosens, sets aside, annuls') echoes the *katalysai* of verse 17 — whoever 'loosens' even the smallest commandment participates in the very abolition Jesus has rejected. The pairing of 'practices and teaches' (*poiēsē kai didaxē*) insists on integrity: teaching without practice is worthless. Being 'called least' may mean having the lowest status in the kingdom, not necessarily exclusion from it.
20. This verse functions as the thesis statement for the six antitheses that follow (5:21-48). The scribes and Pharisees were considered the most meticulous observers of the Law — to exceed their righteousness seemed impossible. The Greek *perisseusē* ('exceed, overflow, surpass') implies not more of the same kind but a different quality of righteousness — one that penetrates from external observance to internal transformation. The double negative *ou mē* ('never, by no means') makes the warning absolute.
21. This introduces the first antithesis. The formula 'You have heard that it was said' (*ēkousate hoti errethē*) refers to the synagogue reading of Torah. The commandment quotes the sixth commandment (Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17). The Greek *phoneuseis* ('murder') is more specific than 'kill' — it refers to unlawful killing, not all forms of taking life. The addition 'whoever murders will be subject to judgment' reflects the established legal tradition surrounding the commandment.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 20:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 5:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The emphatic *egō de legō hymin* ('but I say to you') claims an authority that transcends even Moses — Jesus does not cite another authority but speaks on his own. The three-step escalation moves from internal anger to verbal contempt (*Raka*, an Aramaic term of derision meaning

'empty-head' or 'worthless') to outright denunciation (Mōre, 'fool,' which in Hebrew carries the connotation of moral and spiritual bankruptcy — cf. Psalm 14:1, 'The fool says in his heart'). Gehenna (geennan) refers to the Valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem, associated with child sacrifice (2 Kings 23:10) and later used as a metaphor for divine judgment.

22. The SBLGNT does not include 'without a cause' (eikē), which appears in some later manuscripts. We follow the critical text.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 14:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 23:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The scenario assumes a functioning temple with its sacrificial system — Jesus addresses people who actually bring offerings to the altar. The Greek *thysiaστήριον* ('altar') specifically refers to the temple altar in Jerusalem. The point is radical: reconciliation with a fellow human being takes priority over worship of God.
24. The command is startling in its priorities: leave the sacrifice mid-act to restore a broken relationship. The Greek *diallagēthi* ('be reconciled') is an aorist passive imperative — do whatever it takes to restore the relationship, taking responsibility for your part. The word *prōton* ('first') makes the sequence absolute: reconciliation before worship, not after.
25. The Greek *antidikos* ('adversary, accuser, opponent at law') is a legal term for the opposing party in a lawsuit. The illustration shifts from the temple to the courtroom, but the principle is the same: resolve conflicts urgently, before they escalate beyond your control. The chain of custody — accuser to judge to officer to prison — describes the inexorable progression of unresolved conflict.
26. The Greek *kodrantēn* (Latin quadrans) was the smallest Roman coin, worth about 1/64 of a denarius (a day's wage). The point is totality — every last fraction must be repaid. The shift to singular 'you' (*soi*) makes this personally direct. Whether the saying carries eschatological overtones (final judgment) or remains a practical warning about earthly litigation is debated; likely both dimensions are present.
27. The second antithesis addresses the seventh commandment (Exodus 20:14, Deuteronomy 5:18). The Greek *moicheuseis* ('commit adultery') refers specifically to sexual intercourse with another person's spouse, violating the marriage covenant.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 20:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 5:18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The Greek *pros to epithymēsai* ('with the purpose of desiring, for the purpose of lusting') indicates deliberate, intentional gazing — not an involuntary glance but a cultivated look aimed at arousal. The infinitive of purpose makes the intent central: this is about the will's direction, not mere biological response. The phrase 'in his heart' (*en tē kardia autou*) again locates the moral action in the internal sphere of will and desire.
29. The Greek *skandalizei* ('causes to stumble, causes to sin, entraps') gives us the English 'scandalize.' The language is deliberately hyperbolic — Jesus is not commanding literal self-mutilation but using shock rhetoric to convey the urgency of dealing with sin at its source. The right eye and right hand (v. 30) represent the most valued members. The logic is surgical: better partial loss now than total ruin later.
30. The repetition of the eye/hand pattern reinforces the seriousness of the demand. The right hand was the hand of power, skill, and oath-taking. The verb *ekkopson* ('cut off') is more violent than the eye's 'tear out' (*exele*), escalating the rhetoric. The parallel between *apōlētai* ('perish, be destroyed') for the limb and *apelthē* ('go away, depart') for the body into Gehenna highlights the choice: voluntary partial loss versus involuntary total destruction.
31. The third antithesis cites Deuteronomy 24:1-4, which regulated (but did not endorse) an existing practice of divorce. The Greek *apostasion* ('certificate of divorce, document of separation') was a legal document that freed the woman to remarry. In the first-century debate between the schools of Hillel and Shammai, the grounds for divorce were fiercely contested.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 24:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The exception clause *parektos logou porneias* ('except on the ground of porneia') appears only in Matthew (here and 19:9), not in Mark or Luke. The Greek *porneia* has a broad semantic range: sexual immorality, fornication, prostitution, incest, or any illicit sexual conduct. Whether it refers specifically to pre-marital unchastity, adultery, or sexual sin in general is debated. The logic assumes a patriarchal context where a divorced woman would need to remarry for economic survival — hence the divorced husband 'makes her' commit adultery by forcing her into a new marriage.
33. The fourth antithesis addresses oath-taking. The citation is a composite of Leviticus 19:12 ('You shall not swear falsely by my name'), Numbers 30:2, and Deuteronomy 23:21-23 (on fulfilling vows). The Greek *epiorkēseis* ('swear falsely, commit perjury') and the command to 'fulfill your oaths' (*apodōseis tous horkous*) together summarize the Torah's teaching: if you swear, do not lie; keep what you promise.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 19:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 30:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 23:21-23 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
34. The prohibition *mē omosai holōs* ('do not swear at all') is absolute in form. The practice of swearing by things adjacent to God (heaven, earth, Jerusalem, one's own head) was a way of invoking solemnity without directly using God's name — a legalistic evasion that Jesus exposes. His argument is that everything is connected to God, so every oath implicitly involves God.
35. The phrases echo Isaiah 66:1 ('Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool') and Psalm 48:2 ('the city of the great King'). Jesus's reasoning reveals a theology of divine sovereignty: heaven, earth, and Jerusalem all belong to God, so swearing by any of them ultimately invokes God himself. The 'great King' (*tou megalou basileōs*) is God, not an earthly monarch.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 66:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 48:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The climactic point: you cannot even swear by your own head because you do not have sovereignty over your own body. The inability to change the color of a hair demonstrates human limitations — even the self belongs to God. This strips away every possible basis for oath-making and drives the listener to the simple alternative of verse 37.
37. The doubled *nai nai, ou ou* ('yes yes, no no') emphasizes simplicity and reliability. The Greek *ek tou ponērou* can mean either 'from evil' (abstract) or 'from the evil one' (personal) — the ambiguity is present in the Greek and we follow the personal reading since Matthew elsewhere uses *ho ponēros* for Satan (13:19, 38). The principle is that truthful people do not need oaths — their word alone is sufficient.
38. The fifth antithesis cites the *lex talionis* ('law of retaliation') from Exodus 21:24, Leviticus 24:20, and Deuteronomy 19:21. In its original context, this law was a limitation on vengeance — it prevented disproportionate retaliation by requiring that punishment match the offense exactly. By the first century, the rabbis had already largely replaced literal application with monetary compensation.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 21:24 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 24:20 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 19:21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. The Greek *mē antistēnai tō ponērō* ('do not resist the evil one/evildoer') sets up four illustrations of non-retaliation. A strike on the right cheek (*rhapizeī eis tēn dexian siagona*) with a right hand would be a backhanded slap — an insult, not an attack. This was a gesture of contempt in the ancient world. Turning the other cheek is not passive submission but a refusal to be defined by the insult, forcing the aggressor to either treat you as an equal or back down.
40. The Greek *chitōna* ('tunic, undergarment') was the inner garment; the *himation* ('cloak, outer garment') was the more valuable outer wrap that also served as a blanket at night. Under Exodus 22:26-27, a creditor could take a debtor's cloak as collateral but had to return it by nightfall. Jesus says to give it voluntarily — a radical generosity that exposes the absurdity of litigious greed.
40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 22:26-27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The Greek *angareusei* ('to press into service, to requisition') is a Persian loanword for the power of a government official to compel a civilian to carry a load or provide labor. Roman soldiers had the legal right to conscript locals to carry equipment for one Roman mile (approximately 1,000 paces or 4,850 feet). The instruction to go a second mile transforms compelled service into voluntary generosity.
42. The two commands cover giving (*dos*, 'give') and lending (*danisasthai*, 'to borrow'). The Greek *mē apostrophēs* ('do not turn away') echoes Deuteronomy 15:7-8, which warns against hardening your heart or closing your hand against a poor brother. The instruction is not about financial naivety but about a disposition of open-handed generosity that refuses to calculate advantage.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 15:7-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. The sixth and final antithesis. 'Love your neighbor' comes from Leviticus 19:18, but 'hate your enemy' is not a direct Torah quotation. It may reflect a popular interpretation, a Qumran-type ideology (the Dead Sea Scrolls' Rule of the Community mandates loving the sons of light and hating the sons of darkness), or a logical inference drawn from the limitation of 'neighbor' to fellow Israelites.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 19:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

44. The SBLGNT has the shorter reading without 'bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you' — these expansions appear in later manuscripts under the influence of Luke 6:27-28. We follow the critical text. The Greek *agapate* ('love') is the present imperative, commanding a habitual pattern of life, not a single act. The love commanded (*agapē*) is not emotional affection but willed, active commitment to the well-being of the other — including those who actively harm you.
45. The logic is breathtaking: God's indiscriminate generosity with sun and rain becomes the model for human love. The Father does not withhold creation's blessings from evildoers — his goodness extends to all. To be 'sons of your Father' (*huiioi tou patros hymōn*) means to share his character. The pairing of 'evil and good' with 'righteous and unrighteous' (*dikaious kai adikous*) covers the entire moral spectrum — God's provision is universal.
46. The Greek *telōnai* ('tax collectors') were Jews who collected taxes or tolls on behalf of the Roman government. They were despised as collaborators and assumed to be corrupt (since they often charged above the required amount). Jesus's argument is comparative: if your love extends only to those who love you back, you are no different from the most despised members of society. Even they manage reciprocal affection.
47. The SBLGNT reads *ethnikoi* ('Gentiles, pagans') rather than *telōnai* ('tax collectors') found in some manuscripts. The greeting (*aspasēsthe*) in the ancient Near East was more than a casual hello — it involved a blessing, an inquiry about welfare, and could include an embrace or kiss. To limit greetings to 'brothers' (*adelphous*, meaning fellow community members) was tribal exclusivism. The rhetorical question 'what are you doing more than others?' (*ti perisson poieite*) challenges disciples to exceed the normal human pattern.
48. The Greek *teleioi* ('perfect, complete, mature, whole') does not mean sinless moral perfection in the modern sense. It comes from the root *telos* ('end, goal, completion') and means 'whole, complete, having reached the intended goal.' In context, it means loving completely — without the partial, self-serving limitations exposed in verses 46-47. Luke's parallel (6:36) has 'be merciful' (*oiktirmones*), which may illuminate Matthew's 'perfect': wholeness of love that embraces even enemies. The future indicative *esesthe* ('you will be') can function as an imperative in Greek.

6

Summary: *Matthew 6 continues the Sermon on the Mount, shifting from the antitheses of chapter 5 to the practice of piety. Jesus addresses three pillars of Jewish devotion — giving to the needy (6:1-4), prayer (6:5-15), and fasting (6:16-18) — warning against performing them for human approval rather than for God. At the center stands the Lord's Prayer (6:9-13), the model prayer that encapsulates the entire Sermon's theology. The chapter then turns to the question of treasure and anxiety: where is your treasure? (6:19-24), and why do you worry? (6:25-34). The chapter culminates in the command to 'seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,' with the promise that all material needs will be provided.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Lord's Prayer functions as a structural and theological center for the entire Sermon on the Mount. Its petitions move from God's concerns (name, kingdom, will) to human needs (bread, forgiveness, deliverance) — modeling the priority order that the rest of the Sermon teaches. The 'do not worry' passage (6:25-34) draws on creation theology: birds, flowers, and grass serve as witnesses to God's providential care. The phrase 'you cannot serve God and money' (6:24) uses the Aramaic *mamōnas*, a personification of wealth as a rival deity. The teaching on prayer explicitly contrasts Jewish practice ('do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do') with the intimacy of addressing God as 'Father.'*

Translation Friction: *The doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer ('For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen') does not appear in the earliest Greek manuscripts and is absent from the SBLGNT. We note this in the translator notes for verse 13. The phrase 'daily bread' (*arton epiousion*) contains a word (*epiousios*) that appears nowhere else in all of Greek literature — its precise meaning is debated. The relationship between 'debts' (*opheilēmata*, v. 12) and 'trespasses' (*paraptōmata*, vv. 14-15) involves a shift in vocabulary that we preserve and note.*

Connections: *The Lord's Prayer connects to the broader prayer tradition of Israel (especially the Amidah/Shemoneh Esreh). The 'do not worry' teaching echoes Psalm 37 and Proverbs 3:5-6. The 'eye as the lamp of the body' saying (6:22-23) connects to the purity of heart in 5:8. The teaching on treasures prepares for the parables of chapter 13 (hidden treasure, pearl of great price).*

1Be careful not to practice your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven. 2So when you give to the needy, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3

But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴That your alms may be in secret — and your Father which sees in secret himself will reward you openly. ⁵And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, shut the door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁷When you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹Pray then like this: 'Our Father in heaven, let your name be held holy. ¹⁰Let your kingdom come. Let your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹Provide us today with the bread we need. ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' ¹⁴For if you pardon men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also pardon you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. ¹⁶When you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so that their fasting will be noticed by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸That you appear not to men to fast, but to your Father which is in secret — and your Father, which sees in secret, will reward you openly. ¹⁹Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²²The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! ²⁴No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. ²⁵Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life — what you will eat or what you will drink — or about your body — what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the sky — they do not sow or reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they are? ²⁷And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life span? ²⁸And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not labor or spin, ²⁹Yet I tell you, that not even Solomon in all his splendor was never dressed as beautifully as even one of these flowers. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you — you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' ³²For the Gentiles pursue all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need all of them. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you as well. ³⁴So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT reads *dikaïosynēn* ('righteousness') rather than *eleēmosynēn* ('alms, charitable giving') found in later manuscripts. 'Righteousness' serves as the umbrella term for the three practices that follow: giving, prayer, and fasting. The Greek *pros to theathēnai* ('in order to be seen, for the purpose of being noticed') uses the verb from which we get 'theater' — performing religion for an audience. The Father 'in heaven' (*en tois ouranois*) is contrasted with the earthly audience throughout this section.
2. The Greek *hypokritai* ('hypocrites') originally meant 'actors' — those who perform behind a mask on stage. Jesus repurposes the theatrical metaphor: religious performers are actors playing to a human audience rather than living before God. Whether the 'trumpet sounding' is literal (some form of public announcement) or figurative (drawing attention to one's generosity) is debated. The verb *apechousin* ('they have received in full') is a commercial term meaning 'paid in full, receipt given' — human praise is the only payment they will ever receive.
3. The idiom is vivid hyperbole: even your own body should not be aware of your generosity. The right hand (*dexia*) was the hand of action and blessing; the left hand (*aristera*) was considered secondary. The point is not literal concealment (impossible from oneself) but a disposition so thoroughly free from self-display that giving becomes second nature — unconscious, reflexive, unperformed.
4. The SBLGNT does not include *en tō phanerō* ('openly') after 'will reward you,' which appears in later manuscripts. The contrast is between the 'secret' (*en tō kryptō*) place where genuine piety occurs and the public stage where performative religion operates. The Father 'who sees in secret' (*ho blepōn en tō kryptō*) is the only audience that matters — God perceives what no human observer can.

5. Standing (hestōtes) was the normal Jewish posture for prayer — Jesus does not criticize the posture but the motive. The Greek philousin ('they love, they take pleasure in') exposes the deeper problem: they enjoy being seen praying more than they enjoy praying. The 'corners of the broad streets' (gōniais tōn plateiōn) were intersections where one would be visible from multiple directions — maximum exposure.
6. The Greek tameion ('inner room, storeroom, private chamber') refers to the most private space in a house — often a windowless storage room. Shutting the door (kleisas tēn thyran) physically removes the human audience. The point is not that all prayer must be private (Jesus prayed publicly) but that the essential dynamic of prayer is between the person and God alone. Again the SBLGNT omits en tō phanerō ('openly').
7. The Greek battalogēsēte is a rare word, possibly onomatopoeic (imitating the sound of babbling: 'ba-ba-ba'). It may mean 'to babble, to speak repetitiously and without meaning, to heap up empty phrases.' The Greek polylogia ('many words, wordiness') diagnoses the underlying error: the assumption that God must be nagged or informed by sheer volume of speech. The contrast is with the concise Lord's Prayer that follows.
8. The logic raises a question: if God already knows our needs, why pray at all? Jesus does not answer this directly, but the Lord's Prayer that follows answers implicitly — prayer is not informing God but aligning oneself with God's purposes. The verb oiden ('knows,' perfect tense of oida) indicates settled, complete knowledge, not something God must learn.
9. The address 'Our Father' (Pater hēmōn) is communal — not 'my Father' but 'our Father,' embedding the pray-er in community from the first word. 'In heaven' (ho en tois ouranois) distinguishes the divine Father from earthly fathers. The passive imperative hagiasthētō ('let it be sanctified, let it be treated as holy') is a divine passive — God himself will bring about the honoring of his name, but the pray-er asks for it and commits to participating in it. The 'name' (onoma) in Hebrew thought represents the entire character and reputation of God.
10. The aorist imperatives elthētō ('let it come') and genēthētō ('let it be done') express urgency — bring the kingdom now, accomplish your will now. 'Your kingdom' (hē basileia sou) is the same kingdom of heaven Jesus has been proclaiming since 4:17. The phrase 'on earth as in heaven' (hōs en ouranō kai epī gēs) may modify all three petitions — let your name be holy, your kingdom come, and your will be done, on earth as these things already are in heaven.
11. The Greek epiousios ('daily') is one of the rarest words in the entire Greek language — it appears nowhere else in all surviving Greek literature outside the Lord's Prayer and may have been coined for this purpose. Possible meanings: (1) 'for the coming day' (from epī + ienai, 'for the next day'), (2) 'for existence/sustenance' (from epī + ousia, 'for being'), or (3) 'necessary, essential.' The prayer echoes the manna provision in Exodus 16, where Israel was given bread for one day at a time — daily dependence on God rather than hoarding.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The Greek opheilēmata ('debts, what is owed') is a financial metaphor applied to moral and spiritual obligation. Matthew uses 'debts' where Luke (11:4) uses 'sins' (hamartias), revealing that both concepts overlap. The aorist aphēkamen ('we have forgiven,' completed action) is striking — the prayer presupposes that we have already forgiven before we ask God to forgive us. The 'as' (hōs) does not mean 'because' (earning forgiveness by forgiving) but establishes a pattern: those who have experienced God's forgiveness extend it to others.
13. The petition mē eisenegkēs ('do not bring into, do not lead into') has troubled interpreters: does God tempt people? James 1:13 says God tempts no one. The Greek peirasmos can mean 'testing' (from God) or 'temptation' (from evil) — the prayer asks to be spared the crisis of testing that could overwhelm faith. 'The evil one' (tou ponērou) can be masculine ('the evil one,' Satan) or neuter ('evil' in the abstract). Given Matthew's usage elsewhere (5:37, 13:19, 38), the personal reading is likely.
13. The doxology 'For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, Amen' does not appear in the earliest manuscripts (Sinaiticus, Vaticanus) and is absent from the SBLGNT critical text. It was likely added in liturgical usage, possibly drawn from 1 Chronicles 29:11. We follow the critical text but note the addition for readers accustomed to the traditional form.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Chronicles 29:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The Greek paraptōmata ('trespasses, transgressions, false steps') is a different word from the 'debts' (opheilēmata) of verse 12. A paraptōma is literally a 'falling aside' — a misstep, a deviation from the right path. Jesus expands on the forgiveness petition from the prayer, making explicit what was implicit: the connection between receiving and extending forgiveness is not optional.
15. The negative counterpart is stated with equal force — refusal to forgive blocks the reception of forgiveness. This is not a transactional formula (forgiving to earn forgiveness) but a statement about the nature of forgiveness itself: a heart that cannot extend mercy has not truly received it. The same principle drives the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:21-35.
16. The Greek skythrōpoi ('gloomy, sullen, with a dark look') describes a deliberately mournful appearance. The verb aphanizousin ('they disfigure, make unrecognizable, obscure') may refer to putting ash on the face, not washing, or deliberately making oneself look haggard. The ironic wordplay in Greek is between aphanizousin ('they make invisible/disfigure') and phanōsin ('they may appear/be visible') — they destroy their appearance in order to create an appearance.
17. Anointing the head with olive oil (aleipsai sou tēn kephalēn) and washing the face were signs of normal grooming and celebration in Jewish culture. The instruction is to look normal — even festive — while fasting. The fast remains between you and God; others should not be able to detect it from your appearance.

18. The three-part pattern is now complete: giving (vv. 2-4), prayer (vv. 5-6), and fasting (vv. 16-18) each follow the same structure — negative example of hypocrites, positive instruction for disciples, and assurance that the Father who sees in secret will reward. The Greek *kryphaios* ('hidden, secret') is a variant of *kryptos* used in the giving and prayer sections. The SBLGNT again omits *en tō phanerō* ('openly').
19. The Greek *thēsaurizete* ('store up, treasure up') shares the same root as *thēsauros* ('treasures') — a deliberate play on words: 'do not treasure treasures.' The three threats to earthly wealth — moth (*sēs*, which destroys stored garments), decay (*brōsis*, literally 'eating, corrosion,' which ruins stored food or metal), and theft — cover the major categories of ancient wealth: clothing, provisions, and precious metals.
20. Heavenly treasure is defined by its indestructibility — it is beyond the reach of the forces that threaten earthly accumulation. The concept of 'treasures in heaven' was known in Jewish tradition (Tobit 4:9, 2 Baruch 24:1) and refers to the lasting value of righteous deeds, generosity, and faithfulness before God.
21. The singular 'your' (*sou*) makes this directly personal — it applies to each individual listener. The logic is not merely 'your heart follows your treasure' but 'what you treasure reveals and determines who you are.' The heart (*kardia*) in biblical thought is the center of will, desire, and allegiance. Treasure placement is not a financial decision but an identity decision.
22. The Greek *haplous* ('single, simple, healthy, generous') is the key interpretive challenge. In Greek it can mean physically healthy (a 'sound' eye), morally simple/sincere, or generous (as in the closely related noun *haplotēs* in 2 Corinthians 8:2, 9:11). In context — between the teaching on treasure (vv. 19-21) and the warning about mammon (v. 24) — the sense 'generous' is strong. A 'single' eye is one focused on God rather than divided between God and wealth.
23. The Greek *ponēros* ('evil, bad, sick') stands in direct contrast to *haplous*. In Jewish idiom, an 'evil eye' (*ayin ra'ah* in Hebrew) specifically meant stinginess, greed, and envy — the opposite of generosity. The final exclamation is devastating: if the very organ designed to receive light (the eye/heart) has itself become dark, there is no remaining capacity to perceive truth. The corruption of what should be the source of guidance is the ultimate disaster.
24. The Greek *douleuein* ('to serve as a slave') is not casual employment but total allegiance. A slave has one master — divided ownership was legally impossible. The Aramaic *mamōnas* ('money, wealth, material possessions') is transliterated directly into Greek. By placing *mamōnas* alongside *theō* (God) as potential masters, Jesus personifies wealth as a rival deity. The claim is absolute: dual allegiance is structurally impossible, not merely difficult.
25. The Greek *mē merimnate* ('do not worry, do not be anxious') does not prohibit planning or working but the corrosive anxiety that assumes God's provision is unreliable. The word *merimnaō* is from the root *merizō* ('to divide') — anxiety divides the mind and pulls it in opposing directions. The rhetorical question uses an *a fortiori* argument: if God gave you life (the greater gift), will he not also provide food and clothing (the lesser gifts)?
26. The imperative *emblemsate* ('look at, observe carefully') calls for attentive observation of creation as theological evidence. Birds do not engage in the agricultural cycle (sowing, reaping, storing), yet they are fed. The argument is from lesser to greater (*qal wahomer* in rabbinic terms): if God provides for creatures that cannot farm, how much more for humans made in his image? 'Heavenly Father' (*ho patēr hymōn ho ouranios*) reinforces the relational basis of trust.
27. The Greek *hēlikian* can mean either 'stature' (height) or 'life span' (age), and *pēchyn* ('cubit,' about 18 inches) can be literal or metaphorical. If 'stature,' the saying is absurd (a cubit is about 18 inches — no one can grow that much by worrying). If 'life span,' the saying is practical (worry cannot extend life; it may shorten it). Both readings work, but the life span reading fits the context of existential anxiety better.
28. The verb *katamathete* ('learn thoroughly, observe carefully, consider well') is stronger than a casual glance — it means to study the lilies as one would study a text. The Greek *krina* ('lilies') may refer to various wildflowers rather than cultivated lilies specifically. Like the birds, the flowers do not 'labor' (*kopōsin*, hard physical work) or 'spin' (*nēthoustin*, the work of making thread for fabric). Creation itself testifies to God's generous provision.
29. Solomon was proverbially the wealthiest and most magnificently dressed king in Israel's history (1 Kings 10:4-7, 23). The Greek *doxē* ('glory, splendor, magnificence') here refers to his outward splendor. The comparison is deliberately shocking: a wildflower that lives a single day surpasses the greatest human display of wealth. The implication: if God lavishes beauty on temporary flowers, how much more will he provide for his children?
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Kings 10:4-7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. The Greek *oligopistoi* ('of little faith') is a word characteristic of Matthew (6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8) — it describes not unbelief but insufficient trust in a God one already acknowledges. The *klibanon* ('oven') was a clay baking oven fueled by dried grass and brush. The argument reaches its climax: the most ephemeral thing in creation (grass that exists one day and is fuel the next) receives extravagant beauty from God — how much more will God provide for beings created in his image?
31. The three anxious questions cover the basic necessities: food, drink, and clothing. The subjunctive mood (*phagōmen, piōmen, peribalōmetha*) expresses the anxious deliberation of someone who does not know where their next provision will come from. Jesus does not dismiss the reality of material need but challenges the anxious mindset that treats provision as uncertain.
32. The Greek *ethnē* ('nations, Gentiles') here refers to those who do not know God as Father. The verb *epizētousin* ('eagerly seek, strive after') implies an anxious, driven pursuit. The contrast is sharp: those who do not know God as Father must be anxious about material needs; those who do know him should not be, because he already knows (*oiden*, settled knowledge) their needs. The repetition of 'your heavenly Father' reinforces the relational basis of freedom from anxiety.

33. This verse functions as the climax of the entire 'do not worry' section and arguably of the Sermon on the Mount itself. The imperative *zēteite* ('seek') is present tense — seek continuously, as a way of life. The word *prōton* ('first') establishes priority, not sequence: God's kingdom and righteousness are not the first item on a list but the governing priority that orders everything else. The passive *prostethēsetai* ('will be added, will be provided') is again a divine passive — God will add material provision. Notably, Matthew here uses 'kingdom of God' (*tēn basileian tou theou*) rather than his usual 'kingdom of heaven,' perhaps for emphasis.
34. The personification of 'tomorrow' worrying about itself (*hē aurion merimnēsei heautēs*) adds a touch of wry humor to the teaching. The Greek *kakia* ('trouble, evil, hardship') here means the day's burden of difficulty — not moral evil but the ordinary weight of living. The concluding maxim is proverbial in form: confine your concern to today's challenges. This echoes the 'daily bread' petition of 6:11 — live in daily dependence, not projected anxiety.

7

Summary: *Matthew 7 concludes the Sermon on the Mount with a series of sharply drawn contrasts. Jesus teaches on judging others (7:1-5), warns against giving holy things to those who will desecrate them (7:6), and offers the encouragement of ask/seek/knock (7:7-11). The Golden Rule (7:12) summarizes the entire Law and Prophets. The remainder of the chapter presents four pairs of contrasts — two gates (7:13-14), two kinds of prophets/trees (7:15-20), two kinds of disciples (7:21-23), and two builders (7:24-27). Each pair forces a choice between genuine and counterfeit responses to Jesus's teaching. The Sermon closes with the crowd's astonished reaction: he taught them 'as one having authority, and not as their scribes' (7:28-29).*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Sermon on the Mount ends not with comfort but with urgency. The four final contrasts (two gates, two trees, two claims, two builders) all demand decision: hearing the words is not enough — doing them is the dividing line. The saying 'Lord, Lord' passage (7:21-23) is among the most sobering in the Gospels: people who prophesied, cast out demons, and performed miracles in Jesus's name are told 'I never knew you.' The criterion is not spectacular spiritual activity but doing the will of the Father. The Golden Rule (7:12) is presented as the summary of 'the Law and the Prophets' — a staggering claim that the entire Hebrew Scriptures can be distilled into a single principle of other-centered action.*

Translation Friction: *The instruction 'do not give what is holy to dogs' (7:6) is one of the most cryptic sayings in the Sermon, and its precise referent is debated. We render the Greek as given without imposing a specific interpretation. The relationship between 'judging' (7:1) and 'discernment' (7:6, 7:15-20) creates an apparent tension: do not judge, yet evaluate prophets by their fruit. The tension is real and intentional — Jesus prohibits censorious condemnation while requiring moral discernment.*

Connections: *The Golden Rule connects to Leviticus 19:18 ('love your neighbor as yourself') and to Hillel's famous negative formulation. The wise and foolish builders echo Proverbs' contrast between wisdom and folly. The phrase 'I never knew you' connects to the Hebrew concept of knowing (*yada*) as intimate covenant relationship. The crowd's reaction to Jesus's authority (7:28-29) sets up the conflicts with religious authorities that dominate chapters 8-12.*

¹Do not judge, so that you will not be judged. ²For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. ³Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is a log in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. ⁶Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them underfoot and turn and tear you to pieces. ⁷Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks the door will be opened. ⁹Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him! ¹²So whatever you want others to do for you, do the same for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. ¹³Enter through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the road is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter

through it. ¹⁴How narrow is the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few are those who find it! ¹⁵Watch out for false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will recognize them by their fruit. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰So then, you will recognize them by their fruit. ²¹Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. ²²On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' ²³And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.' ²⁴Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. ²⁵The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. ²⁶And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and struck that house, and it fell — and great was its collapse. ²⁸When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹Since he instructed them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *krinete* ('judge') covers a range from simple evaluation to legal condemnation. In context, Jesus prohibits the censorious, condemning judgment that appoints oneself as moral arbiter over others — not the moral discernment he commands in verses 6 and 15-20. The passive *krithēte* ('be judged') is a divine passive: God will judge you by the same standard you apply to others. The present imperative *mē krinete* suggests 'stop judging' or 'do not make a habit of judging.'
2. The principle of reciprocal measure was proverbial in Jewish thought (cf. Mishnah Sotah 1:7, 'By the measure with which a person measures, it is measured to him'). The Greek creates an emphatic sound pattern through the repetition of *kri-* and *metr-* roots. The 'measure' (*metrō*) image may come from the marketplace — the same measuring cup you use for others will be used for you.
3. The Greek *karpōs* ('speck, splinter, small piece of straw') versus *dokos* ('beam, log, large piece of timber') creates a comically exaggerated contrast — a person with a construction beam protruding from their eye is attempting delicate surgery on another's minor splinter. The humor carries a serious point: self-awareness must precede correction of others. The verb *katanoeis* ('notice, consider carefully, perceive') implies that the failure to see one's own faults is a willful blindness.
4. The rhetorical question exposes the absurdity of the situation. The Greek *aphes ekbalō* ('allow me to remove') sounds helpful and even caring, but the pretense of assistance while harboring a greater fault is itself a form of hypocrisy. The word *idou* ('look, see') calls attention to the obvious — everyone can see the log except the one carrying it.
5. The address *hypokrita* ('hypocrite, actor') is singular and direct — Jesus confronts the individual. Importantly, Jesus does not prohibit helping the brother with his speck — he insists on proper sequence: self-correction first (*prōton*), then assistance. The verb *diaplesei* ('see clearly, see through') implies that removing one's own log restores the clarity needed to genuinely help another. The passage thus teaches not the avoidance of moral evaluation but its proper practice.
6. This saying is among the most debated in the Sermon. 'Dogs' (*kysin*) and 'pigs' (*choirōn*) were both unclean animals in Jewish law and could function as derogatory terms. 'What is holy' (to *hagion*) may refer to sacred food (meat from the temple sacrifices) and 'pearls' (*margaritas*) to precious spiritual teaching. The saying recognizes that some truths, when offered to those who despise them, result not in gratitude but in violence against the giver. This qualifies the non-judgmental ethic of 7:1 — discernment about when and with whom to share is necessary.
7. The three imperatives — *aiteite* ('ask'), *zēteite* ('seek'), *krouēte* ('knock') — are all present tense, indicating continuous action: keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking. The three verbs may suggest escalating intensity: asking is verbal, seeking involves movement and effort, knocking implies arriving at a specific threshold. Each promise uses a divine passive: it will be given (by God), you will find (because God reveals), it will be opened (by God).
8. The word *pas* ('everyone, all') universalizes the promise — it is not restricted to a spiritual elite. The present tense participles (*aitōn*, *zētōn*, *krouonti*) describe ongoing patterns of life, not isolated incidents. The assurance is grounded not in the intensity of human effort but in the character of the Giver, as verses 9-11 will make clear.
9. The rhetorical question expects the answer 'No one!' The comparison works because round flat bread loaves and certain round stones looked similar — the substitution would be a cruel trick. Jesus argues from common human decency to divine generosity: if even flawed human parents give good things to their children, how much more will God?
10. The parallel intensifies: a snake (*ophin*) could visually resemble certain eels or fish, but the substitution would be dangerous rather than merely disappointing. The fish/snake contrast may also carry symbolic weight — fish were a food staple from the Sea of Galilee, while snakes connote

danger and deception (cf. Genesis 3).

10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The assumption 'you who are evil' (hymeis ponēroi ontes) is startling in its matter-of-fact assessment of human moral condition. Jesus does not soften it — even as sinful people, you manage to give good gifts. The a fortiori argument (posō mallon, 'how much more') reaches its conclusion: God's generosity infinitely surpasses the best of human parenting. Luke's parallel (11:13) specifies that the Father gives 'the Holy Spirit'; Matthew's broader 'good things' (agatha) encompasses all that the Father knows his children need.
12. The Golden Rule summarizes the Sermon and, according to Jesus, the entire Hebrew Scriptures ('the Law and the Prophets,' ho nomos kai hoi prophētai, the same phrase from 5:17). The positive formulation ('do for them') goes beyond the negative form attributed to Hillel ('What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor' — Shabbat 31a). The positive form requires active initiative, not merely restraint. The connective oun ('so, therefore') links this to the entire preceding discourse — the Golden Rule is not isolated wisdom but the practical application of everything Jesus has taught.
13. The image of two paths is deeply rooted in Jewish wisdom tradition (cf. Deuteronomy 30:15-19, Psalm 1, Proverbs 4:18-19, Jeremiah 21:8). The Greek stenēs ('narrow, constricted') and plateia ('wide, broad') describe the gates; eurychōros ('spacious, broad') describes the road. The word apōleian ('destruction, ruin, perdition') does not specify the nature of the destruction but its finality. The 'many' (polloi) who take the wide gate creates urgency — following the majority is not safe.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 30:15-19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Proverbs 4:18-19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 21:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The SBLGNT reads ti ('how!') as an exclamation rather than hoti ('because'). The Greek tethlimmenē ('compressed, constricted, pressed, afflicted') is the participle of thlibō, which also means 'to afflict, to oppress' — the narrow road is not merely inconvenient but involves genuine hardship. The destination is zōēn ('life') — not mere survival but the fullness of life in God's kingdom. The word 'find' (heuriskontes) implies that the narrow gate requires searching — it is not self-evident.
15. The Greek pseudoprophētōn ('false prophets') warns that not all who claim to speak for God actually do. The sheep/wolf image is vivid: the exterior is harmless and community-affirming (sheep among sheep), but the interior is predatory (harpages, 'ravenous, greedy, plundering'). The image assumes that false prophets are not easily identified by outward appearance — they blend in. The test for discernment follows in verses 16-20.
16. The Greek karpon ('fruit') is the consistent metaphor for the visible results of a person's character and teaching. The verb epignōsesthe ('you will recognize, you will know fully') is a strengthened form of ginōskō — full, clear recognition over time. The rhetorical questions about grapes from thorns (akanthōn) and figs from thistles (tribolōn) expect the answer 'Of course not!' — nature does not deceive; plants produce according to their kind.
17. The Greek sapron ('rotten, decayed, bad') describes a tree that is diseased at its core — not merely unproductive but fundamentally corrupt. The adjectives agathos ('good') and ponēros ('bad, evil') form a clear moral binary. The principle is straightforward: what you are determines what you produce. Character precedes conduct.
18. The word ou dynatai ('is not able, cannot') states an impossibility, not merely an improbability. This strengthens the diagnostic power of fruit-inspection: the fruit is a reliable indicator because it is an inevitable product of the tree's nature. The chiasmic structure (good tree/bad fruit, bad tree/good fruit) reinforces the point through rhetorical symmetry.
19. This echoes John the Baptist's warning in 3:10 almost verbatim, creating continuity between the forerunner's message and Jesus's teaching. The present tenses ekkoptetai ('is cut down') and balletai ('is thrown') describe a general, ongoing practice — this is how orchards work, and this is how judgment works. The fire (pyr) carries judgment overtones throughout Matthew.
20. The concluding ara ge ('so then, therefore indeed') draws the inference from the entire tree/fruit illustration. The repetition of verse 16a forms an inclusio around the teaching. The verb epignōsesthe ('you will fully recognize') promises that patient observation of results — not first impressions, not claims, not appearances — will reveal the truth about any prophet or teacher.
21. The doubled vocative Kyrie, Kyrie ('Lord, Lord') suggests urgent, fervent address — these are not casual believers but passionate confessors. Yet the criterion for entering the kingdom is not verbal profession but enacted obedience: ho poiōn to thelēma ('the one who does the will'). The phrase 'my Father' (tou patros mou) — Jesus claims a unique filial relationship that distinguishes him from the disciples' 'your Father.' This verse begins the most sobering passage in the Sermon.
22. The phrase 'on that day' (en ekeinē tē hēmera) refers to the day of final judgment. The three activities listed — prophesying, exorcism, and mighty works (dynameis, 'miracles, powerful deeds') — are among the most impressive spiritual accomplishments imaginable. All three are done 'in your

name' (tō sō onomati), repeated three times for emphasis. The shock of the passage is that genuine supernatural activity can coexist with spiritual failure. Jesus here implicitly claims the role of final judge — a divine prerogative.

23. The verb homologēsō ('I will declare, confess, acknowledge publicly') is the same word used elsewhere for public confession of faith — here it is turned to public condemnation. 'I never knew you' (oudepote egnōn hymas) uses ginōskō in the relational sense — not 'I never had information about you' but 'I never had a covenant relationship with you.' This echoes the Hebrew yada, intimate knowing. The Greek anomian ('lawlessness') is literally 'without law' (a-nomia) — a devastating charge in a sermon that has affirmed the Law's permanent validity (5:17-19). The quotation echoes Psalm 6:8.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 6:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. The final parable draws the Sermon's decisive line: hearing (akouei) plus doing (poiei) defines wisdom. 'These words of mine' (mou tous logous toutous) refers to the entire Sermon on the Mount. The Greek phronimō ('wise, prudent, sensible') describes practical wisdom — the ability to make sound decisions. Building on rock (petran) provides a foundation that endures under stress. In the geography of Palestine, sudden flash floods in dry valleys (wadis) are a real and lethal danger.
25. The triple assault — rain (brochē), floods (potamoi, 'rivers, torrents'), and wind (anemoi) — represents comprehensive testing. Every direction of attack is covered: above (rain), below (floods), and sideways (wind). The pluperfect tethemeliōto ('it had been founded, its foundation had been laid') indicates that the foundation was already in place before the storm arrived — preparation precedes crisis. The storm tests what already exists; it does not create the foundation.
26. The Greek mōrō ('foolish, stupid') is the root of English 'moron' — but in biblical wisdom tradition, foolishness is not intellectual deficiency but moral failure, the refusal to live according to reality (cf. Psalm 14:1). The foolish builder hears the same words as the wise builder — the difference is not in access to truth but in response to it. Building on sand (ammon) is building on what shifts and gives way under pressure.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 14:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The storm is identical to verse 25 — both houses face the same test. The difference is entirely in the foundation. The Greek ptōsis ('fall, collapse, ruin') echoes the word used for the moral 'fall' of individuals in the Septuagint. The final phrase kai ēn hē ptōsis autēs megalē ('and great was its collapse') is emphatic in its placement — the sentence ends with the devastating result ringing in the listener's ears. The parable's force is eschatological: the storm represents the final judgment, when every life will be tested.
28. The formula kai egeneto hote etelesen ho Iēsous ('and it happened when Jesus had finished') is Matthew's standard transition at the end of each of his five major discourses (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1). The Greek exeplēssonto ('were astonished, were struck with amazement') is a strong word — literally 'struck out of their senses.' The imperfect tense indicates a continued, lingering amazement rather than a momentary reaction.
29. The Greek exousian ('authority, power, right') distinguishes Jesus from the scribes (grammateis), who taught by citing earlier authorities ('Rabbi Hillel says... Rabbi Shammai says...'). Jesus cited no human authority — his recurring formula 'But I say to you' (5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44) placed his own word alongside and above the Torah itself. The periphrastic construction ēn didaskōn ('he was teaching,' literally 'he was, teaching') emphasizes the ongoing quality and manner of his instruction. The phrase 'their scribes' (hoi grammateis autōn) subtly distances the crowd from the religious establishment.

8

Summary: *Matthew 8 opens a collection of miracle narratives that demonstrate Jesus's authority over disease, nature, and the demonic realm. After descending from the mountain where he delivered the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus heals a leper, a centurion's servant (at a distance), Peter's mother-in-law, and many others. He then calms a violent storm on the Sea of Galilee and casts out demons from two men in the region of the Gadarenes. Interspersed are two brief exchanges about the cost of discipleship.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The centurion episode (vv. 5-13) is remarkable for Jesus's astonishment at a Gentile's faith — greater than any he found in Israel. This leads to the first explicit statement that Gentiles will share in the kingdom of heaven while some 'sons of the kingdom' will be cast out. The healing narratives fulfill Isaiah 53:4, which Matthew quotes in verse 17. The storm-calming episode uses language that echoes God's mastery over chaotic waters in the Old Testament (Psalm 89:9, 107:29). The Gadarene encounter presents Jesus confronting the demonic realm with sovereign authority.*

Translation Friction: The geographic designation varies in manuscripts — 'Gadarenes,' 'Gergesenes,' or 'Gerasenes.' We follow the SBLGNT reading. Matthew has two demoniacs where Mark and Luke have one; we render Matthew's text as given without harmonizing. The phrase 'Son of Man' (huios tou anthropou) is a self-designation of Jesus drawn from Daniel 7:13-14 and rendered with both words capitalized.

Connections: The leper healing connects to Leviticus 14 (purification laws). The centurion narrative anticipates the Great Commission's universal scope (28:19). The Isaiah 53:4 quotation in verse 17 links Jesus's healing ministry to the Servant Songs. The storm scene echoes Jonah 1 (sleeping during a storm) and Psalm 107:23-30. The Gadarene episode anticipates the final confrontation language of Revelation.

¹When he came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him. ²Then a man with a skin disease came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." ³Jesus reached out his hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing. Be made clean." Immediately his skin disease was healed. ⁴Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one, but go show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." ⁵When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, pleading with him, ⁶"Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible suffering." ⁷Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." ⁸The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy for you to come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." ¹⁰When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. ¹¹I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹²However, true children of the reign will be driven out into the darkness outside — where there is sobbing and grinding of teeth. ¹³Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go. Let it be done for you as you have believed." And his servant was healed at that very hour. ¹⁴When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. ¹⁵He touched her hand, and the fever left her. She got up and began serving him. ¹⁶When evening came, they brought to him many who were demon-possessed. He drove out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, ¹⁷That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet and stated, Himself picked up our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. ¹⁸When Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to cross over to the other side of the lake. ¹⁹A scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." ²⁰Jesus said to him, "Foxes have dens, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ²¹Another of his disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ²²But Jesus declared to him, Come with me. And let the dead bury their dead. ²³When he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴Suddenly a great storm arose on the sea, so violent that the boat was being swamped by the waves. But he was sleeping. ²⁵They came and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are going to die!" ²⁶He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. ²⁷The men were amazed, saying, "What kind of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" ²⁸When he came to the other side, to the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs. They were so violent that no one could pass along that road. ²⁹Suddenly they cried out, "What do you want with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the appointed time?" ³⁰Now some distance away a large herd of pigs was feeding. ³¹The demons begged him, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs." ³²He said to them, "Go." They came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the water. ³³Those who had been tending the pigs fled. They went into the town and reported everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. ³⁴Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The genitive absolute construction (katabavtos de autou) marks a transition from the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5-7) to the miracle narratives. 'The mountain' (tou orous) uses the definite article, referring to the specific mountain of the Sermon. The crowds that heard his teaching now witness his authority in action.
2. The Greek leprosy covers a range of skin conditions beyond modern leprosy (Hansen's disease); 'skin disease' captures the broader Greek meaning while 'leprosy' appears in the KJV. The verb prosekynei ('knelt before, worshipped') can indicate either reverence or worship — the ambiguity is

significant. The leper's statement expresses total confidence in Jesus's power ('you can') while deferring to his will ('if you are willing').

3. Physical contact with a person suffering from a skin disease rendered one ritually unclean under Levitical law (Leviticus 13:45-46). Jesus's deliberate touch reverses the expected dynamic — instead of Jesus becoming unclean, the man becomes clean. The aorist passive katharistheē ('be made clean') is a divine passive, implying God as the agent. The word eutheōs ('immediately') emphasizes the instantaneous nature of the healing.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 13:45-46 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The command to show himself to the priest follows the purification procedure of Leviticus 14:1-32, which required priestly inspection and specific offerings. Jesus upholds the Mosaic law even while demonstrating authority that transcends it. The phrase eis martyrion autois ('as a testimony to them') is ambiguous — it could mean testimony to the priests that the man is healed, or testimony against them that the Messiah has come.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 14:1-32. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The hekatontarchos was a Roman military officer commanding approximately one hundred soldiers. His approach to a Jewish teacher would have been culturally unusual. The participle parakalōn ('pleading, urging') indicates earnest, persistent appeal rather than casual request.
6. The Greek pais can mean 'child,' 'servant,' or 'boy.' In this military context, 'servant' is most likely, though some scholars argue for 'son.' The participle basanizomenos ('being tormented') is a strong word — it denotes severe suffering, not mild illness. The perfect passive bebletai ('has been laid low') indicates an ongoing state of helplessness.
7. Some interpreters read this as a question — 'Shall I come and heal him?' — with emphasis on the pronoun egō ('I myself'), expressing surprise that a Jewish teacher would enter a Gentile's house. The declarative reading is more natural in context and is followed here.
8. The centurion's declaration ouk eimi hikanos ('I am not worthy/sufficient') goes beyond social humility — a Roman officer acknowledging unworthiness before a Jewish teacher inverts every expected power dynamic. His request that Jesus 'just say the word' (monon eipe logō) reveals an understanding of Jesus's authority as operative at a distance, not requiring physical presence. This phrase has entered Christian liturgy in many traditions.
9. The centurion's reasoning is remarkable: because he understands chains of command, he recognizes that Jesus operates under divine authority and can therefore command sickness to depart just as the centurion commands soldiers. The phrase hypo exousias ('under authority') is key — the centurion's power to command others derives from being under authority himself, and he perceives the same structure in Jesus's relationship to God.
10. The verb ethaumasēn ('was amazed, marveled') is striking — it is rarely used of Jesus and indicates genuine astonishment. That a Gentile soldier surpasses all of Israel in faith is a provocative claim that foreshadows the Gospel's movement toward Gentile inclusion. The solemn formula amēn legō hymin ('truly I tell you') marks what follows as a declaration of particular weight.
11. The image of reclining at table (anaklithēsontai) evokes the messianic banquet — an eschatological feast anticipated in Isaiah 25:6-8. 'From east and west' signifies Gentile nations streaming to participate in Israel's covenant blessings. The phrase 'kingdom of heaven' (basileia tōn ouranōn) is Matthew's characteristic expression, using 'heaven' as a reverential circumlocution for God.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 25:6-8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The 'sons of the kingdom' (huios tēs basileias) refers to those who would expect to inherit it by birthright — Israelites as covenant heirs. The reversal is stark: insiders become outsiders while outsiders enter. 'Outer darkness' (skotos to exōteron) contrasts with the illuminated banquet hall. 'Weeping and gnashing of teeth' (klathmos kai brygmōs tōn odontōn) is a recurring Matthean phrase for eschatological judgment (13:42, 13:50, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30).
13. The imperative genēthētō ('let it be done') echoes the divine creative commands of Genesis 1 (genēthētō in the Septuagint). Jesus's word alone accomplishes the healing at a distance, exactly as the centurion had trusted it would. The phrase en tē hōra ekeinē ('at that very hour') confirms the instantaneous, remote healing.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The detail that Peter had a mother-in-law (penthēr) confirms he was married (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:5). The perfect participle beblēmenē ('having been laid low') indicates she was bedridden. This domestic setting contrasts with the public healings that precede it.
15. The verb diēkonei ('was serving, ministering to') is from the same root as diakonos ('servant, deacon'). Her immediate service demonstrates complete restoration — not a gradual recovery but instant wholeness. Some manuscripts read autō ('him') while others read autois ('them'); the SBLGNT reads autō.
16. Evening (opsias genomenēs) marks the end of the Sabbath, after which people could travel and carry the sick. The phrase logō ('with a word') emphasizes that Jesus needed no rituals, incantations, or physical contact — his spoken command alone was sufficient. The word exebalen ('drove out, cast out') is forceful, depicting a violent expulsion.
17. Matthew quotes Isaiah 53:4, but applies it to physical healing rather than the vicarious suffering interpretation more common in later Christian theology. The Greek elaben ('took') and ebastasen ('carried, bore') suggest Jesus personally bore the weight of human illness. This is Matthew's

fourth fulfillment formula, connecting Jesus's healing ministry to the Isaianic Servant.

17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 53:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verb ekeleusen ('commanded, ordered') is a military term indicating authoritative direction, not a casual suggestion. 'The other side' (to peran) refers to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, predominantly Gentile territory. Jesus moves from Jewish to Gentile space.
19. The scribe addresses Jesus as didaskalos ('teacher'), not kyrios ('Lord') — a respectful but not confessional title. His pledge of unconditional loyalty is enthusiastic but untested. In Matthew's narrative, scribes are generally opponents; this one's offer stands out.
20. This is the first use of 'Son of Man' (ho huios tou anthrōpou) in Matthew. The title draws on Daniel 7:13-14, where 'one like a son of man' receives dominion, glory, and an everlasting kingdom. Jesus uses it to describe himself in radical vulnerability — the one destined for cosmic authority currently has less shelter than wild animals. The phrase ta peteina tou ouranou ('birds of the sky') uses ouranos, the same word translated 'heaven' elsewhere.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 7:13-14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Burying one's father was among the most sacred obligations in Jewish culture, taking precedence over virtually all other commandments. The request is not trivial — it invokes the deepest filial duty. Whether the father has just died or is elderly and the disciple is requesting a delayed commitment is debated; the urgency of Jesus's response suggests the latter.
22. Jesus's response is deliberately shocking. The phrase 'let the dead bury their own dead' uses 'dead' in two senses — the spiritually dead can attend to the physically dead. The demand places discipleship above the most fundamental family obligation, a radical claim that would have been deeply countercultural. The imperative akolouthei ('follow') is present tense, indicating ongoing commitment rather than a single act.
23. The verb akolouthēsan ('followed') is the same word used for discipleship throughout Matthew. Following Jesus into the boat is literal but also symbolic — the disciples follow him into danger and uncertainty.
24. Matthew uses seismos ('shaking, earthquake') rather than the expected lailaps ('storm, squall') that Mark uses. This word choice suggests cosmic upheaval, not merely bad weather — the same word is used for the earthquake at Jesus's death (27:54) and resurrection (28:2). Jesus sleeping through the chaos echoes Jonah 1:5 and contrasts with Psalm 121:4 ('he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep').
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jonah 1:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 121:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The cry sōson ('save') is the verbal form related to the noun sōtēria ('salvation') and the name Iesous ('the LORD saves'). In context it is a desperate plea for physical rescue, but Matthew's reader would hear the deeper resonance. The present tense apollymetha ('we are perishing, being destroyed') conveys ongoing, immediate danger.
26. The word oligopistoi ('you of little faith') is distinctively Matthean (6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8). It does not mean 'no faith' but insufficient, wavering faith. Jesus rebukes the disciples before calming the storm — the sequence is significant. The verb epetimēsen ('rebuked') is the same word used for commanding demons, treating the storm as a hostile force to be subdued. The phrase galēnē megalē ('great calm') mirrors seismos megas ('great storm'), creating a dramatic contrast.
27. The question potapos estin houtos ('what kind of man is this?') is left open — the narrative invites the reader to answer it. In the Old Testament, only God commands the sea (Psalm 89:9, 107:29; Job 38:8-11). The verb hypakouousin ('obey') is a compound of 'hear under' — the winds and sea submit to his authority as subordinates to a commander.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 89:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Job 38:8-11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The SBLGNT reads Gadarēnōn ('Gadarenes'), referring to the territory of Gadara, a city of the Decapolis about six miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee. Other manuscripts read 'Gergesenes' or 'Gerasenes.' Matthew has two demoniacs where Mark 5:2 and Luke 8:27 have one — this is not harmonized but rendered as Matthew presents it. The tombs (mnēmeiōn) were rock-cut burial caves, considered ritually unclean — the men inhabit a place of death and defilement.
29. The phrase ti hēmin kai soi ('what to us and to you') is a Semitic idiom meaning 'what business do we have with each other?' The demons address Jesus as 'Son of God' (huie tou theou) — the demonic realm recognizes his identity before most humans do. The phrase pro kairou ('before the time') reveals the demons' awareness of an appointed eschatological judgment, and their alarm that Jesus may be enacting it prematurely.
30. The presence of pigs confirms this is Gentile territory — pigs were unclean animals under Jewish law (Leviticus 11:7) and would not be kept in a Jewish region. The detail serves the narrative but also marks the cultural boundary Jesus has crossed.

30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 11:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. The conditional *ei ekballeis* ('if you cast us out') concedes Jesus's authority — the demons do not dispute his power to expel them but negotiate the terms. The verb *parekaloun* ('begged, urged') shows the complete reversal of power — the terrifying demonic forces that controlled two men and terrorized a region now beg for mercy from Jesus.
32. Jesus's single word *hypagete* ('go') is sufficient to command the entire demonic host — the same economy of speech demonstrated in the centurion episode. The verb *hōrmēsen* ('rushed, charged') describes a violent stampede. The destruction of the herd in the sea may echo the drowning of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea (Exodus 14-15) — chaotic evil forces destroyed in water.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 14-15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. The herdsmen's flight (*ephygon*) and subsequent report serve as witnesses to the event. The phrase *ta tōn daimonizomenōn* ('the things concerning the demon-possessed men') indicates they reported the men's liberation as well as the pigs' destruction.
34. The townspeople's response is the opposite of faith — rather than welcoming the one who freed two men from demonic torment, they ask him to leave. The verb *parekalesen* ('begged') is the same word the demons used in verse 31. The irony is pointed: both demons and townspeople want Jesus to go away. Fear of Jesus's disruptive power outweighs gratitude for his liberating power.

9

Summary: *Matthew 9 continues the miracle cycle with the healing of a paralytic (whose sins Jesus forgives first, provoking the scribes), the calling of Matthew the tax collector, debates with the Pharisees over eating with sinners, a question about fasting, the healing of a woman with a hemorrhage, the raising of a ruler's daughter, the healing of two blind men and a mute demoniac, and Jesus's compassion for the crowds described as sheep without a shepherd. The chapter culminates in Jesus's call for laborers for the harvest.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The paralytic narrative (vv. 1-8) is the first direct confrontation between Jesus and the religious authorities in Matthew. Jesus's claim to forgive sins provokes the charge of blasphemy — only God can forgive sins. Rather than retreating, Jesus escalates by using the visible miracle to validate the invisible one. The calling of Matthew (v. 9) is notable as the author's own call narrative. The 'new wine in old wineskins' saying (v. 17) signals that Jesus's ministry cannot be contained within existing religious structures.*

Translation Friction: *The ruler (archōn) in verse 18 is not named in Matthew, though Mark 5:22 identifies him as Jairus. We render Matthew's text without importing details from Mark. The interweaving of the hemorrhaging woman's healing within the Jairus narrative is a Markan sandwich that Matthew compresses significantly. The phrase 'Son of David' in verse 27 is a messianic title that the blind men use publicly.*

Connections: *The forgiveness of sins connects to the name 'Jesus' ('the LORD saves... from their sins,' 1:21). The call of Matthew connects to the theme of unexpected people entering the kingdom (8:11). The new wine/wineskins saying anticipates the new covenant theology. The harvest metaphor (vv. 37-38) sets up the mission discourse of chapter 10. The 'sheep without a shepherd' image echoes Numbers 27:17 and Ezekiel 34.*

1He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to his own town. 2Some people brought to him a paralyzed man lying on a stretcher. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, child — your sins are forgiven." 3At this, some of the scribes said among themselves, "This man is blaspheming." 4Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you harbor evil in your hearts? 5For which is easier — to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? 6But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — then he said to the paralytic — "Get up, pick up your stretcher, and go home." 7He got up and went home. 8When the crowds saw this, they were filled with awe and glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings. 9As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax booth. He said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. 10While Jesus was reclining at table in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were eating with him and his disciples. 11When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 12When he heard this, he said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 13Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I did not come to

call the righteous, but sinners." ¹⁴Then the disciples of John came to him, asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁵Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. ¹⁶No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear becomes worse. ¹⁷Nor do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins burst, the wine spills out, and the skins are ruined. Instead, they pour new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved." ¹⁸While he was saying these things to them, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died. But come and place your hand on her, and she will live." ¹⁹Jesus got up and followed him, and so did his disciples. ²⁰Just then a woman who had suffered from bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak. ²¹For she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." ²²Jesus turned and saw her. He said, "Take heart, daughter. Your faith has made you well." And the woman was healed from that moment. ²³When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd, ²⁴He stated to them, Give location — for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. Then they laughed him to scorn. ²⁵After the crowd had been sent outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. ²⁶And the report of this spread throughout that entire region. ²⁷As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" ²⁸When he entered the house, the blind men came to him. Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." ²⁹Then he touched their eyes, saying, "Let it be done for you according to your faith." ³⁰Their eyes were opened. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one finds out about this." ³¹But they went out and spread the news about him throughout that entire region. ³²As they were leaving, a demon-possessed man who was mute was brought to Jesus. ³³After the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowds were amazed, saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!" ³⁴But the Pharisees said, "He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons." ³⁵Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. ³⁸Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Jesus's 'own town' (tên idian polin) is Capernaum, his base of operations in Galilee (cf. 4:13), not Nazareth where he grew up. The crossing refers to returning from the eastern (Gentile) shore to the western (Jewish) shore of the Sea of Galilee.
2. Jesus responds to 'their faith' (tên pistin autōn) — the faith of those carrying the man, not only the paralytic's own faith. The first words are not 'be healed' but 'your sins are forgiven' (aphientai sou hai hamartiai), establishing that forgiveness is the deeper need. The present tense aphientai ('are forgiven') indicates an accomplished reality, not a future hope. The address teknon ('child') is tender, not condescending.
3. The charge of blasphemy (blasphēmei) is technically accurate by their reasoning — forgiving sins is a divine prerogative (Isaiah 43:25, 'I, I am he who blots out your transgressions'). The scribes reason silently (en heautois, 'within themselves'), which sets up Jesus's demonstration of knowing their thoughts.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 43:25 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The verb eidōs ('knowing') implies direct perception, not deduction — Jesus discerns their unspoken thoughts. The word enthymēseis ('thoughts, deliberations') comes from en + thymos ('in the passion/spirit'), suggesting these are not idle thoughts but deeply held convictions. The adjective ponēra ('evil, wicked') is strong — Jesus characterizes their reasoning as morally corrupt, not merely mistaken.
5. The question is rhetorically brilliant. Saying 'your sins are forgiven' is easier because it cannot be visibly verified or disproven; saying 'get up and walk' is harder because failure would be immediately public. Jesus will do the verifiable miracle to validate the unverifiable one.
6. The sentence breaks mid-thought (an anacoluthon): Jesus shifts from addressing the scribes to addressing the paralytic. The claim is staggering — the Son of Man possesses authority (exousian) on earth to forgive sins, which is functionally a claim to exercise divine prerogative. The phrase epi tēs gēs ('on earth') may emphasize that this heavenly authority is now operative in the earthly realm.
7. The brevity is striking — no fanfare, no extended description. The man who was carried in walks out. The simplicity of the Greek mirrors the effortlessness of the miracle.

8. The verb *ephobēthēsan* ('were afraid, were awed') conveys reverential fear, not mere admiration. The crowds glorify God rather than Jesus directly, and attribute the authority 'to human beings' (*tois anthrōpois*, plural) — they see Jesus as a divinely empowered human, not yet grasping the full implications of what they have witnessed. Matthew may intend the plural as a hint toward the church's future authority to pronounce forgiveness (cf. 18:18).
9. The *telōnion* ('tax booth, toll station') was where customs duties were collected, likely on goods passing through Capernaum along trade routes. Tax collectors (*telōnai*) were despised as collaborators with Rome and assumed to be corrupt. Jesus's two-word call (*akolouthei moi*, 'follow me') and Matthew's instant response (*anastas ēkolouthēsen*, 'getting up, he followed') mirror the call of the first disciples (4:18-22). The author's identification of himself as a tax collector is remarkably self-deprecating.
10. Table fellowship in the ancient world was a powerful social act — eating with someone signified acceptance and solidarity. The pairing 'tax collectors and sinners' (*telōnai kai hamartōloi*) was a standard phrase for social outcasts. The verb *synanekeinto* ('were reclining together') indicates a formal meal where diners reclined on couches, not a casual gathering.
11. The Pharisees address the disciples rather than Jesus directly, perhaps intending to undermine their confidence in him. The address 'your teacher' (*ho didaskalos hymōn*) is distancing — they do not call him 'teacher' themselves. Their objection is about ritual purity: eating with sinners could render one ritually contaminated.
12. Jesus overhears the Pharisees and responds directly with a proverbial saying. The metaphor reframes the situation: the Pharisees see sinners as sources of contamination, but Jesus sees them as patients in need of a physician. The implication is that Jesus's presence among sinners is therapeutic, not compromising.
13. Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6, a text he will cite again in 12:7. The phrase 'go and learn' (*poreuthentes mathete*) was a standard rabbinic formula used when sending students to study a passage more carefully — Jesus turns the Pharisees' own pedagogical language back on them. The Greek *eleos* ('mercy') translates the Hebrew *chesed* in Hosea 6:6. The SBLGNT does not include 'to repentance' (*eis metanoian*) after 'sinners,' which appears in some later manuscripts; we follow the critical text.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Hosea 6:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The question comes from John the Baptist's disciples, not the Pharisees — an important distinction. John's followers practiced ascetic discipline and would have expected Jesus's movement to do the same. The word *polla* ('often, much') appears in brackets in the SBLGNT, indicating manuscript uncertainty; we include it as it fits the context.
15. The phrase *huiōi tou nymphōnos* ('sons of the bridal chamber') is a Semitic idiom for wedding guests or attendants. Jesus casts himself as the bridegroom — an image rich with Old Testament associations where God is the husband of Israel (Hosea 2:19-20, Isaiah 54:5). The passive *aparthē* ('is taken away') contains a hint of violent removal, foreshadowing Jesus's death. Matthew uses *penthein* ('to mourn') where Mark has *nēsteuein* ('to fast'), linking fasting to grief.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Hosea 2:19-20 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 54:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The Greek *rhakous agnaphou* ('unshrunk cloth, unprocessed fabric') refers to cloth that has not been fulled or treated. When washed, it would shrink and tear away from the older, already-shrunk fabric. The metaphor is about incompatibility — Jesus's ministry cannot simply be patched onto existing religious frameworks.
17. New wine still fermenting would expand and burst brittle old wineskins (*askous*), but fresh, supple skins could accommodate the expansion. The parallel with verse 16 reinforces the point: Jesus's ministry requires new structures. The word *kainos* ('new, fresh') denotes qualitative newness, not merely chronological newness (*neos*). Matthew adds the note that 'both are preserved' (*amphoterōi syntērountai*), perhaps suggesting that the old is not destroyed but simply cannot contain the new.
18. Matthew uses *archōn* ('ruler, leader') without specifying the type, though the context indicates a synagogue official (Mark 5:22 names him Jairus). Matthew compresses Mark's account dramatically — in Mark, the girl is initially dying and dies during the encounter; in Matthew, she is already dead when the father arrives. The verb *prosekynēi* ('knelt before, worshipped') again carries the ambiguity of reverence or worship. The father's faith is remarkable: he believes Jesus can raise the dead.
19. The verb *ēkolouthēsen* ('followed') is notable when applied to Jesus — throughout Matthew, others follow Jesus. Here Jesus follows the father, indicating willingness to respond to faith-filled requests.
20. The participle *haimorroousa* ('suffering from a flow of blood') indicates a chronic hemorrhagic condition. Under Levitical law (Leviticus 15:25-30), this rendered her perpetually unclean and socially isolated — anyone she touched would also become unclean. The *kraspedon* ('fringe, tassel, border') likely refers to the *tzitzit*, the tassels worn on the corners of a garment in obedience to Numbers 15:38-39. Her approach from behind suggests both reverence and the social shame of her condition.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 15:25-30 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 15:38-39 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** The verb *sōthēsomai* ('I will be saved/healed') is the same root as *sōzō* ('to save'), connecting physical healing to the broader salvation vocabulary. Her internal reasoning (*en heautē*) reveals faith: she believes that even indirect, unauthorized contact with Jesus's garment will be sufficient.
- 22.** Jesus addresses her as *thygatēr* ('daughter') — a term of familial affection that publicly restores her to community after twelve years of isolation. The perfect tense *sesōken* ('has saved/healed') indicates a completed action with lasting results. Matthew compresses the account significantly compared to Mark 5:25-34, omitting the crowd dynamics and the woman's trembling confession. The phrase *apo tēs hōras ekeinēs* ('from that hour') echoes 8:13.
- 23.** The *aulētas* ('flute players') were professional mourners hired for funerals. The Mishnah (*Ketubot* 4:4) specifies that even the poorest family should hire at least two flute players and one wailing woman for a funeral. Their presence confirms the girl is genuinely dead, not merely ill.
- 24.** Jesus's statement that the girl 'is sleeping' (*kathendei*) has been interpreted either as a literal claim that she was unconscious (not dead), or as a metaphor for death in light of resurrection (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, John 11:11). The mourners' derisive laughter (*kategelōn*) — they who had just been weeping — suggests they knew she was dead and found his statement absurd.
- 25.** The passive *exelēthē* ('was put out') uses the same verb as casting out demons (*ekballō*), suggesting the mourners were forcibly removed. Matthew's account is remarkably compressed — Mark 5:41 includes Jesus's Aramaic words 'Talitha koum,' which Matthew omits. The verb *ēgerthē* ('she got up/was raised') is the same word used for resurrection throughout the New Testament.
- 26.** The noun *phēmē* ('report, news, fame') indicates that despite Jesus's frequent commands to silence, word spread. The phrase *holēn tēn gēn ekeinēn* ('all that land/region') likely refers to the surrounding area of Galilee, not the entire country.
- 27.** The title 'Son of David' (*huios Dauid*) is a messianic designation — the expected Davidic king was believed to have healing powers (based on traditions about Solomon as healer and exorcist). That blind men recognize Jesus as Messiah while the sighted religious leaders do not is deeply ironic. The verb *eleēson* ('have mercy') is an urgent plea that becomes the basis of the later Christian 'Kyrie eleison' prayer.
- 28.** Jesus delays the healing until they reach the house, testing their persistence and faith. The question *pisteuete* ('do you believe?') makes explicit what was implicit in the centurion and hemorrhaging woman episodes — faith is the prerequisite. Their simple affirmation *nai kyrie* ('yes, Lord') combines belief in Jesus's ability with acknowledgment of his authority.
- 29.** The phrase *kata tēn pistin hymōn genēthētō hymin* ('let it be done for you according to your faith') echoes the centurion episode (8:13). The imperative *genēthētō* again recalls the creative commands of Genesis. Jesus's healings are not arbitrary displays of power but responses to faith.
- 30.** The verb *enebrimēthē* ('sternly warned, was deeply moved/angered') is an intense word — it conveys emotional force, perhaps even agitation. The command to secrecy (the 'messianic secret') appears throughout the Gospels. Jesus's reasons may include avoiding premature political messianic fervor and maintaining control over his public identity.
- 31.** The verb *diephēmisān* ('spread the news, made widely known') is emphatic — they did precisely what Jesus told them not to do. Their disobedience is understandable (they can now see) but complicates Jesus's ministry by increasing crowds and public expectations.
- 32.** The adjective *kōphon* can mean 'mute,' 'deaf,' or both. In this context, where the man speaks after the demon is expelled (v. 33), 'mute' is the primary meaning. The man is brought by others — his condition prevents him from seeking Jesus himself.
- 33.** The crowd's declaration *oudepote ephanē houtōs en tō Israēl* ('never has such a thing appeared in Israel') is a superlative claim — not even the prophets or Moses performed such acts. This sets up the Pharisees' counter-interpretation in the next verse.
- 34.** The Pharisees attribute Jesus's power to the *archonti tōn daimoniōn* ('the ruler of the demons') — later identified as Beelzebul (12:24). Unable to deny the miracles, they reinterpret their source. This accusation will receive a full rebuttal in chapter 12. The same evidence (exorcism) produces opposite conclusions depending on the observer's posture toward Jesus.
- 35.** This summary verse nearly duplicates 4:23, creating an *inclusio* that frames the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5-7) and miracle cycle (chs. 8-9) as a unified demonstration of Jesus's ministry. The three activities — teaching, proclaiming, healing — represent the fullness of his work. The phrase *to euangelion tēs basileias* ('the good news of the kingdom') is distinctively Matthean.
- 36.** The verb *esplanchnisthē* ('was moved with compassion') derives from *splanchna* ('entrails, inner organs') — it describes a visceral, gut-level emotional response, the deepest compassion possible. The participles *eskulmenoi* ('harassed, troubled, weary') and *errimmenoi* ('thrown down, helpless, cast aside') paint a picture of a people battered and abandoned. The shepherd image echoes Numbers 27:17, where Moses asks God to appoint a leader so Israel will not be 'like sheep without a shepherd,' and Ezekiel 34, where God condemns Israel's failed shepherds.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 27:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 34. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 37.** The metaphor shifts from shepherding to harvesting. The harvest (*therismos*) is an eschatological image — the gathering of people into God's kingdom. The contrast between 'plentiful' (*polys*) and 'few' (*oligoi*) creates urgency. Jesus sees the crowds not as a burden but as a ripe harvest

awaiting workers.

- 38.** The verb *ekbalē* ('send out, thrust out') is surprisingly strong — the same word used for casting out demons. God does not gently invite workers; he thrusts them out into the harvest. The 'Lord of the harvest' (*tou kyriou tou therismou*) is God, who owns the harvest and dispatches the laborers. This prayer request immediately precedes chapter 10, where Jesus himself sends out the Twelve — the prayer is answered in the next scene.

10

Summary: *Matthew 10 records Jesus's commissioning of the twelve apostles for their first mission. He names all twelve, instructs them to go only to 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' grants them authority over demons and diseases, gives detailed instructions about provisions, hospitality, and persecution, warns that following him will bring division — even within families — and concludes with promises of reward for those who receive them. This is the second of Matthew's five major discourses.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The discourse moves seamlessly from the immediate Galilean mission to language about persecution before governors and kings (v. 18), the coming of the Son of Man (v. 23), and being acknowledged before the Father in heaven (v. 32-33). This telescoping suggests Matthew compiled sayings from different occasions into a single discourse. The repeated command 'do not fear' (vv. 26, 28, 31) structures the middle section. The radical claim that Jesus brings 'not peace but a sword' (v. 34) and the demand to love him above family (v. 37) represent some of the most challenging statements in the Gospels.*

Translation Friction: *The restriction to Israel (vv. 5-6) stands in tension with the Great Commission's universal scope (28:19). We render the text as given, noting the narrative development. The list of apostles varies slightly across the Gospels in name order and in some cases name forms. We follow the SBLGNT text. The phrase 'Son of Man' is capitalized as a title throughout.*

Connections: *The mission charge echoes Moses commissioning Joshua and Elijah commissioning Elisha. The 'lost sheep of the house of Israel' language connects to Ezekiel 34 and Jesus's shepherd compassion in 9:36. The warnings about persecution anticipate the Olivet Discourse (ch. 24-25). The family division sayings echo Micah 7:6, which Jesus explicitly quotes. The promise about sparrows and numbered hairs (vv. 29-31) connects to God's providential care throughout the Old Testament.*

¹He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to drive them out and to heal every disease and every sickness. ²Now the names of the twelve messengers are these. The foremost, Simon, who is known as Peter, and Andrew his brother. James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother. ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. ⁵Jesus sent out these twelve, instructing them: "Do not go on the road to the Gentiles, and do not enter any town of the Samaritans, ⁶However, go rather to the lost sheep of the home of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' ⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with skin diseases, drive out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. ⁹Do not acquire gold or silver or copper for your money belts, ¹⁰Nor scrip since your journey, and not two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves — for the workman is worthy of his meat. ¹¹Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. ¹²As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³If the house is worthy, let your peace rest on it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴If anyone does not receive you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet as you leave that house or town. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town. ¹⁶Look, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. ¹⁷Be on guard against people, for they will hand you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues. ¹⁸You will be brought before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹When they hand you over, do not worry about how to speak or what to say, for what you are to say will be given to you at that time. ²⁰For it is not you who are speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ²¹Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise up against parents and

have them put to death. ²²You will be hated by everyone because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ²³When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next. For truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. ²⁴A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a servant above the master. ²⁵It is enough for the disciple to become like the teacher, and the servant like the master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household! ²⁶So do not be afraid of them. For there is nothing covered that will not be uncovered, and nothing hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰Even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows. ³²Therefore everyone who acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. ³³But whoever denies me before others, I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven. ³⁴Do not think that I came to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵For I came to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. ³⁶A person's enemies will be members of his own household. ³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ⁴⁰Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever receives a righteous person because he is righteous will receive a righteous person's reward. ⁴²And whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple — truly I tell you, that person will by no means lose his reward."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *proskalesamenos* ('having summoned') indicates a formal calling together, not a casual gathering. The authority (*exousia*) Jesus delegates is the same authority he himself exercises in chapters 8-9. The phrase *pneumatōn akathartōn* ('unclean spirits') echoes the Old Testament purity language — these spirits make people ritually and morally defiled.
2. This is the only place Matthew uses the term *apostolōn* ('apostles,' literally 'sent ones'). The designation *prōtos* ('first') for Simon Peter indicates rank, not merely sequence — Peter consistently holds primacy in all apostolic lists. The pairs reflect the calling narratives of 4:18-22.
3. Matthew identifies himself as 'the tax collector' (*ho telōnēs*) — a self-deprecating label that no one else in the list receives. The SBLGNT reads *Thaddaios* where the KJV has 'Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus.' Luke's list has 'Judas the son of James' in this position, possibly the same person under a different name.
4. The term *Kananaios* is not 'Canaanite' (an ethnic designation) but an Aramaic equivalent of *zēlōtēs* ('zealot'), indicating either membership in the Zealot movement or zealous temperament. Rendering as 'the Zealot' follows Luke 6:15 and clarifies the meaning. Judas is listed last with the damning participle *paradous* ('the one who handed over, betrayed'). The name *Iskariōtēs* may derive from Hebrew *ish-Kerioth* ('man of Kerioth'), a town in Judea.
5. The restriction *eis hodon ethnōn* ('onto a road of Gentiles') limits the mission to Jewish territory. This is not ethnic prejudice but strategic priority — the message goes 'to the Jew first' (cf. Romans 1:16). The separate mention of Samaritans acknowledges their intermediate status, neither fully Jewish nor Gentile. This restriction is explicitly lifted in the Great Commission (28:19).
6. The phrase *ta probata ta apolōlota* ('the lost sheep') echoes Ezekiel 34:4-6, where God condemns Israel's leaders for failing to seek the lost, scattered sheep. Jesus sends his disciples to do what Israel's shepherds failed to do. The genitive *oikou Israēl* ('of the house of Israel') limits the scope but the compassion language is universal.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 34:4-6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The disciples' message is identical to John the Baptist's (3:2) and Jesus's own (4:17): *ēggiken hē basileia tōn ouranōn*. The perfect tense *ēggiken* indicates that the kingdom has drawn near and remains near — it is not merely approaching but arriving. The verb *kēryssete* ('proclaim') denotes public, authoritative announcement.
8. The four commands mirror Jesus's own miracle types from chapters 8-9. The phrase *dōrean elabete, dōrean dote* ('freely you received, freely give') establishes the principle of gratuitous ministry — the grace they have received must be passed on without charge. The word *dōrean* means 'as a gift, without cost,' from the same root as *dōron* ('gift').

9. The three metals — gold (chryson), silver (argyron), copper (chalkon) — represent a descending scale of value, emphasizing total financial dependence. The zōnas ('belts, girdles') had folds used as purses. The verb ktēsēthe ('acquire, obtain') prohibits accumulating resources for the journey.
10. The pēran ('bag, knapsack') was a traveler's provision bag. The prohibition of extra clothing and a staff forces radical dependence on hospitality. The principle axios gar ho ergatēs tēs trophēs autou ('the worker deserves his food') is quoted by Paul in 1 Timothy 5:18. The logic: they should not stockpile because the communities they serve are obligated to support them.
11. The verb exetasate ('find out, inquire carefully') implies a deliberate search for a reputable host. 'Worthy' (axios) here means receptive to the message. The instruction to stay in one house (rather than moving to better accommodations) prevents the appearance of opportunism.
12. The greeting (aspasasthe) would have been the standard Jewish blessing of peace — 'Shalom aleichem' ('peace be upon you'). The command to greet 'the house' (tēn oikian) rather than 'the household' treats the home as a unit that receives or rejects the blessing.
13. The 'peace' (eirēnē, corresponding to Hebrew shalom) is treated as a substantial reality that can be bestowed, rest upon a place, or be recalled — not merely a polite wish. The concept of blessing as a tangible force that can be directed and returned reflects the Hebrew understanding of the power of spoken words.
14. Shaking dust from the feet (ektinaxate ton koniorton tōn podōn) was a gesture Jews performed when leaving Gentile territory, symbolically removing pagan contamination. Applied to Jewish towns that reject the message, it declares those towns equivalent to pagan lands — a shocking symbolic act.
15. Sodom and Gomorrah were the ultimate biblical symbols of divine judgment (Genesis 19). Jesus's comparison is deliberately extreme — towns that reject the gospel message face a more severe accounting than those cities destroyed by fire, because they have received a greater revelation and refused it.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The combination of animal metaphors is deliberately paradoxical — sheep (vulnerable), wolves (predatory), serpents (cunning), doves (gentle). The word phronimoi ('shrewd, wise, prudent') carries positive connotations of practical wisdom, not deception. The word akeraioi ('innocent, pure, unmixed') literally means 'unmixed' — without admixture of evil. The disciples need both qualities simultaneously.
17. The synedria ('councils, courts') refers to local Jewish judicial bodies. The verb mastigōsousin ('will flog') refers to the synagogue punishment of lashing (up to thirty-nine strokes, cf. 2 Corinthians 11:24). The phrase 'their synagogues' (tais synagōgais autōn) suggests a growing separation between Jesus's movement and the synagogue — language that may reflect Matthew's own community situation.
18. The scope expands beyond the immediate mission to encompass Roman governors (hēgemonas) and kings (basileis), anticipating Paul's trials and the broader post-resurrection mission. The phrase eis martyriōn ('as a testimony') could mean 'testimony to' (evangelistic opportunity) or 'testimony against' (judicial evidence). The ambiguity is preserved.
19. The verb merimnēsēte ('worry, be anxious') is the same word Jesus used in the Sermon on the Mount (6:25-34). The divine passive dothēsetai ('will be given') indicates God as the source of their words. This is not a promise about improvisation but about divine provision under pressure.
20. The phrase to pneuma tou patros hymōn ('the Spirit of your Father') is distinctively Matthean — Mark 13:11 has 'the Holy Spirit.' Matthew's formulation emphasizes the familial relationship: the Spirit who empowers their testimony belongs to the Father who cares for them.
21. The escalation from religious persecution (vv. 17-18) to family betrayal is jarring. The verb paradōsei ('will hand over, betray') is the same word used for Judas's betrayal of Jesus. The family breakdown described here echoes Micah 7:6, which Jesus will quote explicitly in verse 35-36.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Micah 7:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The phrase dia to onoma mou ('because of my name') indicates that persecution comes specifically from identification with Jesus — his name is the cause. The promise ho de hypomeinas eis telos sōthēsetai ('the one who endures to the end will be saved') uses the verb hypomenō, which means to remain under pressure rather than flee from it. Salvation is promised not to those who escape suffering but to those who persist through it.
23. This is one of the most debated verses in Matthew. The statement ou mē telesēte tas poleis tou Israēl ('you will not finish the cities of Israel') before the Son of Man comes has been interpreted variously: as referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, to the transfiguration, to the resurrection, to the ongoing mission of the church, or to the second coming. The double negative ou mē with the subjunctive is the strongest form of negation in Greek. We render the text without imposing a specific interpretation.
24. This proverb establishes the principle that disciples should expect no better treatment than their teacher received. The parallel structure mathētēs/didaskalon and doulos/kyrion reinforces the point. If Jesus himself faces rejection and persecution, his followers cannot expect exemption.
25. The argument moves from principle to application: if they called Jesus 'Beelzebul' (the accusation noted in 9:34 and expanded in 12:24), his disciples will receive worse. The name Beelzeboul likely derives from Hebrew ba'al zevul ('lord of the dwelling') — a mocking name for the prince of demons. The wordplay is rich: the oikodespotēs ('master of the house') is called 'lord of the dwelling' (Beelzebul), and his oikiakoi ('household members') share his reputation.

- 26.** The first of three 'do not fear' commands (vv. 26, 28, 31) that structure this section. The promise that all hidden things will be revealed (apokalyphthēsetai, from which 'apocalypse' derives) reassures persecuted disciples that the truth about their faithfulness and their persecutors' injustice will ultimately be exposed.
- 27.** The contrast between private instruction ('in the dark,' 'whispered into the ear') and public proclamation ('in the light,' 'from the housetops') indicates that Jesus's private teaching to the disciples is meant for public dissemination. The flat rooftops of Palestinian houses served as gathering places and announcement platforms.
- 28.** The second 'do not fear' command. The distinction between sōma ('body') and psychē ('soul') here reflects the belief that human identity has a dimension that persecutors cannot reach. Geenna (Gehenna) refers to the Valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem, which had associations with child sacrifice (2 Kings 23:10) and became a symbol of divine judgment. We transliterate 'Gehenna' rather than using the interpretive 'hell' to preserve the specific geographic and theological reference.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Kings 23:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** The assarion was a Roman copper coin worth about one-sixteenth of a denarius — the cheapest available currency. Sparrows (strouthia) were the least valuable birds sold in the market. The phrase aneu tou patros hymōn ('apart from your Father') is striking in its brevity — it does not say 'without your Father's knowledge' or 'permission' but simply 'apart from your Father,' implying total divine involvement in even the most insignificant events.
- 30.** The perfect passive ērithmēmenai ('having been counted') indicates a completed action — God has already counted every hair. The argument moves from lesser to greater: if God attends to sparrows (nearly worthless) and to hairs (individually insignificant), how much more to the whole person.
- 31.** The third and climactic 'do not fear' command. The verb diapherete ('are worth more, surpass, differ from') establishes the basis for courage: the disciples' value to God exceeds that of the sparrows he already attends to.
- 32.** The verb homologēsō ('will acknowledge, confess') means to publicly declare allegiance. The phrase en emoi ('in me') suggests more than verbal acknowledgment — it implies union with Jesus. Jesus claims to serve as advocate or witness before the Father, placing himself in a role of cosmic juridical authority.
- 33.** The verb arnēsētai ('denies, disowns') is the opposite of homologeō. The parallel structure creates a solemn either/or with no middle ground. This saying gains poignancy in light of Peter's later denial (26:69-75) and subsequent restoration.
- 34.** The verb balein ('to throw, cast') is more forceful than 'send' — Jesus throws down a sword, not peace. The machairan ('sword') here is not literal military violence but a metaphor for the division his message creates. The statement is deliberately provocative, contradicting expectations of the Messiah as a prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6). Jesus describes the effect of his mission: allegiance to him will cut through existing social bonds.
- 34.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 9:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 35.** The verb dichasai ('to divide, to turn against') describes Jesus's purpose in terms that echo Micah 7:6. The list moves through three family pairs, each representing a generational division. These are the closest family bonds in ancient Near Eastern culture — their rupture represents the most radical possible social disruption.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Micah 7:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** This is a direct quotation of Micah 7:6 (LXX). In Micah, the passage describes the social breakdown of Judah before divine restoration. Jesus applies it to the effect of his own mission — loyalty to him will create enmity within families. The word oikiakoi ('household members') connects to the oikodespotēs ('head of the house') language in verse 25.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Micah 7:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 37.** The verb philōn ('loving') here denotes natural family affection. Jesus does not prohibit loving family but demands that loyalty to him take precedence over the deepest human bonds. The repeated phrase ouk estin mou axios ('is not worthy of me') frames the demand as a question of worthiness for discipleship. Luke's parallel (14:26) uses the stronger 'hate' (miseō); Matthew's 'more than me' (hyper eme) may soften the expression.
- 38.** This is the first mention of the cross (stauron) in Matthew's Gospel. For Jesus's original audience, crucifixion was a Roman method of executing slaves, rebels, and non-citizens — the most shameful death imaginable. The condemned person carried the crossbeam (patibulum) to the execution site. The metaphor means accepting suffering, shame, and potentially death as the cost of following Jesus.
- 39.** The word psychē ('soul, life, self') means both physical life and one's total existence/identity. The paradox operates on both levels: clinging to self-preservation leads to ultimate loss, while surrendering life for Jesus's sake leads to ultimate gain. The phrase heneken emou ('for my sake') is the distinguishing factor — not all loss is redemptive, only loss incurred through loyalty to Jesus.
- 40.** The chain of reception — disciples, Jesus, the Father — establishes the principle of agency: to receive the messenger is to receive the sender. This concept is rooted in the Jewish shaliah principle, where an authorized agent carries the full authority of the one who sends him. The verb dechomenos ('receives, welcomes') implies hospitality and acceptance of both person and message.

41. The phrase *eis onoma prophētou* ('in the name of a prophet') means 'because of his identity as a prophet' — the host shares in the reward because the hospitality is an act of faith in the prophet's mission. The principle extends to righteous people generally. Reward (*misthon*) in Matthew's Gospel is not wage-earning but gracious divine recompense.
42. The climax moves from prophets to righteous people to 'little ones' (*mikrōn*, the least and most vulnerable). The gift is reduced to its minimum — a cup of cold water (*potērion psychrou*) — yet even this smallest act of kindness to a disciple will be rewarded. The double negative *ou mē* ('by no means') provides emphatic assurance. The phrase 'these little ones' anticipates 18:6, 10, 14, where it becomes a major theme.

11

Summary: *Matthew 11 marks a turning point in the Gospel. John the Baptist, now imprisoned, sends disciples to ask whether Jesus is 'the one who is to come.' Jesus responds by pointing to his deeds, then delivers a eulogy for John as the greatest born of women yet less than the least in the kingdom of heaven. He denounces the unrepentant cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, then delivers one of the most intimate prayers in the Gospels, thanking the Father for revealing truth to 'little children' rather than the wise. The chapter climaxes with the great invitation: 'Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *John's question from prison (v. 3) is striking — the one who declared Jesus the 'Lamb of God' now appears to doubt. Jesus's response does not rebuke but redirects: look at the evidence. The woe oracles against Galilean cities (vv. 20-24) are shocking because these are Jewish cities that witnessed Jesus's miracles firsthand. The mutual knowledge between Father and Son (v. 27) is one of the highest christological statements in the Synoptic Gospels, approaching Johannine theology. The invitation of vv. 28-30 uses the metaphor of a yoke — a rabbinic term for Torah obedience — and claims that Jesus's yoke is easy and his burden light.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'the kingdom of heaven suffers violence' (v. 12) is notoriously difficult in Greek. The verb *biazetai* could be passive ('is being violently attacked') or middle ('is forcefully advancing'), and *biastai* ('violent ones') could be opponents who attack or passionate seekers who seize it. We render the ambiguity and note the options. The citation of Isaiah in vv. 4-5 is a composite from multiple passages.*

Connections: *John's question connects to his announcement in 3:11-12. The works Jesus cites (vv. 4-5) echo Isaiah 35:5-6, 61:1. The judgment on cities connects to the Sodom and Gomorrah language of 10:15. The Father-Son revelation passage (v. 27) anticipates the Great Commission's 'all authority' (28:18). The yoke invitation echoes Sirach 51:23-27 and reinterprets the Wisdom tradition.*

¹When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their towns. ²When John heard in prison about the works of the Christ, he sent word through his disciples ³Stated to him, Art you he that should come, or do we look for another? ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those with skin diseases are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news proclaimed to them. ⁶And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." ⁷As they were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? Look, those who wear fine clothes are found in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you — and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written: 'Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' ¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one greater than John the Baptist has appeared. Yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹²From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people are seizing it. ¹³For every one of the prophets and the law prophesied until John. ¹⁴And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵Whoever has ears, let them hear. ¹⁶To what should I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: ¹⁷'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a funeral song, and you did not mourn.' ¹⁸He has a devil, for John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say. ¹⁹The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is vindicated by her deeds." ²⁰Then he began to denounce the towns where most of his miracles had been performed, because

they did not repent: ²¹"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. ²³And you, Capernaum — will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the miracles performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴But I tell you, it will be more bearable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgment than for you." ²⁵At that time Jesus declared, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to little children. ²⁶Yes, Father, for this was your gracious will. ²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. ²⁸Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰My yoke is not heavy, and what I ask you to carry is light.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The formula *kai egeneto hote etelesen* ('and it happened when he finished') is one of Matthew's five discourse-ending formulas (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1), structuring the Gospel around five major teaching blocks. The phrase *en tais poleisin autōn* ('in their towns') is ambiguous — 'their' could refer to the disciples' towns or the people's towns. We follow the more natural reading of the surrounding towns.
2. Matthew refers to *ta erga tou Christou* ('the works of the Christ'), using the title with the article — 'the Christ,' the Messiah. John is in prison (*desmōtēriō*) under Herod Antipas, as explained later in 14:3-12. That John hears about Jesus's works but sends to question him suggests a gap between what he expected of the Messiah and what Jesus is doing.
3. The title *ho erchomenos* ('the coming one') is a messianic designation drawn from Psalm 118:26 ('Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD') and Malachi 3:1. The question is not necessarily about doubt in Jesus's identity but possibly about the nature of his messiahship — John expected a figure who would baptize 'with fire' and judgment (3:11-12), but Jesus's ministry has been characterized by compassion and healing.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 118:26 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Malachi 3:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Jesus does not give a direct yes or no but points to evidence — his deeds speak for themselves. The verbs *akouete kai blepete* ('you hear and see') are present tense, directing them to what is happening right now around them.
5. This list combines Isaiah 35:5-6 (blind, deaf, lame) with Isaiah 61:1 (good news to the poor) and adds lepers and the dead. Each item corresponds to miracles already narrated in Matthew 8-9. The final item — *ptōchoi euaggelizontai* ('the poor are evangelized') — is climactic: the ultimate messianic sign is not spectacular power but that the marginalized receive God's message.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 35:5-6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 61:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The verb *skandalisthē* ('is caused to stumble, is offended') carries the sense of a trap or snare — something that causes one to trip and fall away from faith. The gentle warning is directed at John: blessed is the person who can accept a Messiah who does not match expectations. The beatitude form (*makarios*, 'blessed') echoes the Sermon on the Mount.
7. Jesus defends John's significance with three rhetorical questions (vv. 7-9). The 'reed shaken by the wind' (*kalamon hypo anemou saleuomenon*) may be a political reference — Herod Antipas used a reed as his symbol on coins minted at his capital Tiberias. If so, Jesus is asking: did you go to see someone who bends to Herod's authority? The answer is clearly no.
8. The contrast between John's rough desert existence and the luxury of royal courts is pointed. The word *malakois* ('soft things') refers to expensive, luxurious garments. The implicit comparison with Herod's court — where John is now imprisoned — carries ironic force.
9. The third question answers itself and escalates: John is not merely a prophet but *perissoteron prophētou* ('more than a prophet'). The comparative form sets John above the entire prophetic tradition. What makes him 'more' is explained in the next verse.
10. The quotation combines Exodus 23:20 and Malachi 3:1, with a significant modification: Malachi's 'before me' becomes 'before you,' making Jesus the one whose way is prepared. The word *aggelon* ('messenger') is the same word translated 'angel' in other contexts. John is God's messenger who prepares the way for the Lord's arrival — a role that exceeds ordinary prophetic function.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Malachi 3:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 23:20 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The phrase *en gennētois gynaikōn* ('among those born of women') encompasses all humanity. The paradox is sharp: John is the greatest human who ever lived, yet the least person in the kingdom of heaven surpasses him. This is not a diminishment of John but an elevation of the kingdom — the new era Jesus inaugurates transcends even the greatest achievements of the old. The comparative *mikroteros* ('lesser, least') could also be translated 'the younger one,' possibly referring to Jesus himself.
12. This is one of the most disputed verses in the New Testament. The verb *biazetai* can be middle voice ('is forcefully advancing') or passive ('is being violently attacked'). The *biastai* ('violent ones') can be positive (passionate seekers who forcefully lay hold of the kingdom) or negative (opponents who assault it). The passive/negative reading is adopted here because it fits the context of John's imprisonment and the opposition Jesus faces, but the alternative reading is well attested. Luke 16:16 has a clearly positive version: 'everyone forces their way into it.'
13. The unusual order 'the Prophets and the Law' (rather than the standard 'Law and Prophets') may emphasize the prophetic, forward-looking character of the entire Old Testament. The statement that prophecy extended 'until John' (*heōs Iōannou*) positions John at the hinge between the old era and the new — he is both the last of the old prophets and the first voice of the new age.
14. The identification of John with Elijah fulfills Malachi 4:5 ('I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD'). The qualification *ei thelete dexasthai* ('if you are willing to accept it') acknowledges that this identification requires faith — it is not self-evident. Jesus does not mean that John is literally Elijah reincarnated but that he fulfills Elijah's prophetic role.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Malachi 4:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. This refrain (repeated in 13:9, 43) signals that what has just been said requires spiritual perception, not merely physical hearing. The distinction between hearing sound and understanding meaning runs throughout Jesus's teaching.
16. Jesus introduces a parable comparing 'this generation' (*tēn genean tautēn*) — a term of disapproval throughout Matthew — to petulant children in the marketplace. The agora was the town square where children would play. The image is of children who refuse to participate in any game their peers suggest.
17. The children's complaint describes two games refused: a wedding game (flute playing, dancing) and a funeral game (mourning songs, beating the breast). The point is that 'this generation' refuses to respond no matter what approach is used — they are determined not to participate.
18. John's ascetic lifestyle (fasting, desert living, restricted diet) is dismissed as demonic possession rather than recognized as prophetic discipline. The phrase *mēte esthiōn mēte pinōn* ('neither eating nor drinking') is hyperbolic — he ate and drank but not in normal social settings.
19. Jesus's social engagement at meals (eating and drinking) is dismissed as excess — the opposite accusation from that leveled at John. The terms *phagos* ('glutton') and *oinopotēs* ('drunkard') echo Deuteronomy 21:20, the charge against a rebellious son worthy of death. The closing proverb *edikaiōthē hē sophia apo tōn ergōn autēs* ('wisdom is vindicated by her deeds') personifies wisdom (as in Proverbs 8) and suggests that the results of both John's and Jesus's ministries will ultimately prove them right. The SBLGNT reads 'deeds' (*ergōn*) where Luke 7:35 has 'children' (*teknōn*).
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 21:20. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Proverbs 8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The verb *oneidizein* ('to reproach, denounce') is strong language — public shaming. The noun *dynameis* ('mighty works, miracles') refers to the healings and exorcisms of chapters 8-9. The cause of the denunciation is not that they rejected his miracles but that they failed to repent (*metanoēsan*) — the miracles were intended to produce a turning of heart and life.
21. The woe oracle (*ouai*) is a prophetic form of lament-judgment found throughout the Old Testament prophets. Chorazin and Bethsaida are Galilean towns near Capernaum. Tyre and Sidon were Phoenician coastal cities that the prophets condemned for pride and wickedness (Isaiah 23, Ezekiel 26-28). Jesus's comparison is devastating: pagan cities would have responded more faithfully than these Jewish towns.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 23. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 26-28. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The comparative *anektoteron* ('more bearable, more tolerable') implies degrees of judgment — greater privilege brings greater accountability. The 'day of judgment' (*hēmera kriseōs*) is the eschatological reckoning.
23. Capernaum, Jesus's own base of operations, receives the harshest judgment. The language echoes Isaiah 14:13-15, originally addressed to the king of Babylon. The contrast between heaven (*ouranon*) and Hades (*hadou*) represents the extremes of exaltation and humiliation. Hades (*hadēs*) is the Greek equivalent of Hebrew *Sheol*, the realm of the dead — not 'hell' in the later Christian sense but the place of departed spirits. The claim about Sodom — the most judged city in biblical history — surpasses even the Tyre/Sidon comparison.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 14:13-15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

- 24.** The progression Tyre/Sidon (v. 22) to Sodom (v. 24) intensifies the judgment — each comparison city is more notorious than the last. Capernaum's judgment exceeds even Sodom's because its privilege was greater.
- 25.** The verb *exomologoumai* ('I praise, I thank, I confess') introduces a prayer of startling intimacy after the preceding judgment oracles. Jesus addresses God as *pater* ('Father') and *kyrie tou ouranou kai tēs gēs* ('Lord of heaven and earth'). The paradox is that divine revelation bypasses the *sophōn kai synetōn* ('wise and intelligent') — those with religious expertise — and is given to *nēpiois* ('infants, little children') — those without status or credentials. This is not anti-intellectualism but a statement about the posture required to receive revelation.
- 26.** The phrase *eudokia egeneto emprosthen sou* ('it was well-pleasing before you') is a Semitic construction meaning 'this was your deliberate, delighted purpose.' The word *eudokia* ('good pleasure, gracious will') indicates not arbitrary choice but purposeful delight. Jesus affirms the Father's sovereign decision as both right and good.
- 27.** This verse is often called 'a bolt from the Johannine blue' because its mutual knowledge language (the Father knows the Son, the Son knows the Father) resembles the Fourth Gospel more than the Synoptics. The verb *epiginōskei* ('knows fully, recognizes deeply') indicates intimate, relational knowledge, not mere intellectual awareness. The claim that all things (*panta*) have been delivered to Jesus by the Father anticipates 28:18 ('all authority'). The Son's role as sole revealer of the Father places him in a position of unique mediatorial authority.
- 28.** This invitation is one of the most beloved passages in the New Testament. The participle *kopiōntes* ('laboring, toiling to exhaustion') and the perfect participle *pephortismenoi* ('having been loaded down, burdened') describe people crushed under weight — likely the burden of religious obligation as enforced by the scribes and Pharisees (cf. 23:4). The promise *anapausō hymas* ('I will give you rest') echoes God's promise of rest in Exodus 33:14 and the Sabbath rest of creation. Jesus offers himself — not a system, not a set of rules — as the source of rest.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 33:14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** The 'yoke' (*zygon*) was a standard rabbinic metaphor for Torah obedience — students were said to 'take upon themselves the yoke of the kingdom of heaven' and 'the yoke of the commandments.' Jesus does not abolish the yoke but offers his own yoke as a replacement. The self-description *praus eimi kai tapeinos tē kardia* ('I am gentle and humble in heart') echoes the meekness beatitude (5:5) and the prophecy of the humble king in Zechariah 9:9 (quoted in 21:5). The phrase *anapausin tais psychais hymōn* ('rest for your souls') echoes Jeremiah 6:16.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Zechariah 9:9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 6:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 30.** The adjective *chrēstos* ('easy, pleasant, kind, good') is related to the word for 'Christ' (*Christos*) by sound (a wordplay early Christians noted). A well-fitted wooden yoke was 'easy' in the sense of fitting properly and not chafing — the metaphor is not that there is no yoke but that this one fits. The adjective *elaphron* ('light') contrasts with the heavy burdens of verse 28. Jesus does not promise freedom from all obligation but obligation that gives life rather than crushing it.

12

Summary: *Matthew 12 intensifies the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. It opens with two Sabbath controversies — the disciples plucking grain and Jesus healing a man's withered hand — followed by the Pharisees' plot to destroy Jesus. Matthew inserts a lengthy Isaiah Servant quotation (vv. 18-21). The Beelzebul controversy erupts when Jesus heals a blind and mute demoniac, and the Pharisees attribute his power to the prince of demons. Jesus responds with the 'kingdom divided' argument, warns about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, teaches that a tree is known by its fruit, and warns about idle words. The Pharisees demand a sign, and Jesus offers only the sign of Jonah. The chapter ends with a redefinition of family: whoever does the Father's will is Jesus's brother, sister, and mother.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Sabbath disputes (vv. 1-14) establish Jesus's authority over the Law's interpretation by invoking David, the priests, the temple, and the prophets — then claiming to be 'greater than the temple' (v. 6) and 'Lord of the Sabbath' (v. 8). The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (v. 31-32) is Jesus's most severe warning in the Gospels — an 'unforgivable sin' that has generated centuries of pastoral anxiety. The sign of Jonah (vv. 39-41) links Jesus's death and resurrection to Jonah's three days in the fish. The redefinition of family (vv. 46-50) subordinates biological kinship to spiritual obedience.*

Translation Friction: *The Hosea 6:6 quotation appears for the second time (cf. 9:13). The phrase 'three days and three nights' (v. 40) does not correspond exactly to the timeline of Good Friday afternoon to Easter Sunday morning by modern counting, but Jewish reckoning counted partial days as full days. The 'unpardonable sin' passage requires careful rendering that preserves Jesus's actual words without either minimizing or exaggerating*

the warning.

Connections: The Sabbath grain episode echoes 1 Samuel 21:1-6 (David and the showbread). The Isaiah 42:1-4 quotation (vv. 18-21) is the longest Old Testament citation in Matthew. The Beelzebul controversy connects to the accusation in 9:34 and 10:25. The sign of Jonah points to the death and resurrection narratives. The family redefinition anticipates the church as a new community (ch. 18).

¹At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick heads of grain and eat them. ²When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath." ³He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry — ⁴How he went into the home of God, and did consume the shewbread, which was not permitted for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? ⁵Or have you not read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and yet are without guilt? ⁶But I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. ⁷If you had known what this means — 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice' — you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." ⁹Moving on from there, he went into their synagogue. ¹⁰A man was there with a withered hand. They asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" — so that they could accuse him. ¹¹He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? ¹²How much more valuable then is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." ¹³Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it was restored, as healthy as the other. ¹⁴The Pharisees went out and conspired against him, plotting how to destroy him. ¹⁵Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from there. Large crowds followed him, and he healed all of them. ¹⁶Charged them that they should not render him recognized: ¹⁷That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet and stated, ¹⁸"Here is my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul delights. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. ¹⁹He will not quarrel or cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, until he leads justice to victory. ²¹And in his name the nations will put their hope." ²²Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to him. Jesus healed him so that the man could both speak and see. ²³All the crowds were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" ²⁴But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man drives out demons only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons." ²⁵Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or household divided against itself will stand. ²⁶If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. ²⁸But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹Or how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house. ³⁰Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. ³¹Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³²Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. ³³Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things when you are evil? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure. ³⁶I tell you that on the day of judgment people will give an account for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." ³⁸Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." ³⁹He answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation demands a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹The people of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah — and look, something greater than Jonah is here. ⁴²The queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon — and look, something

greater than Solomon is here. ⁴³When an unclean spirit comes out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest and does not find it. ⁴⁴Then it says, 'I will return to my house that I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean, and put in order. ⁴⁵Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and settle there. And the last condition of that person becomes worse than the first. So it will be with this evil generation." ⁴⁶While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷Someone told him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." ⁴⁸But he replied to the one who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *sporimōn* ('sown fields, grain fields') refers to cultivated land with standing grain. The verb *tillein* ('to pluck, to pull off') describes pulling heads of grain by hand, which was permitted under Deuteronomy 23:25 but which the Pharisees considered 'reaping' — one of the thirty-nine categories of Sabbath-prohibited work in later rabbinic tradition. Matthew adds that the disciples 'were hungry' (*epeinasan*), providing a sympathetic motive absent in Mark.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 23:25. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The Pharisees' charge *ouk exestin* ('it is not lawful') frames the issue as a legal violation. The prohibition is not from the written Torah itself (which permits plucking by hand) but from their interpretive tradition about what constitutes 'work' on the Sabbath. They address Jesus rather than the disciples, holding the teacher responsible for his students' behavior.
3. Jesus's counter-argument begins with the rhetorically sharp *ouk anegnōte* ('have you not read?') — a challenge to the Pharisees' scriptural expertise. The appeal to David (1 Samuel 21:1-6) establishes a precedent where human need overrode ceremonial regulation, and where the kingdom's anointed exercised freedom within the law.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Samuel 21:1-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The *artous tēs protheseōs* ('bread of the Presence,' literally 'bread of the setting forth') were twelve loaves placed on a table in the tabernacle and renewed weekly (Leviticus 24:5-9). Only priests could eat the old loaves. David's consumption of this bread (1 Samuel 21:1-6) was technically illegal yet not condemned by Scripture. Jesus's argument: if David's hunger justified breaking a ceremonial regulation, so does the disciples' hunger.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 24:5-9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Samuel 21:1-6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The second argument is even more pointed: priests perform 'work' on the Sabbath (slaughtering animals, maintaining the fire, preparing offerings) yet are *anaitoi* ('guiltless, without blame'). The verb *bebēlousin* ('profane, desecrate') is deliberately provocative — Jesus uses the Pharisees' own categories against them. Temple service overrides Sabbath restriction by the Law's own provisions.
6. The neuter *meizon* ('something greater') rather than the masculine *meizōn* ('someone greater') makes the claim even more sweeping — not merely a greater person but a greater reality. If temple service overrides the Sabbath, and something greater than the temple is present, then this greater reality certainly overrides Sabbath regulations. The claim would be shocking to any first-century Jew — the temple was the center of Jewish religious life and the place of God's dwelling presence.
7. Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6 for the second time (cf. 9:13). The pluperfect *egnōkeite* ('if you had known,' implying 'but you did not') is a rebuke: the Pharisees who pride themselves on scriptural knowledge have failed to understand a key prophetic text. The word *anaitious* ('innocent, guiltless') declares the disciples formally acquitted — the same word used of the Sabbath-working priests in verse 5.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Hosea 6:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The climactic claim: the Son of Man has sovereign authority (*kyrios*, 'Lord') over the Sabbath itself. Since the Sabbath was instituted by God at creation (Genesis 2:2-3), claiming lordship over it is implicitly claiming divine authority. The word order in Greek places *kyrios* ('Lord') first for emphasis.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 2:2-3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The phrase *tēn synagōgēn autōn* ('their synagogue') again uses the distancing possessive, suggesting tension between Jesus's movement and the synagogue establishment. The second Sabbath controversy follows immediately.

10. The adjective *xēran* ('dry, withered, shriveled') describes a hand that has atrophied or become paralyzed. The question is a trap (*hina katēgorēsōsin autou*, 'in order that they might accuse him'). Later rabbinic tradition permitted Sabbath healing only when life was in immediate danger — a withered hand was not life-threatening, so by their standards, healing could wait until the next day.
11. Jesus uses a *qal wahomer* (lesser to greater) argument, common in rabbinic reasoning. Even the stricter Sabbath interpreters allowed rescuing an animal from a pit on the Sabbath (though the Damascus Document from Qumran prohibited even this). The specification 'one sheep' (*probaton hen*) heightens the analogy — this is someone's only animal, their livelihood.
12. The conclusion *posō oun diapherei anthrōpos probatou* ('how much more a person differs from a sheep') establishes that if Sabbath rescue of an animal is permitted, Sabbath healing of a person must be permitted all the more. Jesus reframes the Sabbath question from 'what is prohibited?' to 'what is good?' — the Sabbath is for doing good (*kalōs poiein*), not for withholding compassion.
13. Jesus heals with a command alone — no physical contact, no medicine, no action that could be classified as 'work.' The verb *apekatestathē* ('was restored') indicates return to a former healthy state. The healing is complete (*hygiēs hōs hē allē*, 'healthy as the other') — not partial or gradual.
14. The response to a healing is a death plot — the irony is devastating. The phrase *symbolion elabon* ('took counsel together, conspired') is a formal term for deliberative action. The verb *apolesōsin* ('might destroy') foreshadows the passion narrative. A Sabbath healing provokes the defenders of the Sabbath to violate the commandment against murder.
15. Jesus's withdrawal (*anēchōrēsen*) is strategic, not fearful — the same verb was used for the family's flight to Egypt (2:14). Despite the growing opposition from leaders, the crowds continue to follow, and Jesus continues to heal — his compassion is not deterred by the conspiracy against him.
16. The command to secrecy (the messianic secret motif) continues. Jesus does not seek public confrontation at this point — his hour has not yet come. The verb *epetimēsen* ('warned, rebuked') is the same strong word used for rebuking storms and demons.
17. This introduces the longest Old Testament quotation in Matthew's Gospel — Isaiah 42:1-4, the first Servant Song. Matthew sees Jesus's withdrawal, quiet ministry, and compassion for the weak as fulfillment of this prophetic portrait.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 42:1-4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The word *pais* ('servant, child') echoes the Hebrew *eved* of Isaiah 42:1. The language of choosing, beloved status, and Spirit-bestowal recalls the baptism scene (3:16-17). The term *krisin* ('justice, judgment') translates Hebrew *mishpat* — not punitive judgment but restorative justice, the right ordering of society. The scope extends to *ta ethnē* ('the nations, the Gentiles'), anticipating the universal mission.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 42:1-4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The description of the Servant's quiet demeanor contrasts sharply with typical political or military messianic expectations. The verb *erisei* ('quarrel, wrangle') and *kraugasei* ('shout, cry out') describe the absence of aggressive self-promotion. This matches Jesus's repeated commands to silence and his withdrawal from public confrontation.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 42:1-4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The bruised reed (*kalamon syntetrimmenon*) and smoldering wick (*linon typhomenon*) are images of extreme fragility — things about to be discarded. The Servant refuses to crush what is already broken or extinguish what is barely alive. This describes Jesus's ministry to the weak, sick, and marginalized of chapters 8-9. The phrase *eis nikos* ('to victory') replaces the Hebrew 'in truth/faithfulness' (*le'emet*), interpreting justice as ultimately triumphant.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 42:1-4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The quotation concludes with the universal hope: *ethnē elpiousin* ('the nations will hope'). The Hebrew original has 'the coastlands will wait for his instruction (torah).' Matthew's Greek version shifts from *torah* to 'name' (*onomati*) and from 'wait' to 'hope' (*elpiousin*), emphasizing personal trust in the Servant rather than obedience to a teaching.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 42:1-4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. This healing combines two conditions from the messianic signs of 11:5 (blind receive sight, mute speak), making it an unmistakable messianic indicator. The double restoration — speaking and seeing — provokes the two opposite responses that follow.
23. The verb *existanto* ('were amazed, astonished, beside themselves') indicates overwhelming wonder. The question *mēti houtos estin ho huios David* uses the particle *mēti*, which in Greek expects a negative answer but here expresses cautious hope — 'this couldn't be the Son of David, could it?' The crowds are tentatively arriving at the messianic conclusion.
24. The Pharisees' response directly counters the crowds' messianic question. Unable to deny the miracle, they attribute its source to Beelzeboul, *archontī tōn daimoniōn* ('the ruler of the demons'). The accusation is the same as in 9:34 but now stated publicly and explicitly. This is the charge Jesus will identify as approaching the unforgivable sin.

25. Jesus again perceives unspoken thoughts (eidōs tas enthymēseis autōn). The argument is logical: internal division destroys any entity — kingdoms, cities, households. The verb erēmoutai ('is made desolate, is laid waste') is strong, suggesting complete devastation. The principle is applied to Satan's kingdom in the next verse.
26. The name Satanias is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew satan ('adversary, accuser'). Jesus's logic: if his exorcisms were powered by Satan, then Satan would be working against his own interests — destroying his own agents. This is self-evidently absurd.
27. The second argument: Jewish exorcists also existed (cf. Acts 19:13-14). If Jesus's exorcisms require a satanic explanation, consistency demands the same explanation for their own practitioners. The phrase hoi huiōi hymōn ('your sons/people') refers to Jewish exorcists associated with the Pharisees' own circles. Jesus turns their accusation into a self-indictment.
28. This is one of the rare places Matthew uses 'kingdom of God' (basileia tou theou) instead of his usual 'kingdom of heaven.' The verb ephthasen ('has arrived, has come upon') indicates that the kingdom is not merely approaching but has already arrived — present tense, operative now. Jesus's exorcisms are evidence of the kingdom's invasion of enemy territory. The conditional 'if' (ei) is a first-class condition in Greek, assuming the premise is true: 'since I drive out demons by God's Spirit...'
29. The parable of the strong man depicts the cosmic conflict behind exorcism. The 'strong man' (ischyros) is Satan; his 'house' is his domain over the demonized; his 'possessions' (skeuē) are the people he holds captive. Jesus is the one who has bound the strong man and is now plundering his domain. The verb dēsē ('bind') anticipates the binding authority Jesus gives to the church (16:19, 18:18).
30. This absolute either/or allows no neutrality toward Jesus. The agricultural metaphor — gathering (synagōn) versus scattering (skorpizein) — depicts the harvest of 9:37-38. Those who do not join Jesus in gathering people into God's kingdom are actively dispersing them. The saying stands in tension with Mark 9:40 ('whoever is not against us is for us'), but the different contexts address different situations.
31. The opening scope is extraordinarily generous — pasa hamartia kai blasphemia aphethēsetai ('every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven'). The single exception stands out starkly: blasphemy against the Spirit (hē tou pneumatōs blasphemia). In context, this refers specifically to attributing the Holy Spirit's work to Satan — seeing the evidence of God's kingdom and deliberately calling it demonic. It is not an isolated sinful word but a settled posture of willful misidentification of good as evil.
32. The distinction between speaking against the Son of Man (forgivable) and speaking against the Spirit (unforgivable) is significant. Rejecting the human Jesus out of ignorance can be forgiven — Peter's denial was forgiven. But deliberately attributing the Spirit's unmistakable work to Satan represents a hardening beyond recovery, because it rejects the very agent of conviction and repentance. The phrase oute en toutō tō aiōni oute en tō mellonti ('neither in this age nor in the coming age') uses eschatological language that covers all of time.
33. The imperative poiēsatē ('make') is not a command to produce fruit but a demand for consistency — if the fruit (Jesus's deeds) is good, then the tree (Jesus's source of power) must be good. You cannot call the fruit good (acknowledging the healings) and the tree bad (attributing them to Satan). The principle ek tou karpou to dendron ginōsketai ('by the fruit the tree is known') echoes 7:16-20.
34. The insult gennēmata echidnōn ('offspring of vipers') repeats John the Baptist's words (3:7), linking the Pharisees to the serpent imagery of Genesis 3. The principle ek tou perisseumatōs tēs kardias to stoma lalei ('out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks') grounds speech in character — words reveal the inner person. The Pharisees' blasphemous words expose a blasphemous heart.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. The word thēsauroi ('treasure, storehouse') depicts the heart as a repository from which words and deeds are drawn. The verb ekballei ('brings out, throws out') is the same word used for casting out demons — what is stored inside inevitably comes out. The parallelism is absolute: good in, good out; evil in, evil out.
36. The adjective argon ('idle, careless, useless') comes from a-ergon ('without work, unproductive'). In context, the 'careless word' is not merely thoughtless chatter but words like the Pharisees' blasphemous accusation — speech that seems offhand but reveals the heart's true orientation. The phrase apodōsousin logon ('will give an account, will render a word') uses the language of legal reckoning.
37. The passive verbs dikaiōthēsē ('will be justified, acquitted') and katadikasthēsē ('will be condemned') are divine passives — God is the implied judge. Words serve as evidence because they reveal character. This does not contradict justification by faith but affirms that genuine faith produces certain kinds of speech while its absence produces others.
38. The request for a sēmeion ('sign') comes immediately after Jesus has just healed a blind and mute demoniac — they have seen signs. The demand is for a spectacular, undeniable cosmic sign that would prove his authority beyond dispute. The address didaskalos ('teacher') is polite but uncommitted.
39. The labels ponēra ('evil') and moichalis ('adulterous') are severe. 'Adulterous' uses the Old Testament prophetic metaphor of Israel as God's unfaithful spouse (Hosea, Ezekiel 16). The sign of Jonah is the only sign Jesus will offer — and it requires faith to interpret, not the kind of overwhelming proof the Pharisees demand.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ezekiel 16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
40. The Greek kētous ('sea creature, great fish') is more accurate than the KJV's 'whale' — the Hebrew in Jonah 1:17 uses dag gadol ('great fish') without specifying the species. The phrase en tē kardia tēs gēs ('in the heart of the earth') refers to the grave/death. The 'three days and three nights' follows Jewish inclusive reckoning where any part of a day counts as a full day — Friday afternoon, all of Saturday, and Sunday morning constitute 'three

days.'

40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jonah 1:17 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The Ninevites — pagans, Assyrians, Israel's enemies — repented at Jonah's reluctant, minimal preaching. 'This generation' has received far greater revelation and refuses to repent. The neuter pleion ('something greater,' not 'someone greater') makes the claim even more comprehensive — not just a greater prophet but a greater reality is present.
42. The 'queen of the South' is the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13), who traveled a great distance to hear Solomon's wisdom. Again a Gentile figure condemns 'this generation.' The parallel structure — Ninevites/Jonah, queen/Solomon — presents Jesus as greater than Israel's greatest prophet and wisest king. The neuter pleion ('something greater') is repeated.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 10:1-13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. The anhydrōn topōn ('waterless, dry places') reflects the ancient Near Eastern belief that demons inhabit desolate wilderness regions (cf. Isaiah 13:21, 34:14; Baruch 4:35). The demon seeks anapausin ('rest') — ironically, the same word Jesus offers to the weary in 11:28. The passage functions as a parable about spiritual vacancy.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 13:21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
44. The demon calls the person 'my house' (ton oikon mou), claiming ownership. The three participles — scholazonta ('empty, unoccupied, idle'), sesarōmenon ('swept clean'), kekosmēmenon ('put in order, decorated') — describe a person who has been cleaned up but not filled with anything positive. Moral reformation without spiritual filling leaves one vulnerable to worse occupation.
45. The number seven (hepta) symbolizes completeness — the reinfestation is total and overwhelming. The phrase ta eschata cheirōna tōn prōtōn ('the last things worse than the first') warns that spiritual emptiness invites greater evil than the original condition. The application to 'this evil generation' (tē genea tautē tē ponēra) transforms the parable from individual exorcism to national warning — Israel has received temporary cleansing through John's ministry and Jesus's healings but refuses to be filled with the kingdom's reality.
46. The phrase heistēkeisan exō ('stood outside') creates a spatial metaphor — family members are on the outside while the listening crowd is on the inside. The mention of adelphoi ('brothers') indicates Jesus had siblings (see 13:55 for their names). Their desire to 'speak to him' may reflect concern about his safety given the growing opposition (cf. Mark 3:21).
47. This verse is bracketed in the SBLGNT, indicating uncertainty about whether it was in the original text — some important manuscripts omit it. Without it, verse 48 follows directly from verse 46 and still makes sense. We include it as it appears in the majority of manuscripts and provides the natural link to Jesus's response.
48. The question is rhetorically shocking — it appears to disown his biological family. Jesus is not rejecting his mother and brothers but redefining the category of family itself. The question demands a new answer that transcends biological kinship.
49. The physical gesture — ekteinas tēn cheira ('stretching out his hand') — makes the redefinition visible and public. The disciples are identified as Jesus's true family. This creates a new kinship community based not on blood but on shared commitment to God's will.
50. The criterion for belonging to Jesus's family is doing the will of the Father (to thelēma tou patros mou) — the same standard from the Sermon on the Mount (7:21). The threefold 'brother and sister and mother' (adelphos kai adelphē kai mētēr) is inclusive of all — notably, 'father' is omitted because that role belongs exclusively to God. This redefinition of family becomes foundational for the church's self-understanding.

13

Summary: *Matthew 13 is the third of Matthew's five major discourses — the Parable Discourse. Jesus teaches seven parables about the kingdom of heaven: the sower (with explanation), the wheat and tares (with explanation), the mustard seed, the leaven, the hidden treasure, the pearl of great price, and the dragnet. Interspersed is a discussion with the disciples about why Jesus speaks in parables, a citation of Isaiah 6:9-10 about hearing without understanding, and a quotation of Psalm 78:2. The chapter concludes with Jesus's rejection in his hometown of Nazareth.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter marks a decisive shift in Jesus's teaching method — from this point, parables become his primary public teaching vehicle. The purpose of parables is paradoxical: they both reveal and conceal. To those with receptive hearts, they illuminate the kingdom's nature; to those with hardened hearts, they confirm blindness (vv. 11-15). The parable of the wheat and tares is unique to Matthew and addresses the coexistence of good and evil within the kingdom community until the final judgment. The series of short parables (mustard seed, leaven, treasure, pearl, net) each capture a different facet of the kingdom's nature.*

Translation Friction: The Isaiah 6:9-10 quotation (vv. 14-15) raises the question of whether parables are designed to prevent understanding. We render Jesus's words and Isaiah's text as given without resolving the tension. The Greek conjunction hina in verse 13 can mean 'in order that' (purpose) or 'so that' (result), and this ambiguity affects whether the concealment is intended or consequential. The identification of the 'field' as 'the world' (v. 38) rather than 'the church' has significant implications for interpreting the wheat and tares.

Connections: The sower parable connects to the harvest imagery of 9:37-38. The wheat and tares anticipates the separation at the final judgment (25:31-46). The mustard seed echoes Daniel 4's tree that shelters nations. The parables of treasure and pearl echo the wisdom tradition (Proverbs 2:4, 8:11). The Nazareth rejection connects to the broader theme of Israel's unresponsiveness (chs. 11-12). The scribe trained for the kingdom (v. 52) may be Matthew's self-description.

¹That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, while the whole crowd stood on the shore. ³He told them many things in parables, saying: "A sower went out to sow. ⁴As he was sowing, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow, ⁶When the sun was up, they were scorched. And on account of the fact that they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil and produced a crop — some a hundred times, some sixty, some thirty what was sown. ⁹Whoever has ears, let them hear." ¹⁰The disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" ¹¹He answered, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹²For whoever has will be given more, and will have an abundance. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. ¹³This is why I speak to them in parables: because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear or understand. ¹⁴In them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'You will hear and hear but never understand; you will look and look but never perceive. ¹⁵For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they barely hear, and they have shut their eyes, so that they might not see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn — and I would heal them.' ¹⁶But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. ¹⁸Listen then to the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰The seed sown on rocky ground is the person who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹Indeed, yet has he not root in himself, but dureth for a while — for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the message, by and by he is offended. ²²The seed sown among the thorns is the person who hears the word, but the worries of this age and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. ²³But the seed sown on good soil is the person who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces — some a hundred, some sixty, some thirty times what was sown." ²⁴He put another parable before them: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶When the plants sprouted and produced grain, then the weeds also appeared. ²⁷The owner's servants came and said to him, 'Master, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' ²⁸He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and pull them up?' ²⁹He said, 'No, because while gathering the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest. At harvest time I will tell the reapers: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat into my barn.'" ³¹He put another parable before them: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man took and planted in his field. ³²It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and nest in its branches." ³³He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and mixed into three measures of flour until all of it was leavened." ³⁴Jesus spoke all these things to the crowds in parables. He did not say anything to them without a parable, ³⁵Indeed, that it could be fulfilled which had been spoken by the prophet of old and stated, I will open my mouth in parables. I will utter things which have been kept

secret from the foundation of the world. ³⁶Then he left the crowds and went into the house. His disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." ³⁷He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸The field is the world. The good seed — these are the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one. ³⁹The enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰Just as the weeds are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who practice lawlessness, ⁴²Will cast them into a furnace of fire — there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear. ⁴⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and in his joy he went and sold everything he had and bought that field. ⁴⁵Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. ⁴⁶When he found one pearl of great value, he went and sold everything he had and bought it. ⁴⁷Again, heaven's kingdom is like to a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind. ⁴⁸When it was full, they pulled it up on the shore, sat down, and sorted the good fish into containers but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from among the righteous ⁵⁰Will cast them into the furnace of fire — there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹"Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." ⁵²He said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his storeroom new things and old." ⁵³When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place. ⁵⁴He came to his hometown and taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? ⁵⁵Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? ⁵⁶And aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" ⁵⁷And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household." ⁵⁸And he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *en tē hēmera ekeinē* ('on that day') links this discourse to the events of chapter 12. The movement from house to seaside establishes the public setting for parabolic teaching. The Sea of Galilee serves as a natural amphitheater.
2. The sitting position (*kathēsthai*) was the standard posture for teaching in the ancient world. The boat creates natural distance and acoustics. The crowd standing (*heistēkei*) on the shore while Jesus sits in the boat reverses the typical rabbi-student arrangement and creates a visual tableau.
3. The noun *parabolē* ('parable,' from *para* + *ballō*, 'to throw alongside') refers to a comparison or illustration that places a familiar image alongside a spiritual truth. The sower parable is the foundational parable — its interpretation governs how all subsequent parables are read. The phrase *ho speirōn* ('the sower') uses the article, suggesting a representative or well-known figure.
4. Palestinian farmers sowed by broadcasting seed across a field. The path (*para tēn hodon*) was the hard-packed pathway through or alongside the field where seed could not penetrate the soil. The birds (*ta peteina*) are identified as representing 'the evil one' in verse 19.
5. The *petrōdē* ('rocky ground') refers not to ground with scattered stones but to thin soil over a limestone shelf — common in the Galilean landscape. The rapid growth (*eutheōs exaneteilen*, 'immediately it sprang up') is not a sign of health but of shallow rooting. Without depth (*bathos gēs*, 'depth of earth'), the growth is superficial.
6. The sun that nurtures deep-rooted plants destroys shallow-rooted ones — the same external pressure produces opposite outcomes depending on root depth. The verb *exēranthē* ('withered, dried up') describes complete death, not temporary wilting.
7. The *akanthas* ('thorns, thistles') represent competing plants that were already present in the soil. The verb *epnixan* ('choked, strangled') is violent — the thorns suffocated the grain by stealing light, water, and nutrients. This soil type has potential for growth but competing forces prevent fruitfulness.
8. The good soil (*gēn tēn kalēn*) is distinguished by its fruitfulness. The yields — hundredfold, sixtyfold, thirtyfold — range from extraordinary to very good. In ancient Palestine, a tenfold return was considered good; even the lowest yield here (thirtyfold) far exceeds normal expectations. The descending order (100, 60, 30) may suggest that any productive response to the word, whatever the degree, represents good soil.
9. The refrain from 11:15 returns, signaling that the parable demands more than surface hearing. The plural *ōta* ('ears') may suggest that physical hearing is not the issue — spiritual perception is required.
10. The disciples' question *dia ti* ('why?') indicates that parabolic teaching is a new method. The pronoun *autois* ('to them') distinguishes the crowds from the disciples — the disciples receive private explanation while the crowds receive parables.

11. The divine passive *dedotai* ('it has been given') indicates that understanding is a gift from God, not an achievement of intellect. The word *mystēria* ('mysteries') does not mean 'puzzles' but 'revealed secrets' — truths about God's kingdom that have been hidden and are now being disclosed to the initiated. The distinction between 'you' (the disciples) and 'them' (the crowds) reflects the growing division in response to Jesus.
12. This saying appears paradoxical and even harsh. The 'having' in question is receptivity to the kingdom message — those who respond to what they have received will receive more understanding, while those who refuse to engage will lose even the initial exposure they had. The principle is spiritual, not economic: responsiveness to truth generates more truth; indifference leads to loss.
13. Matthew uses *hoti* ('because') where Mark 4:12 has *hina* ('in order that'), softening the purpose clause into a causal explanation. The parables are given because the people have already demonstrated their inability to perceive — the parables respond to existing spiritual blindness rather than causing it. The paradox of seeing-without-seeing and hearing-without-hearing describes willful incomprehension.
14. The verb *anaplēroutai* ('is being fulfilled') is present tense — the fulfillment is happening now, in this moment. The quotation from Isaiah 6:9-10 was originally spoken to Isaiah at his commissioning, describing the stubborn unresponsiveness of Israel. Matthew sees the same pattern repeating. The emphatic doubling — *akoē akousete* ('hearing you will hear'), *blepontes blepsete* ('seeing you will see') — stresses the thoroughness of the incomprehension.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 6:9-10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The verb *epachynthē* ('has grown fat, has become dull') describes a heart that has become insensitive through accumulated resistance. The Isaiah passage attributes the closure to the people themselves (*tous ophthalmous ekammysan*, 'they have shut their eyes') — this is self-inflicted blindness. The sequence — see, hear, understand, turn, be healed — represents the progression that has been blocked. The conditional 'I would heal them' (*iasomai autous*) reveals God's desire to heal, frustrated by human refusal.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. After the harsh words about the unresponsive crowds, Jesus turns to the disciples with a contrasting beatitude. Their seeing and hearing is a gift (cf. v. 11) — they are privileged witnesses to the kingdom's arrival.
17. The verb *epethymēsan* ('longed, desired earnestly') expresses intense, unfulfilled desire. The prophets and righteous people of Israel's history anticipated the messianic age but did not live to see it. The disciples are living in the era the entire Old Testament pointed toward — a privilege greater than they realize.
18. The imperative *akousate* ('listen, hear') is emphatic — you who have been given the gift of hearing, now use it. The phrase *tēn parabolēn tou speirantos* ('the parable of the one who sowed') identifies this as the interpretive key for the others.
19. The interpretation identifies the seed as *ton logon tēs basileias* ('the word of the kingdom') — the message about God's reign. The birds of verse 4 are identified as *ho ponēros* ('the evil one,' Satan). The failure is comprehension — *mē synientos* ('not understanding') — the word never takes root because it is never grasped. The verb *harpazei* ('snatches away') is violent, depicting active opposition.
20. The immediate, joyful response (*euthys meta charas lambanōn*, 'immediately with joy receiving') sounds positive but proves shallow. Quick enthusiasm without depth of commitment characterizes this soil type. The joy is genuine but superficial.
21. The phrase *ouk echei rhizan en heautō* ('has no root in himself') describes internal shallowness — the word has not penetrated deeply enough to sustain the person through difficulty. The word *proskairos* ('temporary, short-lived, lasting only for a season') contrasts with the enduring fruit of good soil. The verb *skandalizetai* ('is caused to stumble, falls away') — the stumbling block that trips this person is suffering, not temptation.
22. Two thorns are named: *hē merimna tou aiōnos* ('the worry/anxiety of this age') — the same worry Jesus addressed in 6:25-34 — and *hē apatē tou ploutou* ('the deceitfulness of wealth'). The word *apatē* ('deceit, seduction') treats wealth as an active deceiver, not a passive possession. The result is *akarpōs* ('unfruitful') — the word survives but produces nothing.
23. The distinguishing mark of good soil is *synieis* ('understanding') — the word that was absent from the path soil (v. 19). Hearing plus understanding equals fruitfulness. The verb *karpophorei* ('bears fruit') is the goal of the entire parable. The varying yields (100, 60, 30) allow for different degrees of fruitfulness without disqualifying any productive response.
24. The formula *hōmoiōthē hē basileia tōn ouranōn* ('the kingdom of heaven has become like') introduces the comparison. This parable is unique to Matthew. The 'good seed' (*kalon sperma*) and 'his field' (*en tō agrō autou*) establish the owner's rightful possession and proper action.
25. The *zizania* ('weeds') is commonly identified as darnel (*Lolium temulentum*), a weed that closely resembles wheat in its early growth stages and cannot be distinguished until the grain heads form. Deliberately sowing darnel in an enemy's field was a known act of sabotage in the ancient world, serious enough to be addressed in Roman law. The enemy acts secretly (*en tō katheudein*, 'while sleeping') and departs (*apēlthen*) — evil often works covertly.
26. The weeds become visible only when the grain appears — at the earlier stages, wheat and darnel are indistinguishable. The word *ephanē* ('appeared, became visible') marks the moment of revelation.
27. The servants' question addresses the problem of evil in miniature: if the owner sowed good seed, where did the weeds come from? The word *pothen* ('from where?') asks about origin — the question humanity has always asked about the presence of evil in God's good creation.

- 28.** The master's answer *echthros anthrōpos* ('an enemy person, a hostile man') identifies the source simply and directly. The servants' eagerness to remove the weeds immediately (*syllēxōmen*, 'shall we gather/collect them?') represents the human impulse to purge evil from the community immediately and completely.
- 29.** The master's refusal is practical — dandelion roots intertwine with wheat roots, making selective removal impossible without destroying good plants. The theological implication: premature judgment of the community risks destroying genuine believers. The verb *ekrizōsēte* ('might uproot') describes tearing out by the roots — total destruction.
- 30.** The command *aphete synauxanesthai* ('let them grow together') requires patience — coexistence of good and evil within the kingdom community until God's appointed time. The *therismos* ('harvest') is the final judgment (v. 39). The order is significant: weeds are gathered first for burning, then wheat is gathered into the barn. The barn (*apothēkēn*) represents the final secure dwelling of the righteous.
- 31.** The *kokkō sinapeōs* ('mustard seed,' from the plant *Sinapis nigra* or *Brassica nigra*) was proverbially the smallest seed known in Palestine. Jesus uses the smallest to illustrate the kingdom's beginnings. The kingdom starts imperceptibly small.
- 32.** The contrast between *mikroteron pantōn tōn spermatōn* ('smallest of all seeds') and *meizon tōn lachanōn* ('largest of garden plants') captures the kingdom's trajectory from insignificant beginning to impressive result. The mustard plant can grow to 8-10 feet. The image of birds nesting in branches echoes Daniel 4:12 (Nebuchadnezzar's tree) and Ezekiel 17:23, 31:6, where a great tree sheltering birds symbolizes a kingdom that provides refuge for all nations.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 4:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 17:23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 33.** Leaven (*zymē*) is usually a negative symbol in Jewish tradition (cf. 16:6, 'leaven of the Pharisees'), making its positive use here surprising. The verb *enekrypsen* ('hid, concealed') emphasizes the invisible nature of the kingdom's working. Three measures (*sata tria*) of flour is an enormous quantity — approximately 50 pounds, enough to feed over 100 people. This echoes the amount Sarah prepared for the three visitors in Genesis 18:6 (three seahs). The point: a tiny amount of leaven transforms a massive quantity of dough.
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 18:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 34.** The statement *chōris parabolēs ouden elalei autois* ('without a parable he said nothing to them') applies to this occasion and phase of ministry, not to Jesus's entire teaching career — he taught directly in the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5-7). The shift to exclusively parabolic public teaching marks a new phase.
- 35.** The quotation is from Psalm 78:2, attributed to 'the prophet' (some manuscripts add 'Isaiah,' but the SBLGNT does not). The psalmist Asaph speaks of recounting Israel's history as parables. Matthew applies this to Jesus's parabolic teaching as revealing *kekrymmena apo katabolēs kosmou* ('things hidden since the foundation/creation of the world') — the kingdom truths that have been concealed in God's plan since creation itself.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 78:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** The shift from public seaside teaching to private house instruction mirrors the pattern of the sower parable. The verb *diasaphēsōn* ('explain clearly, make plain') indicates the disciples cannot interpret the wheat-and-weeds parable without help.
- 37.** The allegorical interpretation begins with a series of identifications. The sower is the Son of Man — Jesus himself. This makes the parable autobiographical: Jesus is the one planting good seed in the world.
- 38.** The identification *ho agros estin ho kosmos* ('the field is the world') is significant — the field is not the church but the world. This means the coexistence of wheat and weeds is a reality of the world at large, not merely a problem within the church community. The 'sons of the kingdom' (*huioi tēs basileias*) and 'sons of the evil one' (*huioi tou ponērou*) live intermixed in the same world until the harvest.
- 39.** The enemy is identified as *ho diabolos* ('the devil,' literally 'the slanderer/accuser'). The harvest is the *synteleia aiōnos* ('completion/culmination of the age') — not the 'end of the world' (KJV) but the conclusion of the present age that gives way to the age to come. The reapers are angels, not humans — the final sorting is God's work through his heavenly agents.
- 40.** The analogy moves from agricultural practice (burning weeds) to eschatological reality. The verb *katakaietai* ('is burned up') describes complete destruction. The phrase *en tē synteleia tou aiōnos* ('at the completion of the age') repeats from verse 39.
- 41.** The Son of Man sends 'his angels' (*tous aggelous autou*) — a claim to authority over the heavenly host that belongs to God alone. They collect *ta skandala* ('stumbling blocks, things that cause sin') and *tous poiountas tēn anomian* ('those who practice lawlessness'). The word *anomia* ('lawlessness') is a key Matthean term (7:23, 23:28, 24:12) describing not ignorance of the law but willful disregard for God's will.
- 42.** The *kaminon tou pyros* ('furnace of fire') echoes Daniel 3, where the three young men were thrown into a furnace. The phrase *ho klauthmos kai ho brygmōs tōn odontōn* ('weeping and gnashing of teeth') recurs from 8:12 and appears again in 13:50, 22:13, 24:51, 25:30.
- 42.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

43. The promise eklamphousin hōs ho hēlios ('will shine forth like the sun') echoes Daniel 12:3 ('those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the sky'). The image of luminous glorification describes the final state of the righteous. The phrase tē basileia tou patros autōn ('the kingdom of their Father') is warm and familial. The 'ears to hear' refrain appears for the third time in this chapter.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 12:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
44. Burying valuables in fields was common in the ancient world as a form of protection (no banks existed for ordinary people). The man's response is driven by joy (apo tēs charas, 'from the joy'), not grim duty — discovering the kingdom is exhilarating. He sells panta hosa echei ('everything he has') — total investment. The ethics of concealing the treasure before purchasing the field troubled later interpreters, but the parable's point is the kingdom's incomparable worth, not the man's business practices.
45. The emporō ('merchant, wholesaler') is a professional dealer, not a casual buyer — he is actively seeking (zētounti) quality merchandise. This contrasts with the man in verse 44 who stumbled upon treasure. Both responses to the kingdom are valid: some encounter it unexpectedly, others find it through dedicated seeking.
46. The hena polytimon margaritēn ('one pearl of great value') is singular — one incomparable item that renders all other possessions secondary. Pearls were the most valuable commodity in the ancient world, sometimes worth more than their weight in gold. The merchant's response mirrors the treasure-finder's: total divestiture for a single incomparable possession. The kingdom is worth everything.
47. The sagēnē ('dragnet') was a large net drawn between two boats or pulled from shore, capturing everything in its path indiscriminately. The phrase ek pantos genous ('of every kind') emphasizes the indiscriminate character of the catch. This parable is thematically parallel to the wheat and tares — the kingdom community contains a mixture that will be sorted at the end.
48. The sorting process (kathisantes synelexan, 'sitting down they collected') is careful and deliberate, not hasty. The adjective sapra ('bad, rotten, worthless') is the same word used for 'bad' trees and fruit in 7:17-18. The good fish go into containers (aggē, 'vessels'); the bad are discarded. The scene would be familiar to the Galilean fishermen among Jesus's disciples.
49. The interpretation closely parallels the wheat-and-ares explanation. The verb aphorizō ('will separate, set apart') is the same root as 'Pharisee' (pharisaioi, 'separated one') — an irony perhaps intentional. The final separation is done by angels (as in v. 41), not by humans.
50. This verse repeats verse 42 nearly verbatim, creating an inclusio around the kingdom parables. The repetition of the judgment warning frames the entire parable discourse with eschatological seriousness.
51. The verb synēkate ('have you understood?') echoes the key word from the sower parable — understanding (synieis) is what distinguishes good soil from the path. The disciples' affirmative nai ('yes') claims comprehension. Whether they truly understand remains to be tested. The SBLGNT does not include kyrie ('Lord') after 'Yes,' which appears in some manuscripts.
52. The grammateus mathēteutheis ('scribe made a disciple, scribe trained') is a striking image — a Torah expert who has become a student of the kingdom. Many scholars see this as Matthew's self-description — a Jewish scribe who has become a disciple of Jesus. The storeroom (thēsauroi) contains both kaina kai palaia ('new things and old'), suggesting that the kingdom-trained scribe values both the old Scriptures and the new revelation in Jesus, drawing on both treasuries.
53. The formula kai egeneto hote eteleusen ('and it happened when he finished') marks the end of the third discourse, paralleling 7:28, 11:1, 19:1, and 26:1.
54. The patria ('hometown, fatherland') is Nazareth (cf. 2:23). The verb ekplētesthai ('to be astounded, struck with amazement') is strong but leads to rejection rather than faith. The question pothen toutō ('where did this man get...?') focuses on the source of his authority — they know his background and cannot reconcile it with his present power.
55. The designation ho tou tektonos huios ('the carpenter's son') identifies Jesus by his father's trade. The Greek tektōn ('builder, craftsman') could refer to a woodworker, stoneworker, or general builder. Matthew names four brothers — Iakōbos, Iōsēph, Simōn, Ioudas — and verse 56 mentions sisters. The people's familiarity with his family becomes the basis for their rejection: they think they know everything about him.
56. The repeated pothen ('where from?') frames their inability to reconcile Jesus's extraordinary authority with his ordinary origins. The word pasai ('all') and the phrase pros hēmas ('with us, among us') emphasize that Jesus's family is local, known, and unremarkable. Familiarity breeds contempt.
57. The verb eskandalizō ('were offended, were caused to stumble') echoes the blessed/offended contrast of 11:6. Jesus responds with a proverbial saying about prophetic rejection at home — a pattern seen in Elijah, Jeremiah, and most prophets. The word atimos ('without honor, dishonored') is the opposite of the honor-shame dynamic that governed ancient Near Eastern social life.
58. The statement that Jesus ouk epoiēsen dynameis pollas ('did not do many mighty works') is remarkable — it does not say he could not but that he did not. The reason is dia tēn apistia autōn ('because of their unbelief'). Faith is presented as the environment in which Jesus's power operates, and unbelief (apistia) creates an environment that restricts it. Mark 6:5 says more boldly 'he could not do any mighty work there'; Matthew softens slightly to 'did not do many.'

14

Summary: *Matthew 14 opens with Herod Antipas hearing reports about Jesus and fearing that John the Baptist has risen from the dead. This triggers a flashback to John's execution: Herod had imprisoned John for condemning his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and was manipulated into beheading John through Herodias's daughter's dance and request. Upon hearing the news, Jesus withdraws by boat to a deserted place, but crowds follow on foot. Moved by compassion, he heals their sick and feeds five thousand men (plus women and children) with five loaves and two fish. That night, Jesus walks on the sea to reach his disciples' storm-tossed boat. Peter attempts to walk on water but sinks when he becomes afraid. The chapter closes with healings in Gennesaret.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle (besides the resurrection) recorded in all four Gospels, underscoring its centrality. The language of 'took, blessed, broke, gave' (v. 19) anticipates the Last Supper (26:26). Jesus walking on the sea echoes God's sovereignty over chaotic waters (Job 9:8, Psalm 77:19). Peter's water-walking attempt — unique to Matthew — dramatizes the relationship between faith and fear. Jesus's self-identification *egō eimi* ('it is I' / 'I AM') in verse 27 may carry the resonance of the divine name.*

Translation Friction: *The feeding miracle raises questions about the nature of the multiplication — whether it was instantaneous or progressive, visible or hidden. We render the text as given without speculating on mechanism. The number 'five thousand men' (andres) plus 'women and children' (v. 21) could put the total crowd at 15,000-20,000. Herodias's daughter is not named in Matthew (Josephus identifies her as Salome). The chronological relationship between John's death and Jesus's withdrawal is compressed in the narrative.*

Connections: *The feeding echoes Elisha feeding a hundred with twenty loaves (2 Kings 4:42-44) and Moses providing manna in the wilderness (Exodus 16). The sea-walking echoes God's mastery over the sea in the exodus (Exodus 14) and the psalms (Psalm 77:19). Peter's cry 'Lord, save me' (v. 30) echoes the disciples' cry in the earlier storm (8:25). The twelve baskets of leftovers (v. 20) may symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel — God's provision is more than sufficient for his people.*

¹At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the reports about Jesus ²Stated to his attendants, This is John the Baptist. He is returned to life from the no longer alive. And therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. ³For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, ⁴For John stated to him, It is not lawful for you to have her. ⁵Although Herod wanted to kill him, he feared the crowd because they regarded John as a prophet. ⁶But when Herod's birthday celebration came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the guests and pleased Herod, ⁷Whereupon he swore with an oath to provide her whatsoever she would ask. ⁸Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." ⁹The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he commanded it to be given to her. ¹⁰He sent and had John beheaded in the prison. ¹¹His head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. ¹²John's disciples came, took the body, and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus. ¹³When Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there by boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard about it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a large crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵When evening came, the disciples approached him and said, "This is a remote place and the hour is already late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." ¹⁷They said to him, "We have nothing here except five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸He said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹He directed the crowds to sit down on the grass. Then he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰They all ate and were satisfied. The disciples picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces left over. ²¹Those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. ²²Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³After dismissing the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there

alone. ²⁴By this time the boat was many stadia from land, battered by the waves, because the wind was against them. ²⁵In the fourth watch of the night, he came to them, walking on the sea. ²⁶When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid." ²⁸Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, walked on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he saw the strong wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³²When they climbed into the boat, the wind stopped. ³³Those in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." ³⁴When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. ³⁵When the people of that place recognized him, they sent word throughout the surrounding region. People brought to him all who were sick ³⁶Besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment — and as numerous as touched were appointed perfectly whole.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Herod here is Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who ruled Galilee and Perea as tetrarch (tetraarchēs, 'ruler of a fourth') from 4 BC to AD 39. He is not a king, though Mark 6:14 loosely calls him one. The noun akoēn ('report, what is heard, fame') indicates that Jesus's reputation has reached the political establishment.
2. Herod's conclusion reveals a guilty conscience — he leaps to the supernatural explanation that John has been raised (ēgerthē, the same verb used for Jesus's resurrection). The phrase hai dynamis energousin en autō ('the powers are at work in him') suggests Herod believes that death and resurrection have given John supernatural abilities he did not have before. The paidin autou ('his servants') are court attendants.
3. Matthew now explains Herod's guilt through a flashback. Herodias had been married to Herod's half-brother Philip (not the tetrarch Philip of Luke 3:1 but another son of Herod the Great). The sequence kratēsas... edēsen... apetheto ('having seized... bound... put away') describes a forcible, deliberate imprisonment. According to Josephus (Antiquities 18.5.2), John was imprisoned at the fortress of Machaerus east of the Dead Sea.
4. The imperfect tense elegen ('was saying, kept saying') indicates repeated confrontation — John did not make this accusation once but persistently. The prohibition is based on Leviticus 18:16 and 20:21, which forbid marriage to a brother's wife while the brother is alive. John spoke truth to power at the cost of his freedom and ultimately his life.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 18:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Herod's desire to kill (thelōn apokteinai) is restrained only by political calculation — fear of the crowd (ephobēthē ton ochlon), not moral scruple. The people's recognition of John as a prophet provides temporary protection. Mark 6:20 presents a more complex picture where Herod 'feared John' and 'heard him gladly'; Matthew simplifies the motivation to murderous intent.
6. The genesiois ('birthday celebration') was a banquet with court officials, military commanders, and leading citizens (cf. Mark 6:21). The daughter of Herodias (identified by Josephus as Salome) danced en tō mesō ('in the midst'), meaning before the assembled company. That a princess of the Herodian house would dance publicly before male banqueters was considered scandalous in Jewish culture. The verb ēresen ('pleased') has undertones left unstated.
7. The phrase meth' horkou hōmologēsen ('he promised with an oath') binds Herod with a vow — the same kind of rash oath that entrapped Jephthah (Judges 11:30-40). Jesus has just taught against swearing oaths in the Sermon on the Mount (5:33-37). Herod's oath creates the trap that Herodias will exploit.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Judges 11:30-40. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The participle probibistheisa ('having been prompted, coached, put forward') reveals that Herodias is the architect of the request — the daughter is her instrument. The demand for the head epi pinaki ('on a platter/dish') transforms the banquet setting into a scene of horror — a serving dish meant for food will carry a human head. The word hōde ('here') means immediately, at this banquet.
9. Matthew calls Herod basileus ('king') here, though technically he was only a tetrarch — the title may reflect popular usage or may be ironic. The verb lypētheis ('was grieved, distressed') suggests genuine discomfort, but Herod's concern for public face before his guests (tous synanakeimenous, 'those reclining at table with him') overrides his reluctance. The plural 'oaths' (horkous) may indicate he had repeated the promise.
10. The verb apekephalisen ('beheaded') is stark and without elaboration. The execution happens en tē phylakē ('in the prison'), away from the banquet — Herod does not watch. The brevity of the account contrasts with the elaborate setup, emphasizing the swiftness and finality of the act.
11. The passive ēnechthē ('was brought') maintains the impersonal horror. The chain of delivery — platter to girl, girl to mother — completes Herodias's plan. The word korasiō ('girl, young woman') emphasizes the daughter's youth, making the scene more disturbing. Herodias is the ultimate recipient, achieving through manipulation what Herod had been restrained from doing.

12. John's disciples perform the final act of devotion — burial of the ptōma ('corpse, body'). Their report to Jesus (apēggeilan tō Iēsou) connects the two movements: John's work is finished, and Jesus's intensifies. The narrative implies that John's fate foreshadows Jesus's own.
13. Jesus's withdrawal (anechōrēsen) upon hearing of John's death reflects grief and possibly a sense that his own time is drawing closer. The erēmōn topon ('deserted, isolated place') seeks solitude. The crowds' persistence (ēkolouthēsan... pezē, 'followed on foot') demonstrates their determination — they walked around the lake to reach him. Jesus's desire for solitude is overridden by the needs of the people.
14. The verb esplanchnisthē ('was moved with compassion') is the same visceral word used in 9:36 — a gut-level response to human need that overrides his own grief and desire for solitude. Despite the loss of John and the threat to his own life, Jesus's response to the crowd is not frustration but compassion. He heals tous arrōstous ('the sick, the infirm').
15. The disciples' concern is practical — a large crowd in an isolated area (erēmos topos) with no food as evening approaches. Their solution is dispersal — send them away (apolyson) to fend for themselves. The verb agorasōsin ('might buy') assumes normal economic mechanisms. Jesus will offer a different solution.
16. The emphatic pronoun hymeis ('you yourselves') shifts responsibility to the disciples. The command dote autois hymeis phagein ('you — give them to eat') echoes Elisha's instruction in 2 Kings 4:42-44. The impossibility of the task from a human perspective is the entire point — it requires divine intervention.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Kings 4:42-44. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The disciples' report emphasizes scarcity — ouk echomen ('we do not have') except five loaves (artous, flat bread rounds) and two fish (ichthyas). These were likely small barley loaves and dried fish, a common meal for the poor. The disparity between the tiny provision and the massive need is the setup for the miracle.
18. Jesus's request is simple — pherete moi ('bring them to me'). He does not dismiss the inadequacy of the provision but asks for what is available. The principle: offer what you have to Jesus, however insufficient it seems.
19. The four verbs — labōn ('took'), eulogēsen ('blessed'), klasas ('broke'), edōken ('gave') — form a sequence that will be repeated at the Last Supper (26:26). This eucharistic pattern (take, bless, break, give) shapes early Christian understanding of both miracles and the Lord's Supper. Looking up to heaven (anablepsas eis ton ouranon) signals prayer and divine dependence. The disciples serve as intermediaries — Jesus gives to them, and they distribute to the crowds.
20. The verb echortasthēsan ('were satisfied, were filled') denotes complete satiation, not mere nibbling. The twelve baskets (dōdeka kophinous) of leftovers exceed the original provision — there is more remaining than there was at the start. The kophinos was a wicker basket particularly associated with Jewish travelers. The number twelve likely symbolizes the twelve tribes of Israel — God provides abundantly for his whole people.
21. The count of pentakischilioi andres ('five thousand men/males') follows ancient convention of counting adult males. The addition chōris gynaikōn kai paidiōn ('apart from women and children') indicates the total number was significantly larger. This specification is unique to Matthew among the Synoptics and emphasizes the magnitude of the miracle.
22. The verb ēnagkασen ('compelled, forced, constrained') is unusually strong — Jesus does not suggest but insists that the disciples leave immediately. The urgency may relate to John 6:15, which reports that the crowd wanted to make Jesus king by force after the feeding. Jesus separates the disciples from the politically charged crowd and sends them across the lake.
23. Jesus finally achieves the solitude he sought in verse 13 — but now for prayer rather than rest. The mountain (to oros) connects to the Old Testament pattern of encountering God on mountains (Sinai, Horeb, Carmel). The phrase monos ēn ekei ('he was alone there') creates the setting for the sea-walking miracle — Jesus is on the mountain, the disciples are on the sea, and both are in darkness.
24. The SBLGNT reads stadios pollous ('many stadia') where some manuscripts have 'in the middle of the sea.' A stadion was approximately 600 feet (185 meters). The participle basanizomenon ('being tortured, battered') is intense — the same word used for human torment (8:6, 29). The wind is enantios ('contrary, opposing'), creating a situation of exhausting, fruitless rowing through the night.
25. The fourth watch (tetartē phylakē) was the Roman time division for 3:00-6:00 AM — the darkest, most exhausting hour of the night. The disciples have been struggling since evening. The phrase peripatōn epi tēn thalassan ('walking on the sea') echoes Job 9:8 (LXX), where God alone 'walks on the waves of the sea.' Jesus does what only God does.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Job 9:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The verb etarachthēsan ('were troubled, were agitated, were terrified') describes deep inner disturbance. The word phantasma ('ghost, apparition, phantom') reflects their inability to process what they are seeing — a human figure walking on water in the dark of night. Their cry (ekraxan) is a scream of terror, not a call for help.
27. Jesus responds euthys ('immediately') to their fear. The phrase egō eimi ('I am' / 'it is I') operates on two levels: a simple identification ('it's me, not a ghost') and a possible echo of God's self-revelation in Exodus 3:14 (egō eimi ho ōn, 'I AM WHO I AM') and Isaiah 43:10 ('I am he'). The command mē phobeisthe ('do not be afraid') is the characteristic divine greeting in theophanies throughout the Old Testament.

- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 3:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 43:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** This exchange is unique to Matthew and reveals Peter's character — impulsive faith that acts on what Jesus says. The conditional *ei sy ei* ('if it is you') is not doubt but a test: if Jesus commands and Peter can do it, then the identification is confirmed. The verb *keleuson* ('command') recognizes that Peter cannot walk on water on his own initiative — it requires Jesus's authoritative word.
- 29.** Jesus's one-word command *elthe* ('come') is sufficient. Peter obeys — he climbs out of the boat (*katabas*, 'having come down') and walks on the water (*periepatēsen epi ta hydata*). For a brief time, Peter does the impossible because Jesus commanded it and he obeyed. The phrase *ēlthen pros ton Iēsoun* ('came toward Jesus') shows that the miracle works as long as Peter's focus is on Jesus.
- 30.** The shift is dramatic: *blepōn ton anemon* ('seeing the wind') — Peter's attention moves from Jesus to the storm. Fear replaces faith, and he immediately begins to sink (*katapontizesthai*, 'to be drowned, to sink into the deep'). His cry *kyrie sōson me* ('Lord, save me') is the shortest prayer in the Gospels and echoes the disciples' cry in 8:25. The word *sōson* ('save') again carries both physical and theological weight.
- 31.** Jesus's response is immediate (*eutheōs*) — he does not let Peter drown. The verb *epelabeto* ('seized, caught hold of') describes a firm rescue grip. The address *oligopiste* ('you of little faith') — singular here, applied directly to Peter — is the same word used in 8:26 (plural, to all the disciples). The verb *edistasas* ('doubted, wavered') appears only here and in 28:17 in the New Testament. Peter's faith was real enough to get him out of the boat but insufficient to sustain him through the storm.
- 32.** The wind ceases (*ekopasen*, 'died down, became weary') the moment Jesus and Peter enter the boat — the connection between his presence and the cessation of the storm is implicit. The verb *kopazo* means literally 'to grow weary, to abate,' as if the wind exhausted itself.
- 33.** The verb *prosekynēsan* ('worshipped') here moves beyond the ambiguity of earlier uses (8:2, 9:18) — after witnessing Jesus walk on water and command the wind, the response is worship. The confession *alēthōs theou huios ei* ('truly you are God's Son') is the first time the disciples as a group make this declaration in Matthew. It anticipates Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (16:16). The absence of the article before *theou huios* could mean 'a son of God' or 'the Son of God'; in context, the definite reading is more appropriate.
- 34.** Gennesaret (Gennēsaret) was a fertile plain on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, south of Capernaum. The name is related to Kinneret/Chinnereth (Numbers 34:11), the ancient name for the lake itself.
- 34.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 34:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 35.** The verb *epignontes* ('having recognized') suggests Jesus was already known in this area from previous visits. The rapid communication network (*apesteilan eis holēn tēn perichōron*, 'sent into the whole surrounding region') demonstrates the organized response that Jesus's reputation generated.
- 36.** The request to touch *tou kraspedou tou himatiou* ('the fringe/tassel of his cloak') echoes the hemorrhaging woman's action in 9:20. Word of her healing has clearly spread, generating faith that even touching his garment is sufficient. The verb *diesōthēsan* ('were completely healed, were saved through') is a strengthened form of *sōzō* — total restoration, with no partial or failed healings. The chapter ends on a note of abundant, accessible healing power.

15

Summary: *Matthew 15 opens with a confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees over ritual purity and human tradition versus divine commandment. Jesus declares that defilement comes from within, not from unwashed hands. He then withdraws to the region of Tyre and Sidon, where a Canaanite woman persistently begs for her daughter's healing — a tense exchange that ends with Jesus commending her great faith. The chapter closes with Jesus healing many on a mountainside by the Sea of Galilee and feeding four thousand men (plus women and children) with seven loaves and a few fish.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Canaanite woman episode is one of the most theologically striking passages in Matthew. Jesus initially seems to refuse her, using the metaphor of children's bread and dogs — yet the woman's witty reply ('even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table') draws from Jesus one of his strongest commendations of faith in the entire Gospel. This Gentile woman succeeds where Israel's leaders have failed. The feeding of the four thousand parallels the feeding of the five thousand (chapter 14) but occurs in predominantly Gentile territory, suggesting the extension of Israel's blessings to the nations.*

Translation Friction: Jesus's statement about being 'sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (v. 24) and the 'dogs' metaphor (v. 26) are difficult for modern readers. We render the Greek faithfully without softening the language. The word kynarion ('little dog, house dog') is a diminutive, but its force remains dismissive. The passage's resolution — healing given on the basis of faith — reframes the entire exchange. The discourse on defilement (vv. 10-20) contains a parenthetical observation that effectively abolishes kosher food laws, though Matthew is less explicit about this than Mark 7:19.

Connections: The handwashing controversy connects to Exodus 30:19-21 and the Pharisaic expansion of priestly purity rules to all Jews. Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13 (lip-service vs. heart-worship) and cites the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12) and its penalty (Exodus 21:17). The Canaanite woman evokes Old Testament encounters with Gentiles (1 Kings 17, Elijah and the widow of Zarephath). The feeding of four thousand parallels 2 Kings 4:42-44 (Elisha feeding one hundred) and the manna narrative of Exodus 16.

¹Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, ²"Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat." ³He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must be put to death.' ⁵But you say, 'Whoever tells his father or mother, "Whatever you might have received from me is a gift to God" — ⁶Honour not his Parent or his parent, he will be free. Thus possess you fashioned the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. ⁷Hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you when he said: ⁸"This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. ⁹They worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commandments of people." ¹⁰Then he called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand: ¹¹It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth — this defiles a person." ¹²Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" ¹³He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴Leave them alone. They are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind person guides a blind person, both will fall into a pit." ¹⁵Peter responded and said to him, "Explain this parable to us." ¹⁶Jesus said, "Are you still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not understand that everything that enters the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled into the latrine? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and that is what defiles a person. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, and slander. ²⁰These are the things that defile a person. But eating with unwashed hands does not defile a person." ²¹Jesus left that place and withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²²And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and kept crying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely tormented by a demon." ²³But he did not answer her a word. His disciples came and urged him, "Send her away, because she keeps crying out after us." ²⁴He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶He answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, your faith is great! Let it be done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that moment. ²⁹Jesus moved on from there and went along the Sea of Galilee. He went up on the mountain and sat down there. ³⁰Large crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, blind, crippled, mute, and many others, and they placed them at his feet, and he healed them. ³¹The crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel. ³²Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been staying with me for three days now and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry; they might collapse on the way." ³³The disciples said to him, "Where could we get enough bread in this desolate place to feed such a large crowd?" ³⁴Jesus asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven, and a few small fish." ³⁵He directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. ³⁶He took the seven loaves and the fish, and after giving thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ³⁷They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up seven large baskets full of the leftover pieces. ³⁸Those who ate were four thousand men, not counting women and children. ³⁹After sending the crowds away, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The detail 'from Jerusalem' (apo Hierosolymon) signals that this is an official delegation, not local Galilean opponents. Jerusalem was the center of religious authority, and their journey north to confront Jesus implies a deliberate investigation.
2. The 'tradition of the elders' (paradosis ton presbyteron) refers to the oral Torah — interpretive traditions transmitted alongside the written law. Ritual handwashing before meals was not commanded in the Mosaic law but was a Pharisaic extension of priestly purity practices to ordinary Jews. The verb parabainousin ('transgress, cross over') is deliberately strong — they accuse the disciples of violation, not mere oversight.
3. Jesus turns their accusation back on them using the same verb parabainete ('you break'). The contrast is sharp: they charge his disciples with violating human tradition; he charges them with violating God's commandment (entole tou theou). The phrase 'your tradition' (teen paradosin hymon) pointedly shifts ownership — it is their tradition, not God's.
4. Jesus cites two Old Testament texts: Exodus 20:12 (the fifth commandment) and Exodus 21:17 (its judicial penalty). The verb kakologon ('speaks evil of, reviles') is broader than 'curses' — it includes any verbal dishonoring. The death penalty (thanato teleutato) underscores the seriousness with which the Torah treats parental honor.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 20:12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 21:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The Greek doron ('gift') refers to the practice of qorban — dedicating property or funds to the temple so they cannot be used for other purposes. The irony is that the dedication could be nominal; the person retained the use of the assets while declaring them unavailable for parental support. Jesus is exposing a legal fiction that allows financial self-interest to masquerade as piety.
6. The verb ekyrosate ('you have nullified, voided, made invalid') is a legal term — their tradition has rendered God's commandment legally void. Matthew uses 'word of God' (ton logon tou theou) rather than 'commandment,' broadening the indictment: it is not merely a single rule they have circumvented but God's expressed will.
7. The term hypokritai ('hypocrites') derives from Greek theater, meaning 'actors' — those who perform a role that does not reflect their true character. Jesus applies the term to religious leaders whose outward piety masks disobedience to God's actual commands. The adverb kalos ('rightly, well, fittingly') adds rhetorical force.
8. Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13 following the Septuagint text. The contrast between lips and heart is the core of the hypocrisy charge — external religious performance without internal devotion. The SBLGNT text omits 'draws near to me with their mouth' (found in the KJV, following the fuller Septuagint tradition and some later manuscripts).
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 29:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The adverb maten ('in vain, to no purpose') renders their entire worship project futile. The phrase entalmata anthropon ('commandments of people') directly contrasts with 'commandment of God' in verse 3, completing the rhetorical frame: human tradition has displaced divine command, and the resulting worship is empty.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 29:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Jesus shifts from the Pharisees to the crowd, broadening his audience for a public teaching. The double imperative akouete kai syniete ('listen and understand') demands not just hearing but comprehension — the same call that appears in the parable discourse (13:13-15).
11. The verb koinoi ('makes common, defiles') is a purity term — to make ritually unclean. Jesus reverses the direction of defilement: contamination flows outward from the heart, not inward from food. This principle, if followed to its logical conclusion, dismantles the entire system of dietary purity laws, though Matthew does not make this implication as explicit as Mark 7:19.
12. The verb eskandalisthesan ('were scandalized, took offense') carries the sense of being tripped up, stumbling over something. The disciples' question reveals their concern about the political consequences of offending Jerusalem's delegation.
13. The agricultural metaphor of planting and uprooting echoes Isaiah 5:1-7 (God's vineyard) and Jeremiah 1:10 (prophetic commission to uproot and plant). Jesus declares that the Pharisees' traditions, not having originated with God, will not endure. The phrase 'my heavenly Father' (ho pater mou ho ouranios) asserts Jesus's unique filial relationship.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 5:1-7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 1:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The proverbial saying about blind guides (typhloi hodegoi typhlon) is a devastating dismissal of the Pharisees' claim to spiritual authority. The word hodegos ('guide, leader') implies someone who shows the way — their blindness is not physical but spiritual. The 'pit' (bothnon) represents disaster or ruin.

15. Peter's request treats Jesus's statement in verse 11 as a parable (parabole) — an opaque saying requiring explanation. The verb *phrasō* ('explain, make clear') indicates the disciples did not grasp the revolutionary implications of Jesus's teaching on defilement.
16. The adverb *akmen* ('still, even now') conveys frustration — after all this time with Jesus, they remain *asynetoi* ('without understanding, lacking comprehension'). The 'also' (*kai*) links the disciples' incomprehension to that of the Pharisees and the crowds.
17. Jesus makes his argument crudely physical: food follows a digestive path and exits the body. The word *aphedrona* ('latrine, toilet') is earthy and deliberate — Jesus is demystifying the Pharisees' elaborate purity system by pointing to basic biology. The implication is that food cannot reach or contaminate the heart.
18. The heart (*kardia*) in biblical anthropology is the seat of will, thought, and intention — not merely emotion. Jesus locates the source of defilement in the human interior, the center of moral agency. Words reveal the heart's true condition.
19. The vice list moves from internal (*dialogismoi poneroi*, 'evil thoughts/reasonings') to external acts. Several of the items echo the Ten Commandments: murder (sixth), adultery (seventh), theft (eighth), false testimony (ninth). The Greek *porneiai* ('sexual immorality') is broader than 'fornication' and covers any sexual conduct outside God's design. *Blasphemiai* here likely means 'slander' against others rather than blasphemy against God, given the context of interpersonal sins.
20. Jesus circles back to the Pharisees' original complaint about handwashing (v. 2), now reframing it within his radical redefinition of defilement. The contrast is complete: moral corruption from the heart defiles; ritual omission does not. The adjective *anipto* ('unwashed') appears only here and in Mark 7:2 in the New Testament.
21. The verb *anechōresen* ('withdrew') suggests deliberate retreat, used previously for Jesus withdrawing from conflict (2:14, 12:15, 14:13). Tyre and Sidon were Gentile coastal cities in Phoenicia (modern Lebanon), outside Jewish territory. This is the only time in Matthew's Gospel that Jesus enters explicitly Gentile land.
22. Matthew calls her 'Canaanite' (*Chananaia*) — an archaic term evoking Israel's ancient enemies, while Mark 7:26 calls her 'Syrophoenician.' Matthew's choice emphasizes the ethnic and religious gulf between her and Jesus. The imperfect *ekrazen* ('kept crying') indicates persistent, repeated calling. Her address 'Lord, Son of David' uses the Davidic messianic title — remarkable for a Gentile woman, suggesting she has heard of Jesus's identity.
23. Jesus's silence (*ouk apekrithe aute logon*, literally 'he did not answer her a word') is striking and deliberate. The disciples' request *apolyson auten* ('send her away, dismiss her') is ambiguous — it could mean 'grant her request so she'll leave' or 'drive her away.' Their motivation is annoyance, not compassion.
24. The passive *apestaleen* ('I was sent') points to the Father as the sender, and the restriction 'only' (*ei me*, 'except') to Israel echoes the mission charge of 10:5-6. This statement reflects Jesus's understanding of his earthly mission's scope within Matthew's Gospel. The universal commission does not come until 28:19. The metaphor of 'lost sheep' (*ta probata ta apolalota*) recalls Ezekiel 34, where God condemns Israel's shepherds and promises to shepherd the flock himself.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ezekiel 34. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The verb *prosekynēi* ('worshipped, knelt before, prostrated') can indicate full worship or respectful supplication. The imperfect tense suggests ongoing action — she kept prostrating herself. Her plea is reduced to three words in Greek (*kyrie, boethei moi*) — stripped of all argument, pure appeal to mercy.
26. The diminutive *kynariois* ('little dogs, household dogs') is slightly softer than the full *kyon* ('dog'), which was a standard Jewish epithet for Gentiles. But the force is still dismissive — the 'children' (*tekna*) are Israel, and the Gentiles are compared to household pets. The word *artos* ('bread') anticipates the feeding miracle later in this chapter. Whether Jesus is testing her faith, teaching the disciples, or expressing genuine reluctance is debated; the narrative resolution suggests the exchange serves to display her extraordinary faith.
27. Her reply is a masterpiece of rhetorical persistence. She accepts the metaphor ('Yes, Lord') but turns it: even within the hierarchy Jesus has described, the dogs receive something. The word *psichion* ('crumb, small piece') suggests that what she asks for is not the full portion but the overflow — Israel's blessings are so abundant that even the surplus is enough to heal her daughter. She does not challenge Jesus's priority of Israel; she simply claims the excess.
28. The exclamation *O gynai* ('O woman') with *megale sou he pistis* ('great is your faith') is one of only two times Jesus explicitly praises someone's faith as 'great' — the other is the centurion, also a Gentile (8:10). The pattern is remarkable: Gentiles display the faith that Israel's leaders lack. The passive *genetheto* ('let it be done') mirrors the divine creative language of Genesis 1 in the Septuagint. The healing is instantaneous and at a distance, emphasizing the power of the word alone.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. The definite article *to oros* ('the mountain') may indicate a specific well-known location or may simply reflect Semitic narrative style. Jesus sitting (*ekatheto*) is the posture of a teacher in Jewish tradition. The setting — a mountain by the sea — creates a tableau of authority reminiscent of Moses.
30. The verb *erripsan* ('threw, cast down') is vivid — the sick were deposited urgently at Jesus's feet. The list of afflictions (lame, blind, crippled, mute) echoes the messianic promises of Isaiah 35:5-6, where the coming of God brings healing to the blind, deaf, lame, and mute. The location in

predominantly Gentile territory gives this healing ministry a universal scope.

30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 35:5-6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. The phrase 'the God of Israel' (ton theon Israel) is significant — if this crowd were Jewish, the phrase would be redundant. Its presence suggests that Matthew understands the crowd as at least partly Gentile, glorifying Israel's God in response to Jesus's miracles. This echoes the prophetic vision of Gentiles coming to worship Israel's God (Isaiah 2:2-4, 60:1-6).
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 2:2-4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The verb *splanchnizomai* ('I have compassion') derives from *splanchna* ('intestines, gut') — it describes a visceral, gut-level response, not a mild sentiment. The three-day stay indicates the crowd's persistence in remaining with Jesus despite having no provisions. Jesus takes the initiative here, unlike the feeding of the five thousand where the disciples raised the problem (14:15).
33. Despite having witnessed the feeding of the five thousand (14:13-21), the disciples express the same helplessness. The word *eremia* ('desolate place, wilderness') echoes the wilderness feeding traditions of Exodus 16 (manna) and Numbers 11 (quail). Matthew does not comment on the disciples' apparent failure to remember the previous miracle.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
34. The diminutive *ichthydia* ('small fish') indicates these are not large catches but modest provisions. The number seven often symbolizes completeness in biblical numerology, contrasting with the five loaves of the earlier feeding.
35. The verb *parangeelas* ('commanded, directed') carries authority. The verb *anapesein* ('to recline, sit down') is the standard term for taking a meal position. Unlike the five thousand fed on grass (14:19), this crowd sits on bare ground (teen gen), consistent with a more desolate location.
36. The sequence — took, gave thanks (*eucharistesas*), broke, gave — follows the same pattern as the feeding of the five thousand (14:19) and anticipates the Last Supper (26:26). The verb *eucharisteo* ('to give thanks') is the root of 'Eucharist,' though Matthew does not draw explicit sacramental connections here. The disciples serve as intermediaries, distributing what Jesus provides.
37. The verb *echortasthesan* ('were satisfied, were filled to satisfaction') indicates not mere survival but abundance. The word *spyridas* ('large baskets') differs from the *kophinous* ('small baskets') of the five thousand feeding (14:20). The *spyris* was a large rope basket, possibly big enough to hold a person (cf. Acts 9:25, where Paul is lowered in a *spyris*). Seven full large baskets of surplus from seven loaves declares overwhelming abundance.
38. As with the feeding of the five thousand (14:21), only men (*andres*) are counted; the total number including women and children would have been significantly larger. The number four thousand, combined with the predominantly Gentile setting, may carry symbolic weight — four often represents universality (four corners of the earth, four winds).
39. The SBLGNT reads 'Magadan' (Magadan) rather than 'Magdala' (as in some manuscripts and the KJV). The location is uncertain — it may be the same as Magdala (home of Mary Magdalene) on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, or a variant name for the same area. Mark's parallel (8:10) reads 'Dalmanutha,' another otherwise unknown location. Jesus returns from Gentile territory to the Jewish side of the lake.

16

Summary: *Matthew 16 opens with the Pharisees and Sadducees testing Jesus by demanding a sign from heaven. Jesus refuses, offering only 'the sign of Jonah,' and warns the disciples about the 'leaven' of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The chapter reaches its climax at Caesarea Philippi, where Peter confesses Jesus as 'the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus responds with the famous declaration about building his church on 'this rock' and giving Peter the 'keys of the kingdom of heaven.' Immediately after this high point, Jesus makes his first explicit prediction of his suffering, death, and resurrection — and when Peter objects, Jesus rebukes him with the stunning words, 'Get behind me, Satan.' The chapter concludes with the cost of discipleship: 'Whoever wants to save his life will lose it.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Caesarea Philippi was a deliberately chosen setting — a Gentile city at the foot of a cliff face with a cave shrine to Pan, near temples to Augustus Caesar. Against this backdrop of pagan worship and imperial power, Peter's confession that Jesus is 'the Christ, the Son of the living God' is a political and theological declaration. The rapid reversal from Peter as recipient of divine revelation (v. 17) to Peter as mouthpiece of Satan (v. 23) is one of the most dramatic character moments in the Gospels. The 'keys' saying and the 'binding and loosing' language have generated*

centuries of ecclesiastical debate between traditions claiming Petrine authority and those reading the passage differently.

Translation Friction: The identity of 'this rock' (v. 18) — whether it refers to Peter himself, his confession, or Christ — is one of the most debated questions in New Testament interpretation. We translate the Greek without resolving the ambiguity. The wordplay between Petros (Peter's name) and petra (rock) is evident in Greek but involves a grammatical gender shift. 'Gates of Hades' (v. 18) is rendered literally; it refers to the power of death, not to a geographic location. Jesus's command to silence about his messiahship (v. 20) reflects what scholars call the 'messianic secret.'

Connections: The sign of Jonah connects to Jonah 1:17 and Matthew 12:39-40. Peter's confession echoes Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14 (Davidic sonship). The 'keys' imagery draws on Isaiah 22:22 (the key of the house of David given to Eliakim). 'Binding and loosing' was rabbinic language for authoritative legal rulings. The first passion prediction introduces the pattern of prediction-misunderstanding-teaching that structures chapters 16-20. The cross-bearing language (v. 24) anticipates the crucifixion narrative of chapters 26-27.

¹The Pharisees and Sadducees came and tested Jesus by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. ²He answered them, "When evening comes you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' ³And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to read the appearance of the sky, but you cannot read the signs of the times." ⁴An evil and adulterous generation demands a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." Then he left them and went away. ⁵When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring bread. ⁶Jesus said to them, "Watch out, and guard yourselves against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." ⁷They discussed this among themselves, saying, "It is because we did not bring any bread." ⁸Aware of this, Jesus said, "You of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? ⁹Do you still not understand? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you collected? ¹⁰Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many large baskets you collected? ¹¹How do you not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread? Guard yourselves against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." ¹²Then they understood that he had not told them to guard against the leaven of bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. ¹³When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴They said, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." ²⁰Then he strictly ordered the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. ²¹From that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid, Lord! This must never happen to you." ²³But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, for you are not thinking the things of God but the things of people." ²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit a person to gain the whole world but forfeit his soul? Or what will a person give in exchange for his soul? ²⁷For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will repay each person according to what they have done. ²⁸Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The unusual alliance of Pharisees and Sadducees — normally theological opponents — united against Jesus signals the depth of opposition. The participle *peirazontes* ('testing') indicates hostile intent, not genuine inquiry. The phrase 'sign from heaven' (*semeion ek tou ouranou*) demands a cosmic spectacle beyond earthly miracles, implying their dissatisfaction with the healings and feedings they already knew about.

2. Verses 2b-3 are enclosed in brackets in the SBLGNT, indicating textual uncertainty — they are absent from important early manuscripts including Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. However, they are widely attested in other traditions. We include the text following the SBLGNT's bracketed reading. The weather proverb about red sky at evening is a folk observation still proverbial today.
3. The contrast is devastating: they can interpret weather patterns but are blind to the eschatological moment (ta semeia ton kairon, 'the signs of the times'). The word kairos ('appointed time, season') differs from chronos ('chronological time') — it refers to the decisive moment in God's plan. The SBLGNT does not include 'hypocrites' (hypokritai), which appears in some manuscripts and the KJV tradition.
4. The phrase 'adulterous generation' (genea moichalis) uses the Old Testament prophetic metaphor of Israel as an unfaithful spouse (Hosea 1-3, Ezekiel 16). Their sign-seeking is spiritual infidelity. The 'sign of Jonah' was explained in 12:40 as the Son of Man's three days in the earth, pointing to death and resurrection. Jesus's abrupt departure (katalipan autous apeelthen) is a dramatic rejection of their demand.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Hosea 1-3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ezekiel 16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The detail about forgetting bread sets up Jesus's teaching about 'leaven.' The irony is thick — they have just witnessed two miraculous feedings and are worried about bread supplies.
6. The double imperative horate kai prosechete ('watch out and guard') indicates urgent warning. Leaven (zyme) in Jewish tradition often symbolizes corruption — a small amount permeates the whole batch (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:6-8). Mark's parallel (8:15) includes 'the leaven of Herod' instead of the Sadducees.
7. The verb diellogizonto ('they were reasoning, discussing') shows the disciples taking Jesus's metaphorical warning literally. Their fixation on physical bread after two miraculous feedings demonstrates the obtuseness that Jesus will address in the following verses.
8. The term oligopistoi ('you of little faith') is distinctive to Matthew (6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8) and describes not the absence of faith but its inadequacy. The participle gnous ('having known, perceiving') suggests either supernatural knowledge or simply overhearing their conversation.
9. Jesus appeals to their own experience. The word kophinous ('baskets') specifies the smaller Jewish provision baskets used at the feeding of the five thousand (14:20), distinct from the larger spyridas of 15:37. The parallel structure of the questions builds a rhetorical case against their forgetfulness.
10. The distinction between kophinous (v. 9, smaller baskets) and spyridas (larger baskets) is maintained precisely, confirming that Jesus and Matthew distinguish between the two feeding events. The rhetorical question expects the answer: 'We collected twelve baskets and seven baskets — so provision is obviously not the issue.'
11. The exasperated pos ou noeite ('how do you not understand') brings the rebuke to its peak. Jesus repeats the warning, now clarifying that 'leaven' is metaphorical. The disciples' confusion illustrates a recurring theme in Matthew: proximity to Jesus does not automatically produce comprehension.
12. Matthew, unlike Mark (8:21), resolves the disciples' confusion — they finally understand. The word didache ('teaching, doctrine') identifies the 'leaven' as the Pharisees' and Sadducees' interpretive tradition that, like yeast, invisibly permeates and corrupts. Mark 8:15 identifies the leaven as that of Herod rather than the Sadducees.
13. Caesarea Philippi (modern Banias) was located at the base of Mount Hermon, rebuilt by Philip the tetrarch and named for Caesar Augustus. It contained a grotto sacred to Pan and various pagan temples. The setting for the climactic identity question is deliberately Gentile. Jesus uses the third person 'Son of Man' (ton huion tou anthropou) — a title drawn from Daniel 7:13-14 that was his preferred self-designation.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:13-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The popular identifications are all prophetic figures, indicating that the crowds recognize Jesus as a prophet but not as the Messiah. The mention of Jeremiah is unique to Matthew — Jeremiah was the weeping prophet who predicted the destruction of the temple and the new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34), themes central to Matthew's portrayal of Jesus. Elijah's appearance reflects Malachi 4:5's promise of Elijah's return before the day of the LORD.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 31:31-34. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Malachi 4:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The emphatic pronoun hymeis ('you yourselves') draws a sharp contrast between public opinion and the disciples' own conviction. This is the hinge question of the entire Gospel — everything that follows depends on the answer. The present tense legete ('do you say') demands a current, personal declaration.
16. Peter's confession combines two titles: 'the Christ' (ho Christos, the Messiah/Anointed One) and 'the Son of the living God' (ho huios tou theou tou zontos). The latter goes beyond messianic expectation to assert a unique divine relationship. The qualifier 'living' (tou zontos) distinguishes the true God from the dead idols of the surrounding pagan temples at Caesarea Philippi — a pointed contrast in this setting. Matthew's version is fuller than Mark's simple 'You are the Christ' (Mark 8:29).
17. The patronymic Bariona ('son of Jonah') uses the Aramaic bar ('son') — one of the few Aramaic forms preserved in Matthew. 'Flesh and blood' (sarx kai haima) is a Semitic idiom for human beings in their natural capacity. The point is that Peter's confession came not from human reasoning but from divine revelation (apokalypsis). This makes Peter both uniquely blessed and uniquely responsible.

- 18.** The wordplay between Petros (Peter's name, masculine) and petra ('rock,' feminine) is central but debated. In Aramaic, the underlying word kepha would be identical in both cases, making the connection tighter than in Greek. Whether 'this rock' refers to Peter, his confession, or Christ himself has been disputed since the patristic era. The Greek ekklesia ('assembly, church') appears in the Gospels only here and in 18:17 — it translates the Hebrew qahal, the assembly of God's people. 'Gates of Hades' (pylai hadou) refers to the power of death, not to a place of punishment. The image is of a fortress: death itself cannot breach the community Jesus builds.
- 19.** The 'keys' (kleidas) image draws on Isaiah 22:22, where the key of the house of David is placed on the shoulder of Eliakim the steward — authority to open and shut, admit and exclude. 'Binding and loosing' (deo and lyo) was standard rabbinic terminology for declaring something forbidden or permitted. The authority given to Peter here is extended to the whole community in 18:18. The periphrastic future perfect construction (estai dedemenon, 'will have been bound') may indicate that earthly decisions ratify what heaven has already determined, rather than heaven following earth's lead.
- 19.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 22:22. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 20.** The verb diesteilato ('he strictly ordered, charged') is emphatic. The command to secrecy about his messianic identity — the so-called 'messianic secret' — reflects Jesus's concern that the title 'Christ' carried political and military expectations he did not intend to fulfill. The immediately following passion prediction (v. 21) redefines what messiahship means.
- 21.** The phrase apo tote ('from that time') marks a major structural transition in Matthew (cf. 4:17). The verb dei ('it is necessary, must') indicates divine necessity, not mere fate — this is God's plan. The triad 'elders, chief priests, and scribes' represents the three components of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council. The passive egerthenai ('be raised') implies God as the agent of resurrection. This is the first of three passion predictions (16:21, 17:22-23, 20:17-19), each becoming progressively more detailed.
- 22.** The verb proslabomenos ('took aside, drew to himself') suggests Peter pulled Jesus aside privately. The audacity of a disciple rebuking (epitiman) his teacher is remarkable. The phrase hileos soi is an idiomatic expression meaning 'may God be merciful to you' or 'God forbid' — a strong rejection of what Jesus has just said. Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah (v. 16) has not yet accommodated a suffering Messiah.
- 23.** The address 'Satan' (Satana) does not identify Peter as literally the devil but recognizes that Peter's words echo the tempter's offer of glory without suffering (4:8-10). The word skandalon ('stumbling block, snare, offense') means something that causes someone to fall — Peter, who was just called the rock of the church, is now called a stumbling stone. The verb phroneis ('you are thinking, you are minded') indicates that Peter's entire orientation is wrong — he is operating from a human framework, not a divine one.
- 24.** The three imperatives — deny (aparnesastho), take up (arato), and follow (akoloutheito) — form a sequence of escalating commitment. 'Deny himself' (aparnesastho heautou) means to renounce one's own claims, rights, and self-interest. The cross (stauros) was an instrument of Roman execution — for Jesus's original audience, this was not a metaphor for mild inconvenience but for lethal suffering and public shame. The present imperative akoloutheito ('keep following') indicates continuous, ongoing discipleship.
- 25.** The word psyche means both 'life' and 'soul' — the ambiguity is intentional. On one level, clinging to physical survival leads to spiritual death; on another, grasping at self-preservation in any form leads to ultimate loss. The paradox is sharpened by the phrase 'for my sake' (heneken emou) — Jesus makes himself the criterion that determines whether loss becomes gain.
- 26.** Here psyche is rendered 'soul' rather than 'life' because the context shifts to eternal valuation — what is the self ultimately worth? The verb zemiothee ('to suffer loss, to forfeit') is a commercial term: it frames the soul as an asset that can be lost in a transaction. The word antallagma ('exchange price, ransom') asks what could possibly serve as currency to buy back a forfeited soul. The answer is: nothing. The whole world is insufficient.
- 27.** The Son of Man who has just predicted his suffering and death now claims future glory, angelic retinue, and judicial authority. The phrase 'in the glory of his Father' (en tee doxe tou patros autou) claims a share in the Father's own divine splendor. The language of repaying 'according to their deeds' (kata teen praxin autou) echoes Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12. The combination of suffering-then-glory is the pattern Jesus has been establishing since verse 21.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 62:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Proverbs 24:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** The solemn amen lego hymin ('truly I tell you') introduces a saying that has challenged interpreters for centuries. 'Taste death' (geusontai thanatou) is a Semitic idiom for experiencing death. What event Jesus refers to is debated: the Transfiguration (which immediately follows in chapter 17), the resurrection, Pentecost, the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, or the ongoing expansion of God's kingdom. The placement immediately before the Transfiguration narrative suggests Matthew understood at least a partial fulfillment in that event.

17

Summary: *Matthew 17 opens with the Transfiguration, where Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a high mountain and is transformed before them — his face shining like the sun, his clothes becoming brilliant white. Moses and Elijah appear alongside him, and a voice from the cloud declares, 'This is my beloved Son; listen to him.' After descending, Jesus heals a demon-possessed boy the disciples could not cure, rebuking their lack of faith. He makes his second passion prediction, and the chapter closes with the unusual incident of the temple tax, where Jesus instructs Peter to find a coin in a fish's mouth.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Transfiguration is the most overtly theophanic scene in the Synoptic Gospels. Every element is loaded with Old Testament resonance: the high mountain (Sinai), the bright cloud (the shekinah glory), the voice from the cloud (the divine voice at Sinai), Moses (the law), and Elijah (the prophets). The scene reveals Jesus's true nature momentarily unveiled — what the disciples glimpse on the mountain is the glory that was hidden beneath the ordinary human appearance. Peter's offer to build three tabernacles (skenas) evokes the Feast of Tabernacles and the desire to prolong the experience of divine presence. The command 'Listen to him' echoes Deuteronomy 18:15, the promise of the prophet like Moses.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'high mountain' is unspecified — traditionally Mount Tabor, but Mount Hermon (near Caesarea Philippi) is geographically more likely given the preceding narrative. The phrase 'if you have faith as small as a mustard seed' (v. 20) appears in some manuscripts but is bracketed or absent in others; we follow the SBLGNT. Verse 21 is absent from the earliest manuscripts and is not included in the SBLGNT. The temple tax episode (vv. 24-27) raises questions about Jesus's relationship to the temple establishment and whether the miracle actually occurred — Matthew narrates the instruction but not the execution.*

Connections: *The Transfiguration connects to Exodus 24:15-18 and 34:29-35 (Moses on Sinai, his face shining), 1 Kings 19:8-18 (Elijah on Horeb), and Daniel 7:9 (the Ancient of Days with white garments). The divine voice combines Psalm 2:7, Isaiah 42:1, and Deuteronomy 18:15. The failed exorcism connects to the disciples' authority given in 10:1. The second passion prediction advances the pattern from 16:21. The temple tax discussion connects to Exodus 30:11-16 (the half-shekel tax for the tabernacle).*

¹After six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³And there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴Peter responded and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will make three shelters here — one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him!" ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown and were terrified. ⁷Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up, and do not be afraid." ⁸When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself, alone. ⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." ¹⁰The disciples asked him, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" ¹¹He answered, "Elijah is indeed coming and will restore all things. ¹²But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him but did to him whatever they pleased. In the same way, the Son of Man is also going to suffer at their hands." ¹³Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist. ¹⁴When they came to the crowd, a man came up to him, kneeling before him ¹⁵Indeed, declaring, Lord, have mercy on my son — since he is lunatick, and sore vexed: for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. ¹⁶I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him." ¹⁷Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long will I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to me." ¹⁸Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was healed from that moment. ¹⁹Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and asked, "Why could we not cast it out?" ²⁰He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will

be impossible for you." ²²While they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of people, ²³They will kill him, and the third day he will be raised again. Then they were exceedingly sorry. ²⁴When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the temple tax?" ²⁵He said, "Yes." When he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect tolls or taxes — from their own sons or from others?" ²⁶When he said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. ²⁷But so that we do not cause them to stumble, go to the sea, cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up. When you open its mouth, you will find a four-drachma coin. Take that and give it to them for me and for you."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The 'six days' may echo Exodus 24:16, where the cloud covered Mount Sinai for six days before God spoke to Moses on the seventh. Peter, James, and John form an inner circle who witness events hidden from the other disciples (cf. the raising of Jairus's daughter, Mark 5:37, and the agony in Gethsemane, 26:37). The phrase *kat' idian* ('by themselves, privately') emphasizes the exclusive, revelatory nature of the experience.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 24:16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The verb *metemorphothe* ('was transfigured, was transformed') describes a change of form (*morphe*), not merely appearance. The passive voice implies divine agency — God transforms Jesus. The shining face echoes Moses descending from Sinai with radiant skin (Exodus 34:29-35), but here the glory is Jesus's own, not reflected. The similes — face like the sun, clothes like light — push human language to its limits describing divine splendor.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 34:29-35. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. Moses represents the Torah (the Law) and Elijah represents the Prophets — together they embody the entirety of Old Testament revelation. Both experienced theophanies on mountains (Sinai/Horeb). Both had unusual departures from earthly life (Moses's hidden burial, Deuteronomy 34:5-6; Elijah's ascent in a chariot of fire, 2 Kings 2:11). The verb *syllalountes* ('conversing with') indicates an active exchange, not mere presence. Luke 9:31 specifies they discussed Jesus's 'departure' (*exodus*) in Jerusalem.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 34:5-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Kings 2:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The word *skenas* ('tents, shelters, tabernacles') evokes the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), when Israel dwelt in temporary shelters commemorating the wilderness wandering and God's presence among them. Peter's instinct to build three shelters may reflect a desire to prolong the moment of divine encounter, or an attempt to honor all three figures equally — a misunderstanding the divine voice will correct. Matthew's 'if you wish' (*ei theleis*) is more deferential than Mark's account, which notes Peter did not know what to say (Mark 9:6).
5. The bright cloud (*nephele photeina*) is the *shekinah* — the visible manifestation of God's presence that led Israel through the wilderness (Exodus 13:21-22) and filled the tabernacle and temple (Exodus 40:34-35, 1 Kings 8:10-11). The verb *epeskiasen* ('overshadowed') is the same word used of the Spirit overshadowing Mary in Luke 1:35. The divine voice repeats the baptismal declaration (3:17) with the crucial addition *akouete autou* ('listen to him'), echoing Deuteronomy 18:15 — the promise that God would raise up a prophet like Moses whom the people must heed. This command elevates Jesus above Moses and Elijah.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 13:21-22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 40:34-35 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Kings 8:10-11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 18:15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Falling facedown (*epesan epi prosopon auton*) is the standard Old Testament response to a theophany — encountering the unmediated presence of God (cf. Genesis 17:3, Ezekiel 1:28, Daniel 8:17). The adverb *sphodra* ('extremely, greatly') intensifies their fear. This is not reverent awe but overwhelming terror in the presence of the divine.

6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 17:3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 1:28. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 8:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The physical touch (*hapsamenos auton*) bridges the gap between divine encounter and human comfort. The command 'do not be afraid' (*me phobeisthe*) echoes the angelic reassurance given throughout Scripture when humans encounter the divine (Genesis 15:1, Daniel 10:12, Luke 1:30). Jesus mediates between the overwhelming divine presence and his terrified friends.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 15:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 10:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The phrase 'Jesus himself, alone' (*auton Iesoun monon*) is theologically precise — Moses and Elijah have departed, and only Jesus remains. The Law and the Prophets have borne their witness and yielded the stage to the one they pointed toward. The disciples' gaze is redirected to Jesus alone, fulfilling the command 'Listen to him.'
9. The word *horama* ('vision') is Matthew's term for what they witnessed — it classifies the Transfiguration as a revelatory experience. The command to silence is tied to the resurrection: only after the cross and empty tomb will the Transfiguration be properly understood. Before the resurrection, glory without suffering would feed exactly the wrong kind of messianic expectation.
10. The disciples' question arises naturally from what they have just seen: if Elijah has appeared on the mountain, what about the scribal teaching (based on Malachi 4:5) that Elijah must return before the messianic age? The word *proton* ('first') reflects the expectation that Elijah's return would precede and prepare for the Messiah's arrival.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Malachi 4:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. Jesus affirms the scribal expectation: Elijah will come and 'restore all things' (*apokatastisei panta*). The verb *apokathistemi* ('to restore, to reestablish') implies returning something to its original state. In the Malachi context, Elijah's mission is to turn the hearts of fathers to children and children to fathers before the great day of the LORD.
12. Jesus identifies John the Baptist as the Elijah who was to come — a typological, not literal, fulfillment. The phrase 'they did not recognize him' (*ouk epegnosan auton*) parallels Israel's historic failure to recognize its prophets. The ominous parallel 'in the same way the Son of Man is also going to suffer' links John's fate (beheading by Herod, 14:1-12) to Jesus's approaching passion. The pattern is clear: Israel rejects its prophets, and it will reject its Messiah.
13. Matthew, characteristically, resolves the disciples' confusion (cf. 16:12). The verb *synekan* ('they understood') indicates genuine comprehension. The identification of John with Elijah is not reincarnation but prophetic typology — John came 'in the spirit and power of Elijah' (Luke 1:17).
14. The descent from the mountain to the crowd creates a sharp narrative contrast — from divine glory to human suffering. The participle *gonypeton* ('kneeling') indicates a posture of urgent supplication. The scene parallels the descent of Moses from Sinai to find Israel's failure below (Exodus 32).
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 32. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The verb *seleniazetai* (literally 'is moon-struck') was associated with epileptic-like seizures, believed in the ancient world to be influenced by the moon. We render it 'has seizures' since modern English 'lunatic' carries different connotations. Matthew retains both the medical description (seizures) and the spiritual diagnosis (demon-possession, v. 18), without reducing one to the other. The dangerous symptoms — falling into fire and water — indicate the severity and life-threatening nature of the condition.
16. The disciples' failure is significant because Jesus had explicitly given them authority over unclean spirits (10:1). The verb *edyneethesan* ('they were able') with the negation *ouk* indicates inability, not unwillingness. The father's turning from the disciples to Jesus underscores the gap between delegated authority and its source.
17. The exclamation echoes Moses's frustration with Israel in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 32:5, 20). The adjective *diastrammene* ('twisted, perverted, distorted') describes a generation that has bent away from its proper orientation toward God. The double 'how long' (*heos pote*) expresses both exhaustion and anticipation of departure. The rebuke is directed broadly — at the disciples, the crowd, the entire generation — not just the father.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 32:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verb *epetimesen* ('rebuked') is a word of authoritative command, the same term used for rebuking the wind and sea (8:26). The healing is instantaneous — 'from that very hour' (*apo tes horas ekeines*) — and requires no ritual, no incantation, only Jesus's word of command. The contrast with the disciples' failure is total.

19. The private setting (kat' idian) suggests the disciples are embarrassed by their public failure. Their question is honest: they had been given authority (10:1) and had exercised it successfully (cf. Luke 10:17), so what went wrong? The answer in the next verse will locate the problem in their faith, not their authority.
20. The word oligopistian ('littleness of faith') is the noun form of the adjective oligopistos used throughout Matthew. The mustard seed was proverbially the smallest seed in Palestinian agriculture. The paradox is deliberate: their faith does not need to be large — even the smallest genuine faith can accomplish the impossible. 'This mountain' (to orei touto) may gesture toward the mountain they have just descended, or may simply be a proverbial expression for any insurmountable obstacle.
21. Verse 21 is absent from the earliest and most reliable Greek manuscripts, including Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, and is not included in the SBLGNT critical text. It appears to have been added from Mark 9:29 in later manuscripts. The KJV includes it because it follows the Textus Receptus tradition. We omit it following the SBLGNT.
22. The verb systrefomenon ('gathering, assembling') suggests the disciples came together, possibly after dispersal. The verb paradidosthai ('to be delivered, to be handed over, to be betrayed') is a key passion term — the same word used for Judas's betrayal (26:15-16) and for God 'handing over' Jesus (Romans 8:32). The wordplay between 'Son of Man' (huios tou anthropou) and 'hands of people' (cheiras anthron) creates a bitter irony: the quintessential human will be killed by humans.
23. This second passion prediction (cf. 16:21) is briefer and more blunt than the first — no specification of who will kill him, just the stark 'they will kill him.' The passive 'will be raised' (egertheesetai) again implies God as agent. The disciples' response — deep grief (elypeethesan sphodra) rather than Peter's rebuke of 16:22 — suggests they are beginning to accept what Jesus is saying, even if they do not fully understand it.
24. The didrachma was a two-drachma coin equivalent to the half-shekel temple tax required annually of every Jewish male aged twenty and above (Exodus 30:11-16). The tax supported the daily operations of the Jerusalem temple. The collectors' question implies uncertainty about whether Jesus would comply — his stance toward the temple was already controversial.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 30:11-16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. Peter answers affirmatively without consulting Jesus. The verb proephthasen ('anticipated, spoke first') indicates Jesus raised the topic before Peter could report the conversation, displaying supernatural awareness. The analogy is straightforward: kings tax their subjects, not their own family. The implication — that Jesus as God's Son is exempt from a tax paid to God's temple — is a subtle Christological claim.
26. The conclusion is logical: if kings tax outsiders, not their children, then the Son of God is exempt from the tax levied for God's house. The adjective eleutheroi ('free, exempt') carries both legal (exempt from tax) and theological (free as sons) force. This is one of the subtlest Christological declarations in Matthew — Jesus claims the status of God's Son through an analogy rather than a direct statement.
27. Despite being exempt, Jesus pays the tax 'so that we do not cause them to stumble' (hina me skandalisomen autous) — the same concern for others' conscience that Paul will later develop (Romans 14, 1 Corinthians 8). The stater (stateera) was a four-drachma coin — exactly enough for two persons' temple tax. The miraculous provision of the coin in the fish's mouth is unique to Matthew and has no parallel elsewhere in the Gospels. Notably, Matthew does not narrate the execution of the miracle — only the instruction. Peter's inclusion ('for me and for you') underscores his special role as Jesus's representative.

18

Summary: *Matthew 18 is the fourth major discourse in Matthew's Gospel, focused on relationships within the community of disciples. It opens with the question 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' and Jesus's answer: a child. The chapter addresses the seriousness of causing others to stumble, the parable of the lost sheep, procedures for resolving conflict within the community, the authority of binding and loosing given to the assembled church, the promise of Jesus's presence wherever two or three gather, and Peter's question about the limits of forgiveness. The discourse climaxes with the parable of the unforgiving servant, whose enormous debt is forgiven by his master only for him to refuse mercy to a fellow servant who owes him a trivial sum.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter contains Matthew's only other use of ekklesia ('church,' also in 16:18), here referring not to a universal institution but to a local assembly with authority to adjudicate disputes. The forgiveness teaching is radical — Peter's suggestion of 'seven times' already exceeds normal rabbinic expectations, but Jesus's 'seventy-seven times' (or 'seventy times seven') demolishes all counting. The parable of the unforgiving servant makes the theological logic explicit: those who have received immeasurable forgiveness from God are obligated to extend proportional forgiveness to others. The chapter's movement from the greatness of children to the mechanics of community discipline to unlimited forgiveness creates a coherent vision of kingdom community.*

Translation Friction: The 'stumbling block' passage (vv. 6-9) uses hyperbolic language about millstones, cutting off hands, and plucking out eyes that must be read as deliberate exaggeration for rhetorical force, not literal instruction. The church discipline procedure (vv. 15-17) ending in treating someone 'as a Gentile and a tax collector' is ironic in a Gospel where Jesus befriends precisely those people. The debt figures in the parable are deliberately extreme — ten thousand talents is an astronomically impossible sum, making the contrast with one hundred denarii all the more devastating.

Connections: The child as model of greatness inverts the disciples' question and connects to 19:13-15. The lost sheep parable parallels Luke 15:3-7 but is applied differently — in Luke it is about seeking sinners, in Matthew about caring for vulnerable community members. The binding and loosing authority (v. 18) extends what was given to Peter in 16:19 to the whole community. 'Seventy-seven times' (v. 22) may echo Genesis 4:24, where Lamech boasts of seventy-sevenfold vengeance — Jesus inverts the principle from vengeance to forgiveness. The unforgiving servant parable connects to the Lord's Prayer petition 'forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors' (6:12).

¹At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" ²He called a child over and placed him in the middle of them ³Said, truly I tell you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you will not enter into heaven's kingdom. ⁴Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. ⁶But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble — it would be better for that person to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the open sea. ⁷Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! It is inevitable that stumbling blocks will come, but woe to the person through whom the stumbling block comes. ⁸If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of Gehenna. ¹⁰"See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father who is in heaven. ¹²What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them wanders off, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go search for the one that wandered away? ¹³And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that did not wander off. ¹⁴In the same way, it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost. ¹⁵"If your brother sins against you, go and point out the fault to him privately, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother back. ¹⁶But if he does not listen, take one or two others with you, so that every matter may be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them." ²¹Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how many times will my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" ²²Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. ²³"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴When he began to settle them, one was brought to him who owed ten thousand talents. ²⁵Since he could not repay, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife and children and everything he had, in order to make payment. ²⁶So the servant fell down and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Be patient with me, and I will repay you everything.' ²⁷Moved with compassion, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the loan. ²⁸But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe!' ²⁹So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Be patient with me, and I will repay you.' ³⁰But he refused and went and threw him into prison until he should pay back what was owed. ³¹When his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply distressed and went and reported to their master everything that had taken place. ³²Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his master handed him over to the jailers to

be tortured until he should repay all that was owed. ³⁵So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The question about rank (tis ara meizon, 'who then is greatest') reveals the disciples' persistent misunderstanding of kingdom values. The particle ara ('then') connects this to the preceding events — perhaps Peter's special role in chapter 16 or the inner circle's experience on the mountain in chapter 17 has provoked a status competition. This question provides the occasion for the entire discourse.
2. The word paidion ('child, little child') refers to a young child, not an infant. Jesus uses a visual object lesson — the child stands before the disciples as a living illustration. In the ancient world, children had no social status, no legal standing, and no claim to honor. Setting a child in the center of a discussion about greatness is a deliberate inversion.
3. The verb straphete ('turn, turn around') implies a fundamental reorientation — not merely adding humility to existing ambition but reversing direction entirely. The double negative ou me ('never, absolutely not') is the strongest negation possible in Greek. Jesus does not answer the question 'Who is the greatest?' but instead challenges the premise: without becoming like children, they will not even enter the kingdom, let alone rank within it.
4. The verb tapeinosei ('will humble') is active, not passive — it requires deliberate self-lowering. The child models not innocence or simplicity (neither is the point) but lack of status. The child has no accomplishments, no rank, no claim. Whoever voluntarily occupies that position — expecting nothing, claiming nothing — is, paradoxically, the greatest.
5. The verb dexetai ('welcomes, receives') means to accept someone into one's care and fellowship. The phrase 'in my name' (epi to onomati mou) means on the basis of allegiance to Jesus. Jesus identifies himself with the lowest-status members of the community — to welcome a child (or anyone without social power) is to welcome Christ himself. This principle is expanded in 25:31-46.
6. The 'little ones' (ton mikron touton) shifts from literal children to vulnerable believers within the community. The verb skandalise ('to cause to stumble, to lead into sin') is the same root as 'stumbling block' in 16:23. The mylos onikos ('donkey millstone') is the large stone turned by a donkey, as opposed to the smaller hand-mill — large enough to ensure drowning. The image is deliberately gruesome: causing a vulnerable believer to fall away from faith is worse than a violent death.
7. The exclamation ouai ('woe') is a prophetic warning of judgment, not merely an expression of sorrow. The word ananke ('necessity, inevitability') acknowledges that in a fallen world, stumbling blocks are unavoidable — but this inevitability does not excuse the individual who serves as the instrument of harm. The tension between divine sovereignty (it must happen) and human responsibility (woe to the person) is maintained without resolution.
8. This saying parallels 5:29-30 but extends from eye and hand to include the foot. The language is hyperbolic — Jesus is not commanding literal self-mutilation but emphasizing the radical seriousness of anything that leads to sin. 'Eternal fire' (to pyr to aionion) uses aionios, which corresponds to the Hebrew olam — a duration whose end is beyond sight. The contrast between 'life' (zoe) and 'eternal fire' frames the ultimate stakes.
9. Here Matthew uses geenna ('Gehenna') rather than 'eternal fire' — Gehenna refers to the Valley of Hinnom (ge-hinnom) south of Jerusalem, associated with child sacrifice (2 Kings 23:10, Jeremiah 7:31) and later with divine judgment. By Jesus's time it had become a metaphor for the place of final punishment. We preserve 'Gehenna' rather than using 'hell,' which carries accumulated English connotations beyond the original term.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Kings 23:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 7:31. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The verb kataphronesete ('despise, look down on') literally means to 'think down upon' — to regard as insignificant. The reference to 'their angels' (hoi angeloi auton) is the clearest New Testament basis for the concept of guardian angels. The phrase 'continually see the face of my Father' (dia pantos blepousin to prosopon tou patros mou) indicates these angels have direct, uninterrupted access to God — the highest court privilege, reserved for those with immediate access to the king. The little ones have powerful advocates.
11. Verse 11 is absent from the earliest manuscripts (Sinaiticus, Vaticanus) and is not included in the SBLGNT critical text. It appears to have been imported from Luke 19:10 by later scribes. We omit it following the SBLGNT.
12. The opening question 'What do you think?' (ti hymin dokei) draws the audience into the parable as participants. The verb planetee ('wanders off, goes astray') can refer to both physical wandering and spiritual error (the English 'planet' derives from the same root — 'wanderer'). Unlike Luke's version (15:3-7), which addresses Pharisees about seeking sinners, Matthew's context applies the parable to the care of vulnerable community members ('these little ones').
13. The conditional 'if he finds it' (ean genetai heurein auto) introduces a note of realism — finding is not guaranteed. But the joy when it happens is disproportionate to the arithmetic: one sheep out of a hundred. This disproportion reveals the heart of God toward the vulnerable and lost. The solemn 'truly I tell you' (amen lego hymin) elevates the parable's conclusion to authoritative teaching.
14. The phrase 'the will of your Father' (thelema emprosthen tou patros hymon) uses the Semitic idiom 'will before' — literally 'it is not will before your Father,' meaning 'it is not your Father's desire.' The verb apoletai ('be lost, perish, be destroyed') carries both temporal (wandering from the community) and eternal (final destruction) connotations. The application is clear: the community must pursue its wandering members because God

does not want any of them lost.

15. The phrase 'against you' (eis se) is in brackets in the SBLGNT, indicating textual uncertainty — some manuscripts omit it, making the passage about any sin rather than personal offense. The verb elegxon ('point out, reprove, convict') implies direct, honest confrontation — not gossip, not avoidance, not public shaming. The verb ekerdesas ('you have won, gained') treats the restoration of the relationship as a profit or gain. The procedure begins with the smallest possible circle: one on one.
16. The escalation from private to semi-private follows the legal principle of Deuteronomy 19:15, where two or three witnesses are required to establish a charge. The phrase epi stomatos ('by the mouth of') is a Septuagint quotation. The witnesses serve a dual purpose: to verify the original confrontation was fair and to add weight to the appeal for repentance.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 19:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The verb parakouse ('refuses to listen, disregards') is stronger than mere failure to hear — it implies deliberate rejection. This is the only use of ekklesia ('church, assembly') in the Gospels outside of 16:18. The final status — 'as a Gentile and a tax collector' (hosper ho ethnikos kai ho telones) — places the unrepentant person outside the covenant community. The irony is profound: in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is known precisely for welcoming Gentiles and tax collectors (9:10-11, 15:21-28). This may imply not permanent rejection but a new starting point — they become objects of mission rather than members of the community.
18. This repeats the binding and loosing authority given to Peter in 16:19 but now extends it to the community as a whole (the verbs are second person plural). In rabbinic usage, 'binding' (deo) meant declaring something forbidden, and 'loosing' (lyo) meant declaring it permitted. The periphrastic future perfect (estai dedemena, 'will have been bound') may indicate that the community's decisions ratify what heaven has already determined. The community acts with divine backing, not ahead of it.
19. The verb symphonesousin ('agree, harmonize') is the root of 'symphony' — it implies not mere verbal agreement but genuine harmony of purpose. In context, this refers to the community's prayers in connection with the discipline process just described, not a blank check for any request. The word pragmatos ('matter, thing, case') has legal overtones, supporting the judicial context.
20. This promise echoes the Jewish rabbinic saying that when two or three study Torah together, the Shekinah (divine presence) is among them. Jesus replaces Torah with himself ('in my name,' eis to emon onoma) as the gathering point that guarantees divine presence. The phrase 'there I am' (ekei eimi) may echo the divine self-disclosure formula of the Old Testament. In context, this assures the community that their discipline decisions are made in Jesus's presence, not by human authority alone.
21. Peter's suggestion of seven times is already generous — some rabbinic traditions limited the obligation to forgive the same person to three times (based on Amos 1:3, 'for three transgressions'). Peter doubles it and adds one for good measure. The number seven also carries symbolic weight as the number of completeness. Peter assumes forgiveness must have a reasonable upper limit.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Amos 1:3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The Greek hebdomekontakis hepta is ambiguous — it can mean either 'seventy-seven times' or 'seventy times seven' (490). Either way, the point is the same: Jesus is not setting a higher limit but abolishing limits altogether. The number may deliberately invert Genesis 4:24, where Lamech boasts of seventy-sevenfold vengeance. Where Lamech's vengeance was boundless, Jesus's forgiveness must be equally boundless.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 4:24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The introductory formula homoiothe he basileia ton ouranon ('the kingdom of heaven may be compared to') introduces one of Matthew's most powerful parables. The phrase synarai logon ('settle accounts, take a reckoning') is a financial term — the king is auditing his servants' management of royal funds. The 'servants' (douloi) in a royal context are high-ranking officials entrusted with significant resources.
24. Ten thousand talents (myrion talanton) is a deliberately absurd sum. A talent was the largest unit of currency, and ten thousand (myrioi) was the largest named number in Greek. The total would be roughly equivalent to 200,000 years of a laborer's wages — an unpayable debt, the entire annual tax revenue of a major province several times over. The exaggeration is the point: this is how large human sin-debt is before God.
25. The sale of a debtor and his family into slavery was legally practiced in the ancient Near East (cf. 2 Kings 4:1, Nehemiah 5:5). Even this drastic measure would raise only a tiny fraction of ten thousand talents — the gesture is more punitive than practical. The inclusion of 'wife and children and everything he had' underscores the totality of the ruin.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Kings 4:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Nehemiah 5:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The verb prosekynei ('prostrated himself, worshipped') indicates complete submission. The verb makrothymeson ('be patient, be long-suffering') literally means 'be long-tempered' — the opposite of short-tempered. The servant's promise to 'repay everything' (panta apodoso soi) is transparently absurd given the size of the debt — but desperation makes impossible promises. The irony is that the master does something far better than patience: he forgives the debt entirely.

- 27.** The verb *splanchnistheis* ('moved with compassion') is the same visceral term used of Jesus in 15:32 — gut-level mercy. The verb *apheeken* ('forgave, released, let go') is the standard term for forgiveness in the New Testament. The master does not merely defer payment or reduce the amount — he cancels the entire astronomical debt. This is the parable's image of God's forgiveness: total, unmerited, beyond all reasonable expectation.
- 28.** The contrast is devastating. A hundred denarii was about four months' wages for a day laborer — a real debt, but roughly one six-hundred-thousandth of ten thousand talents. The physical violence (*kratesas auton epnigen*, 'seized him and began to choke him') is shocking after the mercy just received. The verb *pnigo* ('to choke, to strangle') is graphic. The demand 'Pay back what you owe' (*apodos ei ti opheileis*) uses the same language the servant used in his own plea (v. 26) — he has learned nothing from his own experience of mercy.
- 29.** The fellow servant's plea is virtually identical to the first servant's plea in verse 26 — the same posture (falling down), the same words (*makrothymeson*, 'be patient'), the same promise to repay. The parallel is deliberately precise so that the first servant's refusal in the next verse is maximally damning. The difference is that this promise is actually keepable — a hundred denarii could be repaid.
- 30.** The blunt 'he refused' (*ouk eethelen*, literally 'he was not willing') stands in stark contrast to the master's compassion. Imprisonment for debt was common in the ancient world, though it paradoxically made repayment harder since the prisoner could not earn. The verb *ebalen* ('threw') conveys harsh treatment.
- 31.** The fellow servants' distress (*elypethesan sphodra*) and their report to the master serve as witnesses within the parable. The verb *diesaphesan* ('reported clearly, explained in detail') implies they gave a thorough account. The community of servants functions as a moral check — they recognize the injustice and bring it to the authority who can act.
- 32.** The address *doule ponere* ('wicked servant') is a judgment — the servant's wickedness is not the original debt but his refusal to extend the mercy he received. The master's words make the logic explicit: 'I forgave you... because you pleaded' — the forgiveness was real, complete, and generous. What follows reveals the condition that was always implicit.
- 33.** The verb *edei* ('it was necessary, you ought to have') expresses moral obligation — receiving mercy creates the duty to show mercy. The verb *eleesai* ('to show mercy, to have compassion') echoes the prayer of 'Lord, have mercy' (*kyrie, eleeson*) that runs through the Gospel. The question is rhetorical: the answer is obvious, and the servant's failure is inexcusable.
- 34.** The verb *paredoken* ('handed over') is the same verb used for Jesus being 'handed over' to death (17:22, 26:15). The *basanistais* ('torturers, jailers who torture') indicates not merely imprisonment but active punishment. Since the debt of ten thousand talents can never be repaid, the punishment is effectively permanent. The parable's ending is deliberately harsh — unforgiveness brings devastating consequences.
- 35.** The application is direct and severe: 'my heavenly Father will do the same to you.' The qualifier 'from your heart' (*apo ton kardion hymon*) rules out mere formal or verbal forgiveness — the forgiveness must be genuine, internal, and complete. This connects to 6:14-15 (the Lord's Prayer commentary) and 5:23-24 (reconciliation before worship). The entire discourse that began with a question about greatness ends with a warning about the necessity of heartfelt forgiveness.

19

Summary: *Matthew 19 marks Jesus's departure from Galilee toward Judea and his final journey to Jerusalem. The chapter addresses marriage, divorce, and celibacy in response to Pharisaic testing; Jesus blesses children who are brought to him; and a rich young man asks what he must do to inherit eternal life, only to depart in sorrow when told to sell everything. Jesus's declaration that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom provokes the disciples' astonished question, 'Who then can be saved?' The chapter closes with Peter's question about the disciples' reward and Jesus's promise of the twelve thrones and the hundredfold return.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Jesus's teaching on divorce is one of his most direct engagements with Mosaic law. He distinguishes between what Moses permitted (divorce certificate, Deuteronomy 24:1) and what God intended from the beginning (permanent one-flesh union, Genesis 1:27, 2:24). The 'exception clause' (*porneia*, v. 9) is unique to Matthew and has generated centuries of interpretation. The rich young man episode reveals the radical economic demands of discipleship — the man is not condemned for immorality but for attachment to wealth. The disciples' shock ('Who then can be saved?') shows that wealth was commonly understood as a sign of divine favor, making Jesus's teaching genuinely disorienting.*

Translation Friction: *The exception clause 'except for sexual immorality' (*me epi porneia*) in verse 9 is unique to Matthew (absent from Mark 10:11, Luke 16:18). The meaning of *porneia* is debated — it could refer to adultery, incest, premarital unfaithfulness during betrothal, or sexual immorality broadly. We render the Greek term and note the debate. The disciples' reaction in verse 10 ('it is better not to marry') suggests they found*

Jesus's teaching restrictive. Jesus's response about 'eunuchs for the kingdom' (v. 12) is unusual language that has been interpreted variously. The 'eye of a needle' saying (v. 24) is clearly hyperbolic; attempts to identify it as a small gate in Jerusalem are medieval inventions without ancient support.

Connections: The divorce teaching connects to Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 (creation ordinance), Deuteronomy 24:1-4 (Mosaic concession), and Malachi 2:13-16 ('God hates divorce'). The blessing of children connects back to 18:1-5. The rich young man's question echoes Deuteronomy 30:15-20 (choose life). Jesus's promise of twelve thrones (v. 28) connects to Daniel 7:9 (thrones set up) and Luke 22:28-30. The 'regeneration' (palingenesia, v. 28) is a term used in Stoic philosophy for cosmic renewal and here refers to the eschatological new creation.

¹When Jesus had finished these words, he left Galilee and went to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ²Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. ³Some Pharisees came to him to test him and asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?" ⁴He answered, "Have you not read that the one who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵Stated, For this cause will a man leave Father and mother, and will cleave to his wife — then they twain will be one flesh? ⁶So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no person separate." ⁷They said to him, "Why then did Moses command a certificate of divorce to be given, and to send her away?" ⁸He said to them, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of your hardness of heart, but from the beginning it was not this way. ⁹I tell you that whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." ¹⁰The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." ¹¹He said to them, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. ¹²For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb, there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to accept this accept it." ¹³Then children were brought to him so that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." ¹⁵After laying his hands on them, he went on from there. ¹⁶And someone came up to him and said, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to have eternal life?" ¹⁷He said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." ¹⁸He said to him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, "You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, ¹⁹Honour your Father and your mother — and, you shalt love your neighbour as thyself. ²⁰The young man said to him, "I have kept all these. What do I still lack?" ²¹Jesus said to him, "If you want to be complete, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." ²²When the young man heard this, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions. ²³Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁵When the disciples heard this, they were utterly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?" ²⁶Jesus looked at them and said, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." ²⁷Then Peter answered him, "See, we have left everything and followed you. What then will there be for us?" ²⁸Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, in the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The formula 'when Jesus had finished these words' (hote etelesen ho Iesous tous logous toutous) marks the end of the fourth discourse (chapter 18), paralleling the formula at the end of each major discourse in Matthew (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1). The phrase 'beyond the Jordan' (peran tou Iordanou) refers to Perea, the region east of the Jordan. This marks the beginning of Jesus's final journey toward Jerusalem.
2. The summary statement of healing serves as a transition, indicating that Jesus's ministry continues even as the narrative shifts geographically toward Jerusalem. The crowds' following (ekoloutheesan) uses the verb that regularly describes discipleship.
3. The participle peirazontes ('testing') marks hostile intent. The phrase kata pasan aitian ('for any reason') reflects the debate between the rabbinic schools of Hillel and Shammai. Hillel's school allowed divorce for virtually any cause (including a burnt meal); Shammai's school restricted it to sexual immorality. The Pharisees are asking Jesus to take a side in a live controversy.

4. The phrase 'have you not read' (ouk anegnote) is a pointed challenge to biblical scholars — of course they have read it, but they have not understood it. Jesus appeals past the Mosaic legislation to the creation narrative (Genesis 1:27), establishing God's original design as the authoritative standard. The phrase *ap' arches* ('from the beginning') grounds the argument in the creation order.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 1:27. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Jesus now quotes Genesis 2:24. The verb *kollethesetai* ('will be joined, will be united, will cling to') is a strong term suggesting permanent adhesion. The phrase 'one flesh' (*sarka mian*) describes a union that creates a new entity — not merely a legal arrangement but an ontological change. The logic builds toward the conclusion in verse 6.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 2:24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The verb *synezeyxen* ('joined together, yoked together') is a strong term — the same root as 'yoke' (*zeugos*). God himself is identified as the agent of the union, not merely the officiant. The prohibition 'let no person separate' (*anthropos me chorizeto*) places the onus on human beings: divorce is a human act that undoes what God has done. Jesus transcends the Hillel-Shammai debate by returning to creation theology.
7. The Pharisees cite Deuteronomy 24:1-4 as a counterargument. Note their verb: they say Moses 'commanded' (*eneteilato*) divorce. Jesus will correct this in verse 8 — Moses did not command divorce; he permitted it. The *biblion apostasiou* ('certificate of divorce, document of separation') was a legal document that freed the woman to remarry. The Pharisees treat the Mosaic provision as normative; Jesus will treat it as a concession.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Jesus makes two crucial corrections. First, Moses 'permitted' (*epetrepsen*), not 'commanded' — divorce is a concession, not an ideal. Second, the reason for the concession is 'hardness of heart' (*sklerokardia*, literally 'hard-heartedness'), a term used in the Old Testament for Israel's stubborn resistance to God's will (cf. Deuteronomy 10:16, Jeremiah 4:4). Jesus's phrase 'from the beginning' (*ap' arches*) reasserts the creation ideal as the standard by which all subsequent legislation must be measured.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 10:16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 4:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The 'exception clause' (*me epi porneia*, 'except for sexual immorality') is unique to Matthew (cf. 5:32). The Greek *porneia* is broader than *moicheia* ('adultery') and can encompass any serious sexual transgression — its exact scope here is heavily debated. Some scholars argue it refers specifically to incestuous marriages (as in Acts 15:20, 29), others to adultery, others to premarital unfaithfulness. The SBLGNT text does not include the final clause about marrying a divorced woman, which appears in some manuscripts and the KJV tradition (*Textus Receptus*).
10. The disciples' reaction reveals how radical Jesus's teaching is — they conclude that if divorce is so restricted, marriage itself becomes too risky. The phrase *ou sympherei gamesai* ('it is not advantageous to marry') uses the language of practical calculation. Their response shows they understood Jesus to be significantly restricting the prevailing norms.
11. The phrase *ton logon touton* ('this word') is ambiguous — does 'this word' refer to the disciples' suggestion about not marrying, or to Jesus's teaching about divorce? The context suggests the former: not everyone has the gift of celibacy. The passive 'it has been given' (*dedotai*) implies God as the giver — celibacy, like marriage, is a divine calling.
12. Jesus identifies three categories of celibacy: congenital (born eunuchs), imposed (castrated by others, as was common for court officials), and voluntary (those who renounce marriage for the kingdom). The third category is metaphorical — Jesus is not advocating self-mutilation but describing those who voluntarily forgo marriage to devote themselves entirely to God's purposes. The closing invitation 'let the one who is able to accept this accept it' (*ho dynamenos chorein choreito*) acknowledges this is an extraordinary calling, not a universal requirement.
13. The passive *prosenechthesan* ('were brought') indicates parents bringing their children. The purpose — laying on of hands and prayer — is a request for blessing, not healing. The disciples' rebuke (*epetimesan*) suggests they thought Jesus's time was too valuable for children. This echoes their misunderstanding of 'the greatest in the kingdom' from 18:1-5 — they still have not grasped the lesson.
14. The double command — 'let' (*aphete*) and 'do not hinder' (*me koluete*) — corrects the disciples forcefully. The phrase *ton toiouton* ('of such as these') means 'people who are like these children' — those who come with the humility, dependence, and lack of status that characterize children. This reiterates the teaching of 18:3-4.
15. Jesus does exactly what was requested — he lays hands on the children. The simple narrative detail contrasts with the disciples' attempted barrier. Matthew's account is briefer than Mark's (10:16), which adds that Jesus embraced the children.
16. Matthew's version differs from Mark's ('Good Teacher'). Here the man asks 'what good thing' (*ti agathon*) rather than addressing Jesus as 'Good Teacher.' The question assumes that eternal life (*zoe aionios*) can be secured by performing a specific act. The man's approach is sincere — he is not testing Jesus — but his framework is transactional: what must I do to earn this?
17. Matthew's version redirects the question: 'Why do you ask me about the good?' rather than Mark's 'Why do you call me good?' (Mark 10:18). The statement 'there is only one who is good' (*heis estin ho agathos*) points to God as the sole source of goodness. Jesus's answer — 'keep the commandments' (*tereson tas entolas*) — meets the man where he is: if you want to approach this through doing, then the commandments are the

starting point.

18. The man's follow-up question 'Which ones?' (poias) may reflect genuine uncertainty or a desire for a specific checklist. Jesus cites commandments from the second table of the Decalogue — those governing human relationships (sixth through ninth commandments). The absence of the first four commandments (duties toward God) is notable and may be deliberate, as the man's real deficiency involves his relationship with God, not his ethical conduct.
19. Jesus adds the fifth commandment (honor parents) and Leviticus 19:18 ('love your neighbor as yourself'). The addition of the love command is significant — it summarizes the ethical intent of all the commandments Jesus has listed and signals that mere prohibition is insufficient; positive love is required.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 19:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Matthew identifies the man as *neaniskos* ('young man'), providing a detail the other Synoptics convey differently (Mark says Jesus loved him, Luke calls him a ruler). His claim to have kept all the commandments (*panta tauta ephylaxa*) is presented sincerely, not arrogantly. His question 'What do I still lack?' (*ti eti hystero*) reveals an awareness that commandment-keeping has not brought the assurance of eternal life he seeks.
21. The adjective *teleios* ('perfect, complete, mature') does not mean sinless perfection but wholeness — the young man's lack is not moral failure but incomplete devotion. The sequence of commands — go, sell, give, come, follow — dismantles the barrier between the man and full discipleship. 'Treasure in heaven' (*thesauron en ouranois*) contrasts with earthly treasure (cf. 6:19-21). The final imperative 'follow me' (*akolouthei moi*) is the definitive invitation to discipleship.
22. The participle *lypoumenos* ('grieving, sorrowing') indicates that the departure was not callous but painful. He understood what Jesus was asking and could not bring himself to do it. The phrase 'many possessions' (*ktemata polla*) explains his grief — his wealth owned him more than he owned it. He is the only person in the Gospels who is explicitly called to follow Jesus and walks away.
23. The adverb *dyskolos* ('with difficulty, hardly') indicates not impossibility but severe difficulty. The solemn introduction 'Truly I tell you' elevates this to authoritative teaching. In Jewish tradition, wealth was often viewed as a sign of divine blessing (cf. Deuteronomy 28:1-14), making Jesus's warning deeply counterintuitive.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 28:1-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. The image is deliberately absurd — a camel (*kamelon*), the largest animal in Palestine, through the eye of a needle (*trypēmatos raphidos*), the smallest opening imaginable. Medieval interpreters invented a small gate called 'the eye of the needle' in Jerusalem, but no such gate is historically attested. The hyperbole is the point: this is humanly impossible. Matthew uses 'kingdom of God' (*basileia tou theou*) here rather than his usual 'kingdom of heaven,' perhaps following his source.
25. The verb *exeplessonto* ('were utterly astonished, were struck with amazement') is one of the strongest terms for shock in Greek. Their reasoning is clear: if even the rich — those who appear most blessed by God — cannot enter the kingdom, then who can? The question *ti ara dynatai sotheenai* ('Who then can be saved?') assumes what many first-century Jews assumed: wealth indicates divine favor. If God's favorites cannot be saved, salvation is impossible for everyone.
26. The verb *emblepsas* ('looked directly at, fixed his gaze on') indicates an intentional, significant look. Jesus does not soften his teaching about wealth — he confirms it is humanly impossible. But he adds the decisive qualifier: *para theo panta dynata* ('with God all things are possible'), echoing Genesis 18:14 ('Is anything too hard for the LORD?'). Salvation is God's work, not a human achievement. This reframes the entire conversation from 'What must I do?' (v. 16) to 'What can God do?'
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 18:14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. Peter's statement is factual — the disciples have left occupations, homes, and families (4:18-22). His question *ti ara estai hemin* ('What then will there be for us?') is characteristically blunt. It raises the issue of reward for sacrifice, which Jesus answers without rebuke, suggesting the question is legitimate even if the framing is self-interested.
28. The word *palingenesia* ('regeneration, renewal, rebirth') appears only here and in Titus 3:5 in the New Testament. In Stoic philosophy it referred to the cosmic renewal after periodic destruction. Here it refers to the eschatological restoration of all things — the new creation. 'His glorious throne' (*thronou doxes autou*) alludes to Daniel 7:9-14. The twelve thrones for the twelve apostles judging twelve tribes presents the reconstituted Israel under the authority of Jesus and his chosen leaders.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:9-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. The promise extends beyond the twelve to 'everyone' (*pas hostis*) who sacrifices for Jesus. The list covers property (houses, fields) and family relationships — the full range of human attachment. The 'hundredfold' (*hekatontaplasia*) return and 'eternal life' (*zoen aionion*) represent both present-age blessings (new community, new family in the church) and future-age consummation. The SBLGNT omits 'wife' (*gynaika*), which appears in some manuscripts.

30. This saying reverses human expectations of status and reward — a theme running throughout this chapter (children over adults, poor over rich, servants over rulers). The reversal formula 'first/last, last/first' frames the parable of the workers in the vineyard that immediately follows (20:1-16), which also ends with this saying. The word 'many' (polloi) suggests the reversal is not absolute but widespread.

20

Summary: *Matthew 20 opens with the parable of the workers in the vineyard, where laborers hired at different hours all receive the same pay — a denarius — provoking complaint from those who worked longest. Jesus uses this to illustrate that God's generosity transcends human calculations of merit. The chapter then contains the third and most detailed passion prediction, the ambitious request of James and John's mother for her sons to sit at Jesus's right and left in his kingdom, Jesus's teaching that greatness means servanthood, and the healing of two blind men near Jericho.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The vineyard parable is unique to Matthew and is one of the most provocative stories Jesus tells. It offends our sense of fairness — the workers who labored all day in the heat receive the same wage as those who worked one hour. The landowner's response ('Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?') reframes the issue from justice to generosity. The third passion prediction (vv. 17-19) is the most specific yet, adding details about being handed to Gentiles, mocking, flogging, and crucifixion. The request for honored seats and Jesus's response introduce the cup metaphor for suffering and culminate in the definitive statement of his mission: 'The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'*

Translation Friction: *The parable's apparent unfairness is the point — God's grace does not operate by the merit-based system humans expect. We render the landowner's question in verse 15 as closely as possible to preserve the challenge. The SBLGNT places James and John's mother as the one making the request (v. 20), while Mark 10:35 has the brothers themselves asking — Matthew may be softening the brothers' image. The word lytron ('ransom,' v. 28) has significant theological weight and has been central to atonement theology; we render it directly without interpretive expansion.*

Connections: *The vineyard parable connects to Isaiah 5:1-7 (God's vineyard = Israel) and echoes the 'first shall be last' saying from 19:30. The third passion prediction fulfills the pattern established in 16:21 and 17:22-23. The 'cup' metaphor (v. 22) anticipates Gethsemane (26:39). The 'ransom' saying (v. 28) connects to Isaiah 53:10-12 (the servant who bears others' sins) and the Passover redemption theology. The Jericho healing marks the last stop before Jerusalem.*

¹"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the workers on a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³Going out about the third hour, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace ⁴Stated to them. Go you also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. Then they traveled their way. ⁵So they went. He went out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did the same thing. ⁶About the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' ⁷They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last and ending with the first.' ⁹When those hired about the eleventh hour came, each received a denarius. ¹⁰When the first came, they expected to receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹When they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²Indeed, declaring, These last have wrought but one hour, and you have created them as equal to us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. ¹³But he answered one of them, 'Friend, I am not being unfair to you. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴Take what is yours and go. I choose to give to this last worker the same as I gave to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I want with what belongs to me? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?' ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first last." ¹⁷As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside privately and said to them on the way, ¹⁸"See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes. They will condemn him to death ¹⁹Indeed, will deliver him to the Gentiles to

mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him — and the third day he will come back to life. ²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, kneeling before him and making a request. ²¹He said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Say that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." ²²Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." ²³He said to them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right and at my left is not mine to grant. That is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." ²⁴When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵But Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ²⁶It must not be this way among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷Whosoever will be chief in the midst of you, let him be your servant:. ²⁸Even as the Son of Man arrived not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for numerous. ²⁹As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰And two blind men sitting beside the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" ³¹The crowd rebuked them, telling them to be silent, but they cried out all the louder, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" ³²Jesus stopped and called them, saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³³They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." ³⁴Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes, and immediately they received their sight and followed him.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The parable is introduced with 'For' (gar), connecting it to the 'first shall be last' saying of 19:30. The oikodespotes ('master of the house, landowner') represents God. The vineyard (ampelon) is a traditional Old Testament symbol for Israel (Isaiah 5:1-7). Going out 'early in the morning' (hama proi) indicates the start of the workday at approximately 6:00 AM.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 5:1-7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The verb symphonēsas ('having agreed') indicates a mutual contract. A denarius (denarion) was the standard daily wage for a laborer. The KJV's 'penny' is misleading in modern English; we retain 'denarius' as the specific coin. The agreement establishes a just wage — the later controversy is not about underpayment but about equal payment for unequal work.
3. The 'third hour' (triten horan) is approximately 9:00 AM by Jewish reckoning (counting from sunrise). The marketplace (agora) was where day laborers gathered hoping for employment. The word argous ('idle, unemployed') does not necessarily imply laziness — these workers had no one to hire them.
4. Unlike the first group, these workers receive no specific wage agreement — only the promise of 'whatever is right' (ho ean e dikaion). The word dikaion ('right, just, fair') sets up the parable's central question about what constitutes fairness. These workers must trust the landowner's character.
5. The sixth hour is approximately noon, the ninth hour approximately 3:00 PM. The repeated hiring — at 6 AM, 9 AM, noon, and 3 PM — creates a pattern that makes the final hiring at the eleventh hour (v. 6) the climactic surprise. Each group works progressively less time.
6. The eleventh hour is approximately 5:00 PM — one hour before the workday ends at sundown. These workers have waited all day without employment. The landowner's question is not accusatory but inquisitive, and their answer (v. 7) reveals that unemployment, not laziness, is the cause.
7. Their explanation — 'no one hired us' (oudeis hemas emisthosato) — evokes sympathy. The SBLGNT does not include the additional phrase 'and whatever is right you will receive,' which appears in some manuscripts and the KJV tradition. The landowner simply sends them to work with no stated wage.
8. The instruction to pay 'from the last to the first' (arxamenos apo ton eschaton heos ton proton) is a deliberate narrative device — the first-hired must watch the last-hired receive their pay, which creates the expectation and subsequent outrage that drives the parable's point. The epitropos ('manager, steward') handles the actual payment. The evening payment complies with Leviticus 19:13 and Deuteronomy 24:15, which require same-day wages.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 19:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 24:15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The eleventh-hour workers receive a full denarius for one hour of work. The phrase ana denarion ('a denarius each') emphasizes that every worker in this group received the same amount as was contracted with the first group. This is the parable's surprise — and it sets up the complaint.
10. The verb enomisan ('they supposed, expected') reveals their reasoning: if the last received a full denarius, proportional justice would give the first much more. The phrase kai autoi ('they also') emphasizes the equal treatment that the first group finds unjust. Their expectation is entirely logical by human standards — which is precisely the point.

11. The verb *egongyzon* ('grumbled, murmured') echoes Israel's murmuring against God in the wilderness (Exodus 16:7-8, Numbers 14:2). The allusion is probably deliberate: those who have been provided for complain that others have received undeserved generosity.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 16:7-8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 14:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The complaint is vivid and visceral: 'the burden of the day and the scorching heat' (to baros tes hemeras kai ton kausona) evokes twelve hours of physical labor under the Palestinian sun. The word *isous* ('equal') is the crux — they object not to the last group's payment but to the equality. They want hierarchical reward, not equal generosity. Their grievance feels entirely reasonable, which makes the landowner's response all the more challenging.
13. The address *hetaire* ('friend, companion') is polite but formal — Matthew uses it in contexts of gentle correction or warning (22:12, 26:50). The verb *adiko* ('I wrong, I am unjust to') directly addresses the complaint: no injustice has occurred. The contracted wage has been paid in full. The landowner's defense rests on two pillars: contractual integrity (v. 13) and sovereign generosity (v. 15).
14. The imperatives *aron* ('take') and *hype* ('go') are firm dismissals. The verb *thelo* ('I choose, I wish, I want') is the key — the landowner asserts his sovereign right to be generous beyond contractual obligation. The phrase *touto to eschato* ('to this last one') pointedly identifies the recipient of the generosity.
15. Two rhetorical questions drive the parable's theology home. The first asserts the owner's sovereign freedom over his own possessions. The second — literally 'Is your eye evil?' (ho ophthalmos sou poneros estin) — uses the Semitic idiom where an 'evil eye' denotes envy or stinginess (cf. 6:23). We render it 'envious' to capture the meaning. The word *agathos* ('good, generous') is the same word the young man used in his question to Jesus (19:16-17). The parable's God-figure claims the attribute of goodness that belongs to God alone.
16. The saying that opened this section (19:30) now closes it, forming an *inclusio*. The parable has illustrated the principle: God's generosity does not follow human hierarchies of merit. The SBLGNT does not include 'for many are called but few are chosen,' which appears in some manuscripts and the KJV tradition — that saying appears authentically at 22:14.
17. The verb *anabainon* ('going up') is geographically accurate — Jerusalem sits at approximately 2,500 feet elevation, and travelers from Jericho ascend significantly. But 'going up to Jerusalem' also carries theological weight as pilgrimage language. The private setting (*kat' idian*) indicates that the passion prediction is for the inner circle, not the crowds.
18. This third passion prediction (cf. 16:21, 17:22-23) is the most detailed. The verb *paradothesetai* ('will be handed over') adds the theme of betrayal/delivery. For the first time, the role of the Jewish leadership (chief priests and scribes) in condemning Jesus is specified alongside the role of the Gentiles (v. 19). The phrase *katakrinousin auton thanato* ('they will condemn him to death') indicates a formal legal sentence.
19. The Gentiles (*ethnesin*) are the Romans, who alone had the authority to execute by crucifixion. The three infinitives — *empaizai* ('to mock'), *mastigosai* ('to flog'), *staurosai* ('to crucify') — describe the precise sequence of the passion narrative as it will unfold in chapters 26-27. This is the first time Jesus explicitly names crucifixion (*staurosai*) as the method of his death. The passive 'will be raised' (*egertheesetai*) affirms God's final action beyond the human violence.
20. Matthew places the mother as the spokesperson, while Mark 10:35 has James and John making the request directly. This may reflect Matthew's tendency to soften the portrayal of the apostles. The sons of Zebedee are James and John (4:21). The participle *proskynousa* ('kneeling, worshipping') indicates the seriousness of the approach.
21. The request for seats at the right and left (*ek dexion* and *ex euonymon*) of the king was a request for the two highest positions of honor and authority in the coming kingdom. The mother has heard the promise of twelve thrones (19:28) and wants the best seats for her sons. The irony — visible only in retrospect — is that the positions at Jesus's right and left at his 'enthronement' will be occupied by two crucified criminals (27:38).
22. Jesus shifts from the mother to the sons (the verb *oidate* and *aisteisthe* are second person plural). The 'cup' (*poterion*) is a well-established Old Testament metaphor for suffering and divine judgment (Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15). The SBLGNT does not include the reference to baptism, which appears in Mark 10:38 and some Matthew manuscripts. The brothers' confident 'We are able' (*dynametha*) is sincere but uninformed — they do not yet know what the cup contains.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 75:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 51:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 25:15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. Jesus confirms their future suffering (James was martyred, Acts 12:2; John, according to tradition, endured exile) but refuses to grant the seating request, deferring to the Father's sovereign arrangement. The passive *hetoimastai* ('it has been prepared') indicates prior divine planning. Jesus's refusal reveals something about his self-understanding: he operates within the Father's authority, not independently of it.

24. The verb *eganaktesan* ('were indignant, were angry') reveals that the other ten disciples share the same ambition — they are not offended by the desire for status but by the attempt to secure it first. Their anger provides the occasion for Jesus's teaching on servant leadership.
25. The verbs *katakryieousin* ('lord it over, dominate') and *katexousiazousin* ('exercise authority over, tyrannize') both use the prefix *kata-* ('down upon'), indicating oppressive, top-down power. Jesus describes the standard model of leadership in the Roman world — and then explicitly rejects it for his community.
26. The prohibition *ouch houtos estai en hymin* ('it must not be this way among you') is categorical. The word *diakonos* ('servant, minister, one who serves at table') was not a prestigious role — it denoted someone who waited on others at meals. Jesus redefines greatness as service, inverting the power structure he has just described.
27. The escalation from *diakonos* ('servant,' v. 26) to *doulos* ('slave') intensifies the demand. A *doulos* had no rights, no autonomy, no personal agenda — only the master's will. The word 'first' (*protos*) echoes the parable's concern with first and last (vv. 8, 16) and the disciples' desire for preeminence.
28. This is one of the most theologically dense sentences in the Gospels. Jesus defines his entire mission in terms of service and self-sacrifice. The word *lytron* ('ransom') appears only here and in Mark 10:45 in the Gospels. It refers to the price paid to free a slave or prisoner. The preposition *anti* ('in place of, instead of') indicates substitution — Jesus's life given in exchange for 'many' (*pollon*). The language echoes Isaiah 53:10-12, where the Servant of the LORD bears the sin of many. 'Many' (*polloi*) is a Semitic inclusive term that often means 'all' (cf. Romans 5:15-19).
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:10-12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. Jericho, about fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem, was the last major stop on the pilgrim route to Jerusalem. The 'large crowd' (*ochlos polys*) suggests the growing numbers of Passover pilgrims joining Jesus as he approaches the capital.
30. Matthew has two blind men where Mark 10:46 names one (Bartimaeus). This is consistent with Matthew's tendency to double figures (cf. two demoniacs in 8:28 where Mark has one). The address 'Son of David' (*huios Daud*) is a messianic title acknowledging Jesus as the expected Davidic king. The plea 'have mercy' (*eleeson*) echoes the Canaanite woman's cry (15:22) — the same faith-filled appeal from those on society's margins.
31. The crowd's attempt to silence the blind men parallels the disciples' attempt to send away the children (19:13) and the Canaanite woman (15:23). The pattern is consistent: human gatekeepers try to prevent the marginal from reaching Jesus, and the desperate refuse to be silenced. The comparative *meizon* ('louder, more urgently') shows their persistence increasing under pressure.
32. Jesus's stopping (*stas*) is significant — he is on his way to Jerusalem, to his death, yet he stops for two blind beggars. The question 'What do you want me to do for you?' (*ti thelete poieso hymin*) is the same question he effectively asked the mother of James and John (v. 21). The contrast is pointed: she wanted status; they want sight.
33. Their request is simple and direct: 'that our eyes may be opened' (*hina anoigosin hoi ophthalmoi hemon*). The opening of blind eyes is a messianic sign (Isaiah 35:5, 42:7), so their request implicitly affirms the 'Son of David' title they have used. The passive *anoigosin* ('may be opened') acknowledges that they cannot heal themselves.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 35:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
34. The verb *splanchnistheis* ('moved with compassion') again denotes the visceral, gut-level mercy characteristic of Jesus (cf. 9:36, 14:14, 15:32). The physical touch (*hepsato ton ommaton*, 'touched their eyes') is not strictly necessary for healing — Jesus has healed at a distance — but adds personal, intimate contact. The immediate result (*eutheos*) and their following (*ekoloutheesan*) indicate both physical healing and discipleship. As Jesus enters Jerusalem for the final time, he does so accompanied by those whose eyes he has opened — a fitting symbolic conclusion to the journey.

21

Summary: *Matthew 21 marks the beginning of Jesus's final week in Jerusalem. He enters the city riding on a donkey in fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, acclaimed by crowds shouting 'Hosanna to the Son of David.' He then drives the merchants and money changers from the temple, declaring it should be a house of prayer. After cursing a barren fig tree -- which withers immediately -- Jesus teaches about faith and prayer. The chief priests and elders challenge his authority, and Jesus responds with three confrontational parables: the two sons, the wicked tenants, and (beginning in chapter 22) the wedding feast. The chapter escalates the conflict between Jesus and the Jerusalem religious establishment that will culminate in his arrest and crucifixion.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Matthew's account of the entry uniquely mentions two animals -- a donkey and a colt -- following the parallelism of the Zechariah quotation literally. The temple action is presented not merely as reform but as prophetic judgment: Jesus quotes both Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11, framing the temple establishment as having betrayed its purpose. The fig tree episode functions as an enacted parable of Israel's spiritual barrenness. The parable of the wicked tenants is an allegory*

transparent enough that the chief priests recognize themselves in it (v. 45), yet its Old Testament foundation in Isaiah 5 gives it prophetic weight beyond mere polemic.

Translation Friction: The two-donkey detail in verses 2-7 has puzzled interpreters. Matthew appears to read Zechariah 9:9's Hebrew parallelism ('a donkey, even a colt, the foal of a donkey') as referring to two separate animals, while Mark and Luke mention only one. We render Matthew's text as written. The immediate withering of the fig tree (v. 19) differs from Mark's two-day sequence. Matthew has compressed the timeline, presenting the miracle and its lesson as a single dramatic unit. The stone quotation in verse 42 (Psalm 118:22-23) was a key text in early Christian apologetics and appears across multiple New Testament books.

Connections: The triumphal entry fulfills Zechariah 9:9 and echoes Solomon's royal procession on David's mule (1 Kings 1:33-40). 'Hosanna' comes from Psalm 118:25-26, a Hallel psalm sung at Passover and Tabernacles. The temple cleansing connects to Malachi 3:1-3 ('the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple'). The fig tree echoes Jeremiah 8:13 and Hosea 9:10. The parable of the wicked tenants draws on Isaiah 5:1-7 (the Song of the Vineyard). The rejected cornerstone (Psalm 118:22-23) ties the entry psalm to the passion narrative.

¹When they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²Declaring to them, Go into the village over opposed to you, and right away you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her — loose them, and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." ⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: ⁵"Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Look, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" ⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds going ahead of him and those following were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" ¹⁰When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" ¹¹The crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." ¹²Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those selling doves. ¹³He said to them, "It is written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a den of robbers." ¹⁴The blind and the lame went to him in the temple. And he healed them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the remarkable things he did, and the children shouting in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they became indignant ¹⁶Stated to him, Hearst you what these say? And Jesus says to them, Yea. Have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings you have perfected praise? ¹⁷And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and spent the night there. ¹⁸In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went to it and found nothing on it except leaves only. He said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again." And the fig tree withered at once. ²⁰When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither so quickly?" ²¹Jesus answered them, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen. ²²And whatever you ask in prayer with faith, you will receive." ²³When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" ²⁴Jesus answered them, "I also will ask you one question, and if you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵The baptism of John -- where was it from? From heaven or from men?" They discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' ²⁶But if we say, 'From men,' we are afraid of the crowd, for they all regard John as a prophet." ²⁷So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁸"What do you think? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹He answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. ³⁰He went to the other and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him.

And even when you saw this, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him. ³³"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ³⁴When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵But the tenants seized his servants, beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they treated them the same way. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and take his inheritance.' ³⁹They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰When the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" ⁴¹They said to him, "He will bring those wretches to a wretched end and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." ⁴²Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes'? ⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. ⁴⁴The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls." ⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they knew he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶Although they wanted to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Bethphage ('house of unripe figs') was a village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, near Bethany. The Mount of Olives carried eschatological significance from Zechariah 14:4, where the LORD would stand on it in the day of final deliverance. Jesus's approach from the east mirrors Ezekiel's vision of God's glory returning to the temple from the east (Ezekiel 43:1-4).
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Zechariah 14:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 43:1-4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. Matthew uniquely mentions both the mother donkey (onon) and the colt (polon), reading Zechariah 9:9 as referring to two animals. Jesus's foreknowledge of the donkeys' exact location demonstrates prophetic authority. The untying of a tethered animal without the owner's prior consent required the explanation given in the next verse.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zechariah 9:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The title *ho kyrios* ('the Lord') here may function as either 'the master/owner' or with the fuller theological sense of 'the Lord.' The ambiguity may be deliberate -- Jesus claims sovereign right over the animals while the owner hears a reasonable request. The immediate compliance anticipated suggests prior arrangement or divine authority recognized.
4. This is Matthew's characteristic fulfillment formula (cf. 1:22, 2:15, 4:14, 8:17, 12:17, 13:35). The prophet is Zechariah, though Matthew does not name him. The passive *plerothē* ('might be fulfilled') indicates divine intentionality -- these events were orchestrated by God, not coincidence.
5. The quotation combines Isaiah 62:11 ('Say to the daughter of Zion') with Zechariah 9:9. The key word *praus* ('humble, gentle, meek') is the same word Jesus used of himself in 11:29 ('I am gentle and humble in heart'). In Zechariah's context, this king comes in peace, not on a warhorse. The Hebrew parallelism in Zechariah ('a donkey / a colt, the foal of a donkey') describes one animal in two ways, but Matthew's narrative presents two animals.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 9:9 -- see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 62:11 -- see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The verb *synetaxen* ('directed, instructed, commanded') emphasizes the deliberate nature of the entry -- this was not spontaneous but a planned prophetic enactment. The disciples' obedience mirrors the pattern seen throughout Matthew.
7. The pronoun *auton* ('them') in 'he sat on them' most naturally refers to the cloaks, not both animals. The cloaks serve as an improvised saddle -- a mark of honor. The act of spreading garments echoes Jehu's anointing as king (2 Kings 9:13).
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 9:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Spreading garments on the road was a gesture of royal homage (cf. 2 Kings 9:13). The cutting of branches recalls the Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23:40) and the rededication of the temple under Judas Maccabeus (1 Maccabees 13:51, 2 Maccabees 10:7). The crowd instinctively treats Jesus's entry as a royal and liturgical event.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Kings 9:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 23:40 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The acclamation quotes Psalm 118:25-26, a Hallel psalm sung during Passover. 'Hosanna' (from Hebrew hoshi'a na, 'save now, please') had evolved from a plea into a shout of praise. 'Son of David' is an explicitly messianic title. 'The one who comes' (ho erchomenos) may echo Malachi 3:1 and the messianic expectation of 'the coming one' (cf. 11:3). 'In the highest' (en tois hypsistois) directs the praise heavenward.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 118:26. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Malachi 3:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The verb *eseisthe* ('was shaken, stirred') is related to *seismos* ('earthquake') -- the same root used for the earthquake at Jesus's death (27:51) and resurrection (28:2). Matthew uses seismic language for moments of divine disruption. The city's question 'Who is this?' sets up the christological tension that dominates the rest of the Gospel.
11. The crowd identifies Jesus as 'the prophet' (ho prophetēs), possibly the eschatological prophet like Moses promised in Deuteronomy 18:15. The geographical identification 'from Nazareth of Galilee' is both factual and slightly deflating -- Galilee was considered peripheral, and Nazareth insignificant (cf. John 1:46). The crowd's answer falls short of the full confession 'Son of David' from verse 9.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 18:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The Greek *hieron* refers to the broader temple complex, specifically the Court of the Gentiles where commercial activity took place. Money changers (*kollybiston*) converted Roman and Greek currency into the Tyrian shekel required for the temple tax. Doves were the offering prescribed for the poor (Leviticus 5:7, 12:8). Jesus's action targets a system that profited from worship and excluded Gentiles from their designated prayer space.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 5:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Jesus combines Isaiah 56:7 ('my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations') with Jeremiah 7:11 ('has this house become a den of robbers in your eyes?'). The Jeremiah reference is especially pointed: in Jeremiah 7, God threatens to destroy the temple because the people treat it as a safe hideout while practicing injustice. The Greek *leston* ('robbers, bandits') is stronger than 'thieves' -- these are violent exploiters, not petty criminals.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 56:7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 7:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. This detail is unique to Matthew. The blind and lame were traditionally excluded from the temple (cf. 2 Samuel 5:8, though the interpretation of that passage is debated). By healing them in the temple, Jesus enacts the restoration and inclusion that the prophets envisioned. The temple becomes what it was meant to be -- a place of divine healing and access.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Samuel 5:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The word *thaumasia* ('remarkable things, wonders') is used only here in the New Testament. The chief priests and scribes are angered not by the healings alone but by the children's messianic acclamation -- 'Hosanna to the Son of David' -- spoken in the temple itself. The Davidic title in the temple carries political and theological weight they cannot ignore.
16. Jesus quotes Psalm 8:2 (LXX), where God ordains praise from the youngest and most vulnerable. The quotation implies that the children perceive what the religious experts cannot -- or will not -- acknowledge. The verb *katertiso* ('you have prepared, perfected, established') suggests that God has deliberately arranged for this praise.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 8:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. Bethany ('house of affliction' or 'house of dates') was a village about two miles east of Jerusalem on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives. It was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (John 11:1). Jesus's nightly withdrawal from Jerusalem during Passion Week was both practical (avoiding arrest) and symbolic (departing from the city that rejects its prophets).
18. Jesus's hunger is a reminder of his full humanity. The detail also sets up the fig tree episode as a prophetic sign-act rather than a fit of frustration -- the hunger provides the occasion, but the meaning goes far deeper.
19. The fig tree is a well-established prophetic symbol for Israel (Jeremiah 8:13, Hosea 9:10, Micah 7:1). A tree with leaves but no fruit advertises productivity it cannot deliver -- like a temple full of commerce but empty of justice. In Matthew's compressed timeline, the tree withers *parachrema* ('at once, immediately'), making the prophetic point unmistakable. Mark's account spreads this over two days.

- 19.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 8:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 19.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Hosea 9:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 19.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Micah 7:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 20.** The disciples focus on the speed of the miracle rather than its symbolic meaning. Their amazement (*ethaumasán*) opens the door for Jesus's teaching on faith and prayer in the following verses.
- 21.** The phrase *amen lego hymin* ('truly I say to you') is Jesus's characteristic formula for solemn pronouncement. 'This mountain' (*to orei touto*) likely refers to the Mount of Olives, visible from where they stood. Moving mountains was a Jewish metaphor for accomplishing the seemingly impossible. The verb *diakritete* ('doubt, waver') is related to the word used for Peter's doubt on the water (14:31).
- 22.** This promise is conditioned by two factors: prayer (*en te proseuche*) and faith (*pisteuontes*). It is not a blank check for material desires but a statement about the power of God channeled through trusting prayer. The present participle *pisteuontes* ('believing, having faith') indicates an ongoing disposition, not momentary confidence.
- 23.** The double question about authority (*exousia*) targets both the nature and the source of Jesus's power. 'These things' (*tauta*) refers to the temple cleansing, the healings, and the teaching -- all of which bypass the established religious hierarchy. The chief priests and elders represent the Sanhedrin, the recognized governing body. Their challenge is both theological and jurisdictional.
- 24.** Jesus's counter-question is a standard rabbinic debate technique -- not evasion but a method of exposing the real issue. By linking his answer to their answer, he forces them to confront the very authority they are trying to deny.
- 25.** The question 'from heaven or from men' (*ex ouranou e ex anthronon*) presents the only two options: divine origin or human origin. 'Heaven' is a Jewish circumlocution for God. The leaders' private calculation reveals that their concern is not truth but political advantage -- they reason from consequences rather than convictions.
- 26.** The leaders' fear of the crowd (*phoboumetha ton ochlon*) mirrors Herod's fear of the people regarding John (14:5). In both cases, political calculation overrides honest engagement with prophetic authority. Their inability to answer exposes their bad faith.
- 27.** Their answer 'We do not know' (*ouk oidamen*) is technically a lie -- they have a private opinion but refuse to state it. Jesus's refusal to answer is not evasion but justice: those who will not engage honestly with the evidence they already have do not deserve further revelation. The implicit answer is clear -- Jesus's authority, like John's, comes from heaven.
- 28.** The parable of the two sons is unique to Matthew. The opening 'What do you think?' (*ti hymin dokei*) draws the leaders into rendering judgment on themselves -- the same technique Nathan used against David (2 Samuel 12:1-7). The vineyard (*ampelon*) is a standard Old Testament symbol for Israel (Isaiah 5:1-7).
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Samuel 12:1-7 -- the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 5:1-7 -- the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** The verb *metameleteis* ('changed his mind, felt regret') is distinct from *metanoeo* ('repent' in the fuller sense). This son's initial refusal followed by obedience represents those who initially rejected God's call but later responded -- the tax collectors and prostitutes mentioned in verse 31.
- 30.** The second son addresses his father with the respectful *kyrie* ('sir, lord') and gives immediate verbal assent, but his actions contradict his words. He represents the religious leaders who profess obedience to God but fail to respond to John's (and now Jesus's) message. Words without corresponding action is a theme throughout Matthew (cf. 7:21-23).
- 31.** The leaders pronounce their own verdict. Jesus's application is devastating: the social outcasts (*telonai*, 'tax collectors'; *pornai*, 'prostitutes') who initially lived in rebellion but responded to John's call are entering the kingdom ahead of the religious establishment. The present tense *proagousin* ('are going ahead, are entering') indicates this is happening now, not merely in the future.
- 32.** The phrase 'in the way of righteousness' (*en hodo dikaiosynes*) may mean John came living righteously, or came teaching the way of righteousness, or both. The double indictment is severe: they rejected John's message, and even after seeing others respond, they refused to reconsider. The verb *metemelete* ('change your minds') echoes the first son's change of heart in verse 29.
- 33.** The parable's opening deliberately echoes Isaiah 5:1-2, the Song of the Vineyard, where God plants and cares for Israel as his vineyard. Every detail -- the fence, the winepress, the tower -- comes from Isaiah's text. The *oikodespotes* ('master of the house, landowner') represents God. The *georgoi* ('tenant farmers') represent Israel's leaders. The audience would have recognized the allusion immediately.
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 5:1-2 -- the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 34.** The servants (*doulous*, 'slaves') represent the prophets sent to Israel throughout its history. The 'season of fruit' (*kairos ton karpon*) indicates the time when God expected a return on his investment in Israel -- justice, righteousness, and faithfulness.

35. The three-fold violence -- beating, killing, stoning -- summarizes Israel's treatment of the prophets, a theme running through the Old Testament (cf. 2 Chronicles 24:21, Jeremiah 26:20-23, Nehemiah 9:26) and explicit in Jesus's lament over Jerusalem (23:37). Stoning (elithobolisan) was the traditional punishment for blasphemy and false prophecy, ironically used against true prophets.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Chronicles 24:21 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 26:20-23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Nehemiah 9:26 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The landowner's persistence in sending more servants (pleionas ton proton, 'more than the first group') reflects God's patience and repeated appeals through successive generations of prophets. The tenants' unchanging response reveals the depth of their rebellion.
37. The shift from 'servants' to 'his son' (ton huion autou) marks the climax of the parable and its transparent christological claim. The sending of the son is qualitatively different from the sending of servants -- this is the final appeal, the last and greatest envoy. The verb entrapesontai ('will respect, will be put to shame before') expresses the owner's reasonable expectation.
38. The tenants recognize the son as the heir (kleronomos) -- their crime is not ignorance but deliberate rebellion. They calculate that killing the heir will give them ownership of the vineyard, a legal assumption in certain ancient property arrangements. The parallel to the Jerusalem leaders' conspiracy against Jesus is unmistakable.
39. The detail that they threw him 'out of the vineyard' before killing him prefigures Jesus's crucifixion outside the walls of Jerusalem (cf. Hebrews 13:12). The sequence -- seizure, expulsion, death -- will be enacted literally in chapters 26-27.
40. Jesus forces the leaders to pronounce judgment again -- the same technique used in the parable of the two sons (v. 31). The question assumes the owner's return is certain; only the timing is unknown. The phrase kyrios tou ampelonos ('lord/owner of the vineyard') carries both literal and theological weight.
41. The Greek kakous kakos ('wretches wretchedly' or 'evil ones evilly') is a wordplay -- the punishment fits the crime. The leaders unwittingly pronounce their own doom. The transfer of the vineyard to 'other tenants' (allois georgois) foreshadows the inclusion of the Gentiles and the reconstitution of God's people around Jesus.
42. Jesus quotes Psalm 118:22-23, the same Hallel psalm from which the crowds shouted 'Hosanna' at the entry (v. 9). The rejected stone becoming the cornerstone (kephalen gonias, literally 'head of the corner') was a key early Christian testimony text (cf. Acts 4:11, 1 Peter 2:7). The 'builders' who reject the stone are the leaders standing before Jesus.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 118:22-23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. This is one of the rare instances where Matthew uses 'kingdom of God' (basileia tou theou) rather than his preferred 'kingdom of heaven.' The word ethnei ('nation, people') is singular and does not necessarily mean 'Gentiles' (though that reading is possible); it may refer to a reconstituted people of God that includes both Jews and Gentiles who bear fruit. The emphasis is on fruit-bearing (karpos), connecting back to the fig tree (v. 19) and the vineyard's expected produce.
44. This verse draws on Isaiah 8:14-15 (the stone of stumbling) and Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45 (the stone that crushes the statue). The two scenarios -- falling on the stone and the stone falling on someone -- represent two ways of encountering Jesus: stumbling over him in offense, or being crushed by his judgment. Some scholars question this verse's originality, but it is present in the SBLGNT.
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 8:14-15. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 2:34-35. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
45. The verb egnoson ('knew, recognized, understood') confirms that the parables were not obscure -- the leaders understood them clearly. They are now named specifically: 'chief priests and Pharisees,' the two groups who will drive the passion narrative. Their comprehension without repentance fulfills the pattern of the second son in verse 30.
46. The chapter ends with the same dynamic that opened the John the Baptist flashback (14:5) -- the leaders want to act against God's messenger but fear the people. The crowd's recognition of Jesus as a prophet, while falling short of the full messianic confession, nevertheless provides temporary protection. The arrest is deferred but not abandoned; it will come in 26:47-56.

22

Summary: *Matthew 22 opens with the parable of the wedding banquet, in which a king's invited guests refuse to come and are replaced by strangers from the streets. The chapter then records three challenge questions posed to Jesus by various groups: the Pharisees and Herodians ask about paying taxes to Caesar, the Sadducees pose a hypothetical about resurrection and marriage, and a Pharisee lawyer asks which commandment is the greatest. Jesus answers each decisively, then poses his own question about the Messiah's identity as David's Lord — silencing all challengers.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The three challenge questions represent the major theological factions of first-century Judaism converging against Jesus: Pharisees (political trap about taxes), Sadducees (theological trap about resurrection), and a lawyer from among the Pharisees (legal trap about the commandments). Jesus not only escapes each trap but turns the final exchange into an offensive question about Psalm 110:1 that none of them can answer. The wedding banquet parable contains Matthew's distinctive addition of the guest without wedding garments (vv. 11-14), raising the stakes beyond mere invitation to proper response.*

Translation Friction: *The parable's violent imagery — the king destroying the murderous invitees and burning their city (v. 7) — has been read as a reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. We render the Greek as given without imposing a specific historical identification. The phrase 'many are called but few are chosen' (v. 14) has generated centuries of theological debate about election; we render the Greek straightforwardly. Jesus's answer about the greatest commandment combines Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, a combination not found elsewhere in Jewish literature of this period.*

Connections: *The wedding banquet parable echoes Isaiah 25:6-8 (the eschatological feast). The tax question connects to the broader theme of God's kingdom versus earthly kingdoms. The resurrection debate anticipates Matthew 28. Jesus's citation of Psalm 110:1 becomes foundational for early Christian Christology (Acts 2:34-35, Hebrews 1:13). The double love commandment becomes the hermeneutical key for the entire law (cf. Romans 13:8-10, Galatians 5:14).*

1Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. 3He sent his servants to call those who had been invited to the feast, but they refused to come. 4Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my banquet — my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.' 5But they paid no attention and went away — one to his field, another to his business. 6The rest seized his servants, mistreated them, and killed them. 7The king was enraged. He sent his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9Go therefore to the main roads, and invite to the feast as many as you find.' 10Those servants went out into the roads and gathered everyone they found, both evil and good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12He said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless. 13Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind his hands and feet and throw him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14For numerous are called, but few are chosen. 15Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to trap him with his own words. 16They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians, saying, 'Teacher, we know that you are truthful and teach the way of God honestly. You do not defer to anyone, for you show no partiality. 17So tell us what you think: is it lawful to pay the tax to Caesar, or not?' 18But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, 'Why are you testing me, you hypocrites? 19Show me the coin used for the tax.' They brought him a denarius. 20He said to them, 'Whose image and inscription is this?' 21They said, 'Caesar's.' Then he said to them, 'Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God.' 22When they heard this, they were amazed. And they left him and went away. 23That same day Sadducees came to him — those who say there is no resurrection — and they asked him, 24'Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies without children, his brother is to marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.' 25Now

there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. ²⁶The same thing happened with the second, the third, and on through all seven. ²⁷Last of all, the woman died. ²⁸So in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her as wife." ²⁹Jesus answered them, "You are mistaken, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰For in the resurrection people neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven. ³¹And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God: ³²'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead but of the living." ³³When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching. ³⁴When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a challenge, tempting him, ³⁶"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" ³⁷He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang every one of the law and the prophets. ⁴¹While the Pharisees were assembled, Jesus asked them, ⁴²"What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "David's." ⁴³He said to them, "How then does David, speaking by the Spirit, call him Lord? ⁴⁴"The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet"? ⁴⁵How is he his son?, and if David then call him Lord. ⁴⁶No one was able to answer him a word, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *apokritheis* ('answering') does not imply a question was asked — it is a Semitic idiom meaning 'responded to the situation.' The plural *parabolais* ('parables') may indicate that Matthew groups this with the preceding parables of chapter 21, though only one parable follows here.
2. The Greek *gamous* (plural 'wedding festivities') encompasses the entire multi-day celebration, not just the ceremony. 'Wedding feast' captures the communal banquet dimension better than 'marriage.' The aorist *homiothee* ('was compared') frames the parable as a completed analogy.
3. The double invitation — first a prior invitation (*keklemenous*, perfect participle, 'those having been invited'), then the servants sent to summon them — reflects ancient Near Eastern banquet protocol. The refusal is deliberate: *ouk ethelon* ('they were not willing') emphasizes willful rejection, not inability.
4. The Greek *ariston* can mean 'breakfast' or 'midday meal' but here refers to a grand banquet. The detail of slaughtered oxen (*tauroi*) and fattened cattle (*sitista*) emphasizes lavish provision and the urgency of the invitation — the food is prepared and will not keep. The king's patience in sending a second delegation heightens the gravity of the refusal.
5. The verb *amelesantes* ('having disregarded, having been careless about') conveys not hostility but indifference — the most common form of rejection. The mundane alternatives (field, business) make the point: ordinary concerns displaced the king's extraordinary invitation.
6. The parable escalates sharply from indifference (v. 5) to violence. The verb *hybrisan* ('mistreated, insulted') denotes outrageous abuse. This mirrors the prophetic tradition of Israel killing God's messengers (cf. 2 Chronicles 36:15-16, Matthew 23:37).
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Chronicles 36:15-16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The burning of 'their city' (*teen polin auton*) has been widely read as an allusion to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Whether this reflects a post-70 addition or Jesus's prophetic foresight is debated. The Greek *eneprēsen* ('burned') is vivid and specific.
8. The adjective *axioi* ('worthy, deserving') introduces a key theme: the invitation was free, but the invitees rendered themselves unworthy by their response. Worthiness here is defined by willingness to come, not by prior qualification.
9. The Greek *diexodous tōn hodōn* ('exits of the roads,' i.e., crossroads, intersections, or where roads leave the city) suggests the boundary between the city and the surrounding countryside — places where anyone might be found. The invitation becomes indiscriminate and universal.
10. The pairing *ponērous te kai agathous* ('both evil and good') is striking — the replacement guests are a mixed company, not a moral elite. This reflects Matthew's consistent picture of the kingdom as a mixed community (cf. the wheat and weeds, 13:24-30; the net, 13:47-50). The Greek *anakeimenōn* ('reclining ones') indicates the Greco-Roman dining posture.
11. The 'wedding garment' (*endyma gamou*) has generated much discussion. Some scholars suggest hosts provided garments; others see this as symbolic of righteousness or repentance. The man was gathered from the streets (v. 10), so the expectation of proper attire implies provision was made. The singular man among many guests suggests this is not about social class but about response — even among those who come, proper preparation is required.
12. The address *hetaire* ('friend, companion') appears only three times in Matthew (here, 20:13, 26:50) and always carries an ominous edge — it is used when someone has overstepped. The man's silence (*ephimōthē*, 'was muzzled, was silenced') indicates he has no defense; the passive voice may suggest divine silencing rather than mere embarrassment.

13. The attendants here are diakonoi ('servants, ministers') — different from the douloi ('slaves') sent to invite guests. 'Outer darkness' (skotos to exōteron) is a Matthean phrase (cf. 8:12, 25:30) depicting exclusion from the lit banquet hall into the night. 'Weeping and gnashing of teeth' is a formulaic expression in Matthew for eschatological judgment (8:12, 13:42, 13:50, 24:51, 25:30).
14. This summarizing statement distinguishes klētoi ('called, invited') from eklektoi ('chosen, selected'). The parable illustrates both categories of failure: those who refuse the call entirely (vv. 3-7) and those who come without proper response (vv. 11-13). The saying's theological weight — particularly regarding divine election versus human response — has been debated throughout church history. The Greek is rendered straightforwardly without resolving that tension.
15. The verb pagideusōsin ('to ensnare, to trap') is from pagis ('a snare, a trap') — hunting imagery. The Pharisees are now deliberately setting a verbal trap. The phrase en logō ('in a word/statement') means they want Jesus to say something that can be used against him.
16. The coalition of Pharisee disciples and Herodians is politically improbable — Pharisees resented Roman rule while Herodians supported the Herod dynasty and Roman accommodation. Their alliance against Jesus is itself revealing. The flattery is calculated: 'you show no partiality' (ou blepeis eis prosōpon anthrōpōn, literally 'you do not look at the face of people') is designed to pressure Jesus into giving a direct answer regardless of political consequences.
17. The Greek kēnsōn is a loanword from the Latin census, referring specifically to the Roman poll tax (tributum capitis). This was the most hated tax because it symbolized subjugation — every payment acknowledged Roman sovereignty. The trap is elegant: a 'yes' alienates the Jewish populace; a 'no' constitutes sedition against Rome.
18. The word ponērian ('wickedness, malice') is stronger than mere trickery — it ascribes evil intent. The verb peirazete ('you are testing') is the same word used for Satan's temptation of Jesus in chapter 4. Hypokritai ('hypocrites') originally meant 'stage actors' — people playing a role. Jesus exposes the flattery of verse 16 as performance.
19. The denarius (dēnariōn) was a Roman silver coin, a day's wage for a laborer (cf. 20:2). That they could produce one immediately in the temple precincts is itself telling — they carried the very coin bearing Caesar's image into sacred space. The KJV's 'penny' is a misleading anachronism.
20. The word eikōn ('image, likeness') carries theological resonance — humans are made in God's eikōn (Genesis 1:26-27 LXX). Jesus's question sets up a contrast between what bears Caesar's image and what bears God's image. The epigraphē ('inscription') on a Tiberian denarius would read 'Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus.'
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 1:26-27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The verb apodote ('give back, return, render') is crucial — it implies returning what already belongs to someone, not making a gift. Caesar's coin bears Caesar's image; give it back. But since humans bear God's image, the unstated implication is far more sweeping: give your whole self back to God. The answer transcends the political trap entirely by reframing the question from taxation to total allegiance.
22. The verb ethaumasan ('they marveled, were astonished') indicates that Jesus's answer genuinely surprised them — it was not the binary response they had prepared for. Their departure signals that the trap failed completely.
23. Matthew's parenthetical note about Sadducean theology (legontes mē einai anastasin, 'saying there is no resurrection') orients the reader to the nature of the coming trap. The Sadducees accepted only the Torah (Genesis-Deuteronomy) as authoritative and found no explicit resurrection teaching there. Their question is designed to make resurrection belief look absurd.
24. The Sadducees cite the levirate marriage law from Deuteronomy 25:5-6 (with echoes of Genesis 38). The Greek epigambreusei ('shall marry as next-of-kin') is a technical term for levirate marriage. By grounding their question in Moses — the one authority they accept — they believe they have framed an unanswerable challenge to resurrection belief.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 25:5-6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 38. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The scenario is likely hypothetical, perhaps a stock riddle used in Sadducean-Pharisee debates. Seven brothers creates the maximum absurdity for a resurrection scenario. The phrase par' hēmin ('among us') may be a fictional framing device rather than a claim about real people.
26. Matthew compresses the narrative — Mark 12:21-22 provides slightly more detail. The repetition through all seven brothers drives home the point: whose wife would she be in the resurrection?
27. The phrase hysteron pantōn ('last of all') completes the hypothetical with finality — all eight parties are now dead, setting up the resurrection question.
28. The Greek pantes gar eschon autēn ('for they all had her') could be read crudely, but in context it means all seven were legally married to her in succession. The Sadducees believe they have created a logical impossibility that disproves resurrection — one woman cannot simultaneously be wife to seven men.
29. The verb planasthe ('you are led astray, you wander') implies not just intellectual error but spiritual disorientation. Jesus identifies two sources of their mistake: ignorance of Scripture (tas graphas, the very Torah they claim to champion) and ignorance of God's power (tēn dynamin tou theou) — they have limited God to what their theology permits.

- 30.** Jesus does not deny resurrection but redefines its nature. The distinction between gamousin ('they marry,' active, typically of men) and gamizontai ('they are given in marriage,' passive, typically of women being given by their father) reflects first-century marriage customs. The comparison to angels does not mean people become angels but that the resurrected state transcends the social structures of mortal life, including marriage. This directly dissolves the Sadducees' riddle.
- 31.** Jesus now turns to Scripture — specifically the Torah, the only authority the Sadducees accept. The phrase to rhēthen hymin ('what was spoken to you') is pointed: this was not spoken to ancient Israelites only but to you, the Sadducees, who claim to live by Moses.
- 32.** Jesus quotes Exodus 3:6, from the burning bush narrative — firmly within the Torah. His argument turns on the present tense 'I am' (egō eimi): God does not say 'I was' their God but 'I am,' implying that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are alive to God. This is an argument the Sadducees cannot dismiss as coming from the Prophets or Writings, which they considered less authoritative.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 3:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 33.** The verb exeplessonto ('were struck out of their senses, were astonished') is stronger than mere surprise — it connotes being overwhelmed. The same verb describes the crowd's reaction to the Sermon on the Mount (7:28). 'Teaching' (didachē) is preferred over the KJV's 'doctrine,' which in modern English implies systematic theology.
- 34.** The verb ephimōsen ('silenced, muzzled') is the same word used for the speechless guest in verse 12 — a verbal link suggesting divine authority that stops mouths. The Pharisees, having failed through their proxies (v. 16), now regroup for a direct challenge. The irony is that the Pharisees would have agreed with Jesus about resurrection — yet they still oppose him.
- 35.** The nomikos ('lawyer, legal expert') is someone skilled in the Torah and its interpretation. The participle peirazōn ('testing') again uses the temptation vocabulary (cf. v. 18, 4:1). Whether this lawyer has hostile or genuinely curious intent is ambiguous — Mark's parallel (12:28) presents the scribe more positively. Matthew's peirazōn tilts toward a hostile reading.
- 36.** The question poia entolē megalē ('which commandment is great?') reflects a real rabbinic debate. The rabbis identified 613 commandments in the Torah (248 positive, 365 negative) and debated which were 'heavy' (important) and which were 'light.' Asking Jesus to prioritize forces him to potentially diminish some commandments in favor of others.
- 37.** Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:5, the centerpiece of the Shema — the daily Jewish confession of faith. The Greek follows the Septuagint with three terms: kardia ('heart,' the seat of will and thought in Semitic usage), psychē ('soul/life'), and dianoia ('mind, understanding'). The Hebrew original has 'heart, soul, and strength' (me'od); Matthew's 'mind' may represent an interpretive rendering of the Hebrew or follow a variant Septuagint tradition. The threefold 'all' (holē) demands totality — no compartment of the self is exempt.
- 37.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 6:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 38.** Jesus identifies the Shema command as both megalē ('great' in importance) and prōtē ('first' in rank). By citing Deuteronomy 6:5, Jesus answers from the Torah itself — the ground shared by Pharisees, Sadducees, and all Jewish groups.
- 38.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 6:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 39.** Jesus volunteers a second commandment from Leviticus 19:18 that was not asked for. The word homoia ('like, similar') does not mean identical but says the second shares the same essential character as the first — love of God and love of neighbor are inseparable. The combination of Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 into a unified ethical framework appears to be original to Jesus, though Rabbi Hillel's 'Golden Rule' (b. Shabbat 31a) expresses a similar instinct.
- 39.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 19:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 39.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 6:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 40.** The verb krematai ('hangs, depends') is vivid — the entire Torah and prophetic corpus is suspended from these two commands like a door on its hinges. Jesus does not replace the 613 commandments but provides their organizing center. 'The Law and the Prophets' (ho nomos kai hoi prophētai) is the standard Jewish designation for Scripture (cf. 5:17, 7:12).
- 41.** The initiative now shifts — Jesus moves from defense to offense. Having answered three challenges, he poses his own question. The genitive absolute synēgmenōn ('while being gathered') recalls their gathering in verse 34, making Jesus's counter-question an immediate response to their collective challenge.
- 42.** The question peri tou Christou ('about the Christ/Messiah') is about the expected Messiah, not about Jesus himself — at least not explicitly. The Pharisees' answer 'David's son' is theologically correct but incomplete, as Jesus will demonstrate. This was the standard messianic expectation drawn from 2 Samuel 7 and Isaiah 11.
- 42.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Samuel 7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. The phrase *en pneumati* ('in/by the Spirit') attributes Davidic authorship of Psalm 110 to divine inspiration. Jesus's argument depends on two premises: (1) David wrote Psalm 110, and (2) he wrote it under the Spirit's guidance. Both were uncontested assumptions in first-century Judaism.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 110 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
44. Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1 from the Septuagint. The Hebrew original distinguishes two figures: YHWH (the LORD) speaks to *adoni* ('my lord,' David's superior). In the Greek, both are *kyrios* ('Lord'), but the first represents God and the second the Messiah. The right hand is the position of co-regency and supreme honor. This psalm was the most frequently cited Old Testament text in the early church (Acts 2:34-35, 1 Corinthians 15:25, Hebrews 1:13).
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 110:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
45. Jesus's argument is not that the Messiah is not David's son — the genealogy in chapter 1 affirms that he is. Rather, the Messiah must be more than David's son: he must also be David's Lord. A father does not call his descendant 'my Lord.' The Messiah must therefore transcend mere Davidic descent. Jesus leaves the implication unspoken, forcing the Pharisees to grapple with it.
46. The double negative — no one could answer (*edynato apokrithēnai*) and no one dared ask (*etolmēsen eperōtēsai*) — creates a comprehensive silencing. The verb *tolmaō* ('to dare, to have courage') indicates that questions stopped not from satisfaction but from fear. This verse closes the series of public debates that began in 21:23 and transitions to Jesus's initiative in chapter 23.

23

Summary: *Matthew 23 records Jesus's most sustained public denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees. After warning the crowds and his disciples about their hypocrisy, Jesus delivers seven 'woe' pronouncements, each targeting a specific form of religious pretense: blocking others from the kingdom, exploiting converts, manipulating oaths, obsessing over minor rules while ignoring justice and mercy, maintaining outward purity while harboring inward corruption, and honoring dead prophets while persecuting living ones. The chapter closes with Jesus's lament over Jerusalem, expressing anguish at the city's refusal to receive God's messengers.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The seven woes form a carefully structured prophetic oracle in the tradition of Isaiah and Amos. Each 'woe' (*ouai*) is addressed directly to the scribes and Pharisees as 'hypocrites' (*hypokritai*), creating a relentless rhetorical rhythm. The chapter stands in sharp tension with Jesus's instruction in 23:2-3 to respect the teaching authority of the scribes — the critique is not of the Torah but of those who teach it without practicing it. The lament over Jerusalem (vv. 37-39) shifts from prophetic anger to maternal grief, using the image of a hen gathering her chicks. This is one of the most emotionally raw passages attributed to Jesus in the Gospels.*

Translation Friction: *This chapter has a difficult history in Jewish-Christian relations. The language of condemnation has been weaponized against Jewish people as a whole, which is a misreading — Jesus himself is Jewish, his audience is Jewish, and this is an intra-Jewish prophetic critique in the tradition of Jeremiah and Amos. We render the Greek faithfully while noting that 'scribes and Pharisees' designates specific religious leaders, not the Jewish people. The relationship between Matthew's community and the synagogue likely shaped the intensity of this rhetoric.*

Connections: *The woe oracles echo Isaiah 5:8-23 and Habakkuk 2:6-20. The imagery of whitewashed tombs recalls Ezekiel 13:10-16. Jesus's lament over Jerusalem draws on the maternal imagery of Isaiah 66:13 and the prophetic grief of Jeremiah 8-9. The reference to Abel and Zechariah (v. 35) spans the entire Hebrew Bible from Genesis 4 to 2 Chronicles 24. The closing quotation from Psalm 118:26 connects to the triumphal entry (21:9) and will be fulfilled at the Parousia.*

1Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples: 2"The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses's seat. 3So do and observe everything they tell you, but do not follow their example, for they preach but do not practice. 4They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. 5Everything they do is done to be seen by others. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. 6They love the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, 7Greetings in the markets, and to be known as of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. 8But you are not to be

called 'Rabbi,' for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers and sisters. ⁹And do not call anyone on earth your father, for you have one Father — the heavenly one. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor — the Christ. ¹¹The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹²Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. ¹³But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor do you allow those who are trying to enter to go in. ¹⁴Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You cross sea and land to make a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. ¹⁵Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it means nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple is bound by the oath.' ¹⁶You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? ¹⁷And you say, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it means nothing; but whoever swears by the gift on it is bound by the oath.' ¹⁸You blind ones! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ¹⁹So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. ²⁰And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. ²¹And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and by the one who sits on it. ²²Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You tithe mint, dill, and cumin, but you have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faithfulness. These you should have practiced without neglecting the others. ²³Blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. ²⁴Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁵Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside may become clean as well. ²⁶Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs that appear beautiful on the outside but inside are full of dead people's bones and every kind of impurity. ²⁷In the same way, you appear righteous to people on the outside, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. ²⁸Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, ²⁹Say, If we had been in the period of our fathers, we would not possess been partakers with them in the lifeblood of the God's spokespersons. ³⁰So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. ³¹Then fill up the measure of your ancestors! ³²You snakes, you brood of vipers! How will you escape the judgment of hell? ³³Therefore, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from city to city, ³⁴Indeed, that upon you may come every one of the righteous blood shed upon the world, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. ³⁵Truly I tell you, all these things will come upon this generation. ³⁶"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you — how often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁷Look, your house is left to you desolate. ³⁸For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The dual audience — crowds (*ochlois*) and disciples (*mathētais*) — is significant. The warnings that follow are not private instruction but public proclamation. This positions Jesus as a prophet addressing the entire people, not just his inner circle.
2. The 'seat of Moses' (*Mōyseōs kathedras*) refers to the teaching authority inherited from Moses — the right to interpret and apply the Torah. Archaeological evidence confirms that synagogues had a literal stone seat from which the Torah was taught. Jesus acknowledges the legitimacy of the office even as he critiques its occupants.
3. This verse is striking: Jesus validates the scribes' and Pharisees' teaching authority (*panta hosa ean eipōsin*, 'everything they say') while completely rejecting their behavior (*kata ta erga autōn mē poieite*, 'do not do according to their works'). The critique is hypocrisy — the gap between word and deed — not the content of their teaching itself.
4. The imagery of *phortia barea* ('heavy loads') contrasts sharply with Jesus's own invitation in 11:30 ('my burden is light'). The verb *desmeuousin* ('they bind') suggests legal obligations tied tightly. The phrase *tō daktylō autōn ou thelousin kinēsai* ('they are not willing to move with their finger') exposes the asymmetry: they impose rules they do not share the burden of keeping.
5. Phylacteries (*phylaktēria*) are small leather boxes containing Scripture passages (Deuteronomy 6:8, 11:18), worn on the forehead and arm during prayer. Making them wider makes one's piety more visible. The tassels (*kraspeda*) are the fringed borders of the prayer shawl commanded in Numbers 15:38-39. Jesus does not condemn phylacteries or tassels — he himself wore tassels (9:20, 14:36) — but the ostentatious enlargement of them for public display.

5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 6:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 15:38-39 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The prōtoklisian ('first reclining place') at a banquet was the seat nearest the host, denoting highest status. The prōtokathedrias ('first seats') in the synagogue were those facing the congregation, reserved for distinguished persons. Both represent social capital — visible markers of religious rank.
7. The title Rabbi (Rhabbi, from the Hebrew rav, 'great one') means 'my master' or 'my teacher.' In the first century it was transitioning from a general honorific to a formal title for Torah scholars. The desire to be called Rabbi reflects the pursuit of status through religious authority.
8. The Greek adelphoi ('brothers') is rendered inclusively as 'brothers and sisters' since the audience includes the crowds (v. 1), not just male disciples. The SBLGNT reads ho didaskalos ('the teacher') without the addition 'even Christ' found in some manuscripts and reflected in the KJV. Jesus establishes a radically egalitarian community ethic — no hierarchy of religious titles.
9. The prohibition against calling anyone 'father' (patera) as a religious title parallels the Rabbi prohibition. 'Father' (abba, pater) was used as a title of respect for esteemed teachers. Jesus does not prohibit the biological use of the word but the use of parental titles to establish religious hierarchy — all authority derives from the heavenly Father alone.
10. The Greek kathēgētai ('guides, instructors, leaders') is distinct from didaskalos ('teacher,' v. 8). Jesus covers three titles — Rabbi, Father, Instructor — to prohibit any title that creates a spiritual hierarchy between believers. The Christ (ho Christos) is identified as the sole legitimate instructor, a significant Christological claim.
11. The word diakonos ('servant, one who serves') is the root of 'deacon.' Jesus redefines greatness not as authority over others but as service to others — a consistent theme (20:26-27). This inverts the entire religious hierarchy just described.
12. The passive verbs tapeinōthēsetai ('will be humbled') and hypsōthēsetai ('will be exalted') are divine passives — God is the unspoken agent who brings down the proud and lifts up the humble. This saying echoes Proverbs 29:23, Ezekiel 21:26, and appears elsewhere in Jesus's teaching (Luke 14:11, 18:14).
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Proverbs 29:23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 21:26. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The first woe. The Greek ouai ('woe') is not a curse but a prophetic lament — it expresses grief as much as judgment (cf. Isaiah 5:8-23). The verb kleiete ('you shut, you lock') pictures the kingdom as a door being barred. The participle eiserchomous ('those entering, those in the process of entering') suggests people who were on their way into the kingdom but were blocked by the religious leaders' obstruction.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 5:8-23 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Verse 14 is not present in the SBLGNT critical text. It appears in the KJV based on later manuscripts that likely imported it from Mark 12:40 or Luke 20:47. Modern critical editions omit it. The verse numbering jumps from 13 to 15 in the SBLGNT.
15. The second woe. The Greek prosēluton ('proselyte, convert') refers to a Gentile who fully converts to Judaism, including circumcision and Torah observance. The verb periagete ('you go around, you traverse') with 'sea and land' conveys exhaustive effort. The phrase huion geennēs ('son of Gehenna') uses the Semitic idiom 'son of X' meaning 'one characterized by X.' Geenna refers to the Valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem, associated with child sacrifice (Jeremiah 7:31) and later with eschatological punishment.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 7:31 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The third woe. The address shifts from 'hypocrites' to 'blind guides' (hodēgoi typhloi), emphasizing not just their insincerity but their inability to lead others. The casuistry Jesus describes — distinguishing binding from non-binding oaths based on what one swears by — is a form of oath manipulation that allows deception while maintaining technical innocence. The verb opheilei ('is obligated, is bound') is a financial term applied to moral obligation.
17. The epithet mōroi ('fools') is the same word Jesus warned against using in 5:22 — its use here, in prophetic denunciation from the one with authority to judge, is deliberate. The participle hāgiasas ('having sanctified, having made holy') establishes the theological point: the temple consecrates the gold, not the reverse. Valuing the gold over the temple inverts the sacred order.
18. The same casuistry is now applied to the altar (thysiastērion) and the gift (dōron) placed upon it. The parallel with verses 16-17 exposes the systematic nature of the deception — it is not a single error but an entire system of oath manipulation.
19. The SBLGNT reads typhloi ('blind ones') without mōroi ('fools'), differing from some manuscripts reflected in the KJV. The argument parallels verse 17 exactly: the altar consecrates the offering, not the reverse.

- 20.** Jesus dismantles the casuistry: swearing by a sacred object includes everything associated with it. You cannot separate the container from the contents. This verse begins the logical conclusion (vv. 20-22) that makes all oaths equally binding.
- 21.** The participle *katoikounti* ('the one dwelling') refers to God's presence in the temple. The argument escalates: swearing by the temple invokes not just a building but God himself, who inhabits it. This connects to the Shekhinah tradition — God's dwelling presence in the sanctuary.
- 22.** The argument reaches its pinnacle: heaven is God's throne (cf. 5:34, Isaiah 66:1), so every oath invoking heaven invokes God. The conclusion is inescapable — no oath can be made 'non-binding' because all sacred things ultimately point to God, before whom all oaths are binding.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 66:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** The fourth woe. Mint (*hēdyosmon*), dill (*anēthon*), and cumin (*kyminon*) are small garden herbs — tithing them represents extreme scrupulousness about minor regulations. The 'weightier matters' (*ta barytera*) — justice (*krisin*), mercy (*eleos*), and faithfulness (*pistin*) — echo Micah 6:8. Crucially, Jesus does not say they should stop tithing herbs; he says they should do both (*tauta edei poiēsai kakeina mē afienai*). The issue is proportion and priority, not abolition of the lesser commands.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Micah 6:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 24.** This vivid hyperbole may contain a wordplay in Aramaic: *qalma* ('gnat') and *gamla* ('camel') are near-homophones. The image of straining wine to remove a tiny insect (for ritual purity) while somehow ingesting an entire camel (the largest animal in Palestine, also unclean per Leviticus 11:4) is deliberately absurd. It captures the inverted priorities of verse 23 in a single memorable image.
- 24.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 11:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 25.** The fifth woe. The cup and dish metaphor addresses ritual purity laws about vessels (cf. Mark 7:1-4). The Greek *harpagēs* ('robbery, plunder, greed') and *akrasias* ('lack of self-control, self-indulgence') describe the moral contents behind the ritually clean exterior. The contrast between *exōthen* ('outside') and *esōthen* ('inside') is the essence of hypocrisy.
- 26.** The singular address *Pharisaie typhle* ('Blind Pharisee') suddenly personalizes the critique. The logic is simple: if you clean the inside, the outside will follow naturally. Internal transformation produces external purity, not the reverse. This principle underlies Jesus's entire ethical teaching.
- 27.** The sixth woe. Tombs were whitewashed before Passover so that pilgrims could avoid accidental contact with them, which would cause ritual defilement (Numbers 19:16). The irony is devastating: the whitewash exists to warn people away from contamination, but here it becomes a metaphor for deliberate concealment. The word *akatharsias* ('impurity, uncleanness') is the ritual opposite of the purity the Pharisees obsessively cultivate.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 19:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** The application makes the metaphor explicit. The word *anomias* ('lawlessness') is striking — these are the very people who claim to be the Torah's guardians, yet Jesus accuses them of *anomia*, the negation of law (*a-nomia*, 'without law'). Their meticulous rule-keeping paradoxically constitutes a deeper form of lawlessness because it violates the law's true intent.
- 29.** The seventh woe. Archaeological evidence confirms that elaborate tomb monuments were being built around Jerusalem in this period. The verb *oikodomeite* ('you build') and *kosmeite* ('you adorn, you decorate') describe acts of memorial piety — honoring prophets of the past. The hypocrisy lies in what follows.
- 30.** The Greek *koinōnoi* ('partners, participants, sharers') implies active complicity, not just passive agreement. The claim to moral superiority over their ancestors is the setup for Jesus's devastating reversal in the next verse — by identifying their ancestors as prophet-killers, they unwittingly confess the family lineage.
- 31.** The verb *martyreite* ('you testify, you bear witness') is legal language — they have given testimony that convicts them. The word *huiōi* ('sons') means both biological descendants and spiritual heirs. Jesus's logic: by acknowledging that your fathers killed the prophets, you admit kinship with prophet-killers — and your current actions prove the family resemblance.
- 32.** The imperative *plērōsate* ('fill up!') is darkly ironic — possibly a command, possibly a sarcastic permission, possibly a prophetic declaration of inevitability. The 'measure' (*metron*) of sin is an image from Genesis 15:16, where God tells Abraham that the iniquity of the Amorites 'is not yet complete.' Jesus implies that his generation will bring the accumulated guilt to its fullness.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 15:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 33.** The epithets *opheis* ('snakes') and *gennēmata echidnōn* ('offspring of vipers') echo John the Baptist's language in 3:7. The rhetorical question *pōs phygēte* ('how will you flee?') implies no escape is possible. The word *geennēs* ('Gehenna/hell') refers to the Valley of Hinnom, the image of final divine judgment (cf. 5:22, 29-30, 10:28).
- 34.** The remarkable claim *egō apostellō* ('I am sending') places Jesus in the role of God himself, who in the Old Testament sends prophets. Jesus predicts the persecution of his own future messengers using four escalating verbs: kill (*apokteneite*), crucify (*staurōsete*), flog (*mastigōsete*), and pursue

(diōxete). The prediction of crucifixion is specifically Roman punishment, suggesting Jesus foresees the Roman context of early Christian persecution.

- 35.** Abel (Genesis 4) is the first murder victim in the Hebrew Bible; Zechariah son of Jehoiada (2 Chronicles 24:20-22) is the last, since Chronicles is the final book in the Hebrew canon. Together they span the entire scriptural record of innocent blood. The identification 'son of Barachiah' creates a difficulty — the Zechariah killed in the temple was the son of Jehoiada (2 Chronicles 24:20), not Barachiah. This may reflect confusion with the prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah (Zechariah 1:1), or it may represent a tradition otherwise lost to us. We render the Greek as given.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Chronicles 24:20-22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 1:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** The solemn amēn legō hymin ('truly I say to you') marks this as an authoritative prophetic declaration. The phrase tēn genean tautēn ('this generation') most naturally refers to Jesus's contemporaries, placing the prophesied judgment within a generation — a timeframe consistent with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.
- 37.** The tone shifts dramatically from prophetic denunciation to lament. The double vocative Ierousalēm Ierousalēm expresses deep grief (cf. 'Absalom, Absalom!' in 2 Samuel 19:4). The maternal image of a hen (ornis) gathering chicks (nossia) under her wings (pterygas) is extraordinary — Jesus uses a feminine, nurturing metaphor for his own desire to protect Jerusalem. The divine wing as shelter echoes Psalm 91:4 and Ruth 2:12. The verb ēthelēsate ('you were willing') places the blame squarely on Jerusalem's refusal.
- 37.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Samuel 19:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 37.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 91:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 37.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ruth 2:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 38.** The word oikos ('house') likely refers to the temple, though it could mean Jerusalem or the nation. The adjective erēmos ('deserted, desolate') echoes Jeremiah 22:5 ('this house will become a desolation'). The verb aphietai ('is left, is abandoned') suggests divine departure — God is vacating the premises. The passive voice is a divine passive: God is the one leaving.
- 38.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 22:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 39.** Jesus quotes Psalm 118:26, the same psalm the crowds sang at his triumphal entry (21:9). The phrase ap' arti ('from now') marks a turning point — Jesus's public ministry in Jerusalem is ending. The 'until' (heōs an) implies a future moment of recognition, whether at the Parousia or at a future national repentance. The quotation frames Jesus's departure as a withdrawal of divine presence that will end only when Jerusalem welcomes him as the one coming in the LORD's name.
- 39.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 118:26. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

24

Summary: *Matthew 24 contains the Olivet Discourse — Jesus's extended teaching on the destruction of the temple, the signs of his coming, and the end of the age. Prompted by the disciples' question about when the temple will be destroyed and what signs will signal his return, Jesus describes a sequence of tribulations: false messiahs, wars, famines, earthquakes, persecution, the 'abomination of desolation,' cosmic disturbances, and finally the coming of the Son of Man. The chapter closes with parables and warnings about readiness, emphasizing that no one knows the day or hour.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Olivet Discourse is one of the most debated passages in the New Testament. The disciples' question in verse 3 may conflate two events (the temple's destruction and the end of the age) that Jesus addresses separately, or Jesus may see them as typologically connected. The phrase 'abomination of desolation' (v. 15) draws from Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11, originally referring to Antiochus Epiphanes' desecration of the temple in 167 BC, here reapplied to a future event. The discourse weaves together language of historical catastrophe (consistent with 70 AD) and cosmic apocalyptic imagery (suggesting an event beyond history).*

Translation Friction: The central interpretive challenge is distinguishing which predictions refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD and which refer to the final return of Christ — or whether such a distinction is even intended. We render the Greek as given without imposing a particular eschatological framework. The phrase 'this generation will not pass away until all these things take place' (v. 34) has been interpreted as referring to the generation alive in Jesus's day, the generation alive when the signs begin, or 'generation' in the sense of 'race/people.' We render genea straightforwardly as 'generation' and note the interpretive range.

Connections: The discourse draws heavily on Daniel 7 (Son of Man coming on clouds), Daniel 9 (abomination of desolation), Isaiah 13 and 34 (cosmic upheaval language), Zechariah 12-14 (mourning and judgment), and Joel 2 (signs in sun and moon). The 'days of Noah' comparison (vv. 37-39) connects to Genesis 6-8. The discourse serves as the foundation for much of Revelation's imagery and for Paul's eschatological teaching in 1 Thessalonians 4-5 and 2 Thessalonians 2.

¹Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came to him to point out the buildings of the temple. ²He answered them, "Do you see all these things? Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another — every one will be thrown down." ³As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will deceive many. ⁶You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these things are the beginning of birth pains. ⁹Then they will hand you over to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. ¹⁰At that time many will fall away, betray one another, and hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets will arise and deceive many. ¹²And because lawlessness will increase, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. ¹⁵"So when you see the abomination of desolation, spoken of through the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place" — let the reader understand — ¹⁶Then let them which be in Judaea escape into the hills. ¹⁷The one on the housetop must not go down to get things out of his house, ¹⁸And do not allow him that is in the field return back to take his clothes. ¹⁹How terrible it will be for pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days! ²⁰Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on a Sabbath. ²¹For at that time there will be great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, and never will again. ²²If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short. ²³Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' — do not believe it. ²⁴For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵See, I have told you in advance. ²⁶So if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness!' — do not go out. Or, 'Look, he is in the inner rooms!' — do not believe it. ²⁷For as lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸Wherever the carcass is, there the vultures will gather. ²⁹"Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. ³²Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: when its branch becomes tender and puts out leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³In the same way, when you see all these things, you know that it is near — right at the door. ³⁴Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³⁵Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. ³⁶But concerning that day and hour, no one knows — not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son — but the Father alone. ³⁷For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸Until the day that noe entered into the ark,, for as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. ³⁹Recognized not until the flood arrived, and picked up them all away. So will also the coming of the Son of Man be. ⁴⁰Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and one left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and one left. ⁴²Therefore stay alert, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But

understand this: if the homeowner had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴For this reason, you also must be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. ⁴⁵"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶Blessed is that servant whom his master finds doing so when he arrives. ⁴⁷Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸But if that wicked servant says in his heart, 'My master is delayed,' ⁴⁹Will start to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. ⁵⁰The lord of that attendant will arrive in a time when he looketh not for him, and in an moment that he is not aware of,. ⁵¹Will cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites — where there is sobbing and grinding of teeth.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *eporeueto* ('was going, was walking away') is imperfect, suggesting Jesus was in the process of departing — a symbolic act following the 'desolate house' pronouncement of 23:38. The disciples' impulse to show him the temple buildings (*oikodomas tou hierou*) reflects pride in Herod's temple, one of the architectural wonders of the ancient world. Josephus describes its massive stones and gold ornamentation.
2. The double negative *ou mē* ('absolutely not') with the subjunctive *aphethē* expresses the strongest possible negation in Greek — this will certainly happen. The prophecy was fulfilled literally in 70 AD when the Romans under Titus destroyed the temple. Josephus records that soldiers pried apart the stones to recover gold that had melted between them during the fire (Jewish War 7.1.1).
3. The disciples' question contains two or possibly three parts: (1) when will the temple be destroyed? (2) what is the sign of your coming (*parousia*)? (3) what signals the end of the age (*synteleias tou aiōnos*)? The Greek *parousia* means 'arrival, presence, coming' and became the technical term for Christ's return. The phrase *synteleias tou aiōnos* means 'completion of the age,' not 'end of the world' as in the KJV — *aiōn* is 'age,' not 'world' (*kosmos*). The Mount of Olives, east of the temple, is associated with eschatological events in Zechariah 14:4.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 14:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Jesus begins not with a timeline but with a warning. The verb *planēsē* ('leads astray, deceives') is from the same root as 'planet' (wandering star) — it suggests being led off course. The imperative *blepete* ('watch, be alert') sets the tone for the entire discourse: vigilance, not speculation, is the proper response to eschatological questions.
5. The phrase *epi tō onomati mou* ('on the basis of my name') means they will invoke Jesus's authority or claim to be his successor. The claim *egō eimi ho Christos* ('I am the Christ') predicts messianic pretenders. Josephus records several such figures in the decades before 70 AD (Theudas, the Egyptian, Bar Kokhba later in 132 AD).
6. The verb *throeisthe* ('be alarmed, be disturbed') suggests panic or anxiety. Jesus distinguishes between preliminary signs and the end itself (to *telos*). The word *dei* ('it is necessary, it must') indicates divine necessity — these events are part of the plan, not signs that the plan has failed. The phrase *oupō estin to telos* ('the end is not yet') prevents premature eschatological calculation.
7. The phrase *ethnos epi ethnos* ('nation against nation') echoes Isaiah 19:2 and 2 Chronicles 15:6. The SBLGNT does not include 'pestilences' (*loimoi*), which appears in some manuscripts reflected in the KJV. The catalog — wars, famines, earthquakes — represents the standard prophetic signs of divine judgment (cf. Isaiah 13, Ezekiel 38, Joel 2).
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 19:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Chronicles 15:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 38. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Joel 2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Greek *ōdinōn* ('birth pains, labor contractions') is more specific than the KJV's 'sorrows.' The metaphor is significant: birth pains are not pointless suffering but purposeful agony that leads to new life. The image comes from the prophetic tradition (Isaiah 26:17, 66:7-9, Jeremiah 4:31, Micah 4:9-10) where Israel's suffering is compared to labor preceding deliverance.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 26:17 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 4:31 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Micah 4:9-10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The verb paradōsousin ('they will hand over, deliver up') is the same word used for Judas's betrayal of Jesus (26:15) and for Jesus being handed over to Pilate (27:2). The term thlipsin ('affliction, distress, tribulation') denotes severe pressure and suffering. The phrase dia to onoma mou ('because of my name') identifies the cause: association with Jesus himself.
10. The verb skandalisthēsontai ('will be caused to stumble, will fall away') describes apostasy under pressure — faith collapsing when the cost becomes too high. The triple repetition of allēlous ('one another') paints a picture of community disintegration: mutual betrayal and mutual hatred replacing mutual love.
11. The pseudoprophētai ('false prophets') are distinct from the false messiahs of verse 5. The term echoes Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and Jeremiah 23:9-40 — Israel's perennial problem of prophets who speak without divine commission. The repetition of pollous ('many') in both subject and object emphasizes the scale of the deception.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 13:1-5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 23:9-40. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The word anomian ('lawlessness') — the same term used in 23:28 — here describes societal moral collapse. The verb psygēsetai ('will be cooled, will grow cold') uses a temperature metaphor for love (agapē) — the opposite of the fervent love commanded in 22:37-39. The connection between rampant lawlessness and the cooling of love suggests that moral chaos erodes the capacity for genuine community.
13. The participle hypomeinas ('having endured, having persevered') is from hypomenō ('to remain under, to bear up under') — it pictures standing firm under pressure rather than escaping it. 'The end' (telos) may refer to the end of one's life, the end of the tribulation, or the consummation of the age. 'Will be saved' (sōthēsetai) encompasses both spiritual salvation and physical deliverance, depending on context.
14. The Greek oikoumenē ('inhabited world') referred to the known world of the Roman Empire, though its scope may extend beyond that. The phrase eis martyron ('as a testimony/witness') indicates that the proclamation itself constitutes a witness — whether people accept or reject it. This verse makes worldwide gospel proclamation a precondition for 'the end' (to telos), providing a missionary mandate embedded in eschatological prophecy.
15. The 'abomination of desolation' (to bdelygma tēs erēmōseōs) comes from Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11. In Daniel it referred to Antiochus IV Epiphanes setting up a pagan altar in the temple in 167 BC. Jesus reapplies it to a future desecration. The parenthetical 'let the reader understand' (ho anaginōskōn noeitō) may be Matthew's editorial note to his readers rather than Jesus's words, alerting them that this prophecy requires careful discernment. The 'holy place' (topō hagiō) is the temple area.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 9:27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The imperative pheugetōsan ('let them flee') conveys urgency — immediate flight, no delay. The instruction to flee to the mountains is practical advice for a military siege: the Judean wilderness and hills east of Jerusalem provided natural refuge. The early church historian Eusebius records that Christians in Jerusalem fled to Pella in Transjordan before the Roman siege of 70 AD.
17. The flat roof (dōmatos) of a Palestinian house was used for daily activities and could be accessed by an external staircase. The instruction is to flee via the rooftops without even entering one's own home — the urgency is that extreme. Every moment spent collecting possessions risks death.
18. The himation ('cloak, outer garment') was an essential item — it served as both clothing and bedding (cf. Exodus 22:26-27). Even this necessity must be abandoned. The verb epistrepasō ('let him turn back') echoes Lot's wife (Genesis 19:26) — looking back is dangerous.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 22:26-27 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 19:26 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The ouai ('woe, alas') here expresses compassion, not condemnation — grief for those whose physical condition makes flight nearly impossible. The phrase en gastri echousais ('having in the womb') and thēlāzousais ('nursing') depict the most vulnerable members of society in a crisis.
20. Winter (cheimōnos) makes travel through the Judean wilderness dangerous — cold, rain, swollen wadis. A Sabbath flight would face two obstacles: restricted travel distances (a 'Sabbath day's journey' was about 2,000 cubits or three-quarters of a mile) and city gates that might be shut. The mention of Sabbath assumes a Jewish-observant audience and reflects Matthew's Jewish-Christian community context.
21. The phrase thlipsis megalē ('great tribulation') has become a technical eschatological term in many traditions. The language of unprecedented suffering echoes Daniel 12:1. The superlative — nothing like it before or after — may be hyperbolic prophetic language (cf. Exodus 10:14 about the locusts, Joel 2:2) or may describe a truly singular event. Josephus's account of the siege of Jerusalem describes starvation, cannibalism, and mass crucifixion that corroborates extreme suffering.

21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 12:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 10:14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Joel 2:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The verb *ekolobōthēsan* ('were cut short, were curtailed') implies divine intervention to limit the duration of suffering. The term *pasa sarx* ('all flesh') means all living people, not just believers. The *eklektous* ('elect, chosen ones') are the reason for God's mercy in shortening the tribulation — divine compassion for his people sets a boundary on catastrophe.
23. Jesus returns to the warning against false messiahs (cf. v. 5). The construction *ean tis* ('if anyone') is deliberately indefinite — the source of deception could be anyone. The imperative *mē pisteusēte* ('do not believe') is decisive and unqualified.
24. The compound *pseudochristoi* ('false messiahs/false christs') appears only here and in Mark 13:22 in the entire New Testament. The phrase *sēmeia megala kai terata* ('great signs and wonders') uses the same language used positively for God's miraculous acts in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:22) — the deception is sophisticated enough to mimic divine authentication. The clause *ei dynaton* ('if possible') leaves ambiguous whether the elect can actually be deceived — the conditional suggests it may approach but not achieve that.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 6:22. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The verb *proeirēka* ('I have foretold') emphasizes that the warning comes before the events, removing any excuse for being caught off guard. The brevity of the statement gives it the force of a prophetic seal — 'You have been warned.'
26. Two contrasting locations are named: the wilderness (*erēmō*), where prophetic and messianic movements typically gathered (cf. the Qumran community, various revolutionary movements), and the inner rooms (*tameiois*), suggesting secret, esoteric knowledge. Both are rejected — the true coming of the Son of Man will not be hidden or localized.
27. The lightning metaphor (*astrapē*) establishes three qualities of the Parousia: it will be sudden, visible everywhere simultaneously, and unmistakable. No one needs to be told lightning has struck — you simply see it. This eliminates the possibility of a secret or localized return. The title 'Son of Man' (*huios tou anthrōpou*) draws from Daniel 7:13-14.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:13-14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. This proverb-like saying is enigmatic. The Greek *aetoi* can mean 'eagles' or 'vultures' — vultures is more contextually appropriate since eagles do not typically feed on carrion (*ptōma*, 'fallen body, corpse'). The saying may mean that judgment naturally finds its target, just as vultures inevitably find a carcass. Some interpreters see a reference to Roman eagles (legionary standards). The exact application is deliberately obscure.
29. The adverb *eutheōs* ('immediately') creates an interpretive challenge — if the tribulation of 'those days' refers to 70 AD, what follows 'immediately' after? The cosmic imagery draws heavily from Isaiah 13:10 (judgment on Babylon) and Isaiah 34:4 (judgment on Edom), where darkened sun and falling stars are prophetic language for political upheaval and divine judgment, not necessarily literal astronomical events. Whether Jesus uses this language literally or figuratively (as the prophets often did) remains debated. The 'powers of the heavens' (*dynameis tōn ouranōn*) may refer to celestial bodies or to spiritual forces.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 13:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 34:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. The 'sign' (*sēmeion*) of the Son of Man is not identified — it may be the Son of Man himself, a banner, a light, or something else entirely. The mourning of 'all the tribes of the earth' (*pasai hai phylai tēs gēs*) echoes Zechariah 12:10-12, where Israel mourns one whom they have pierced. The coming 'on the clouds' (*epi tōn nephelōn*) directly fulfills Daniel 7:13-14, where the Son of Man receives universal dominion from the Ancient of Days. The combination of *dynamis* ('power') and *doxa* ('glory') contrasts with Jesus's first coming in humility.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 7:13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 12:10-12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. The trumpet (*salpingos*) echoes the great trumpet of Isaiah 27:13, which summons the scattered Israelites home. The gathering of the elect (*eklektous*) from the four winds (*tessarōn anemōn*) fulfills the ingathering prophecies of Deuteronomy 30:4, Isaiah 11:11-12, and Zechariah 2:6. The phrase *ap' akrōn ouranōn heōs tōn akrōn autōn* ('from the extremities of the heavens to their extremities') means from one horizon to the other — a universal gathering.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 27:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 30:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 11:11-12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Zechariah 2:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 32.** The fig tree (sykēs) parable is an analogy from nature, not an allegory (the fig tree does not represent Israel here, despite some interpretive traditions). In Palestine, the fig tree's visible budding is a reliable harbinger of summer. The Greek hapalos ('tender, soft') describes the supple new growth. Jesus applies this to the preceding signs: when you see them, know that the fulfillment is near.
- 33.** The pronoun 'it' (implied by the verb *estin*) is ambiguous — 'it' could be the Son of Man, the kingdom, or the predicted destruction. The phrase *epi thyras* ('at the doors') is a vivid spatial metaphor: whatever is coming has arrived at the threshold and is about to enter.
- 34.** This is one of the most debated verses in the New Testament. The word *genea* ('generation') most naturally means the people alive at a given time (roughly 30-40 years). If taken at face value, Jesus predicts that everything described in vv. 4-31 will occur within the lifetime of his contemporaries. This fits the destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD, about 40 years after Jesus's ministry) but creates tension with the cosmic-scale events of vv. 29-31. Alternative readings take *genea* as 'race' (the Jewish people will not cease to exist) or 'type of people' (evil generation). We render the word in its primary sense and note the interpretive range.
- 35.** The contrast between the temporary (heaven and earth) and the permanent (Jesus's words) is a staggering claim. The verb *parelusetai* ('will pass away, will come to an end') applied to heaven and earth echoes Isaiah 51:6 and Psalm 102:26. The double negative *ou mē parelthōsin* ('absolutely will not pass away') applied to Jesus's words places them above creation itself in permanence — a claim of divine authority.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 51:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 102:26 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** The SBLGNT includes *oude ho huioi* ('nor the Son'), which some manuscripts omit (the KJV follows manuscripts that omit it). The inclusion is generally considered original and theologically significant: Jesus acknowledges a limitation on his own knowledge regarding the timing of the end. The three-tiered exclusion (no human, no angel, not even the Son) concentrates all knowledge of the timing in the Father alone. This verse fundamentally undercuts all attempts to calculate the date of Christ's return.
- 37.** The Noah comparison (*hai hēmerai tou Nōe*) establishes an analogy not about wickedness but about normalcy — people will be going about ordinary life when the end comes. The Greek *Nōe* is the Septuagint form of the Hebrew Noah.
- 38.** The activities listed — eating (*trōgontes*), drinking (*pinontes*), marrying (*gamountes*), and giving in marriage (*gamizontes*) — are not sinful but ordinary. The point is not that they were doing evil things but that they were oblivious. The *kataklysmos* ('flood, deluge') is the Greek term used in the Septuagint for Noah's flood (Genesis 6-8).
- 38.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 6-8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 39.** The verb *ouk egnōsan* ('they did not know, they did not realize') is the key: the catastrophe was not unannounced (Noah was building the ark in plain sight) but unrecognized. The verb *ēren* ('took away, swept away') pictures sudden, total removal. The *parousia* will similarly overtake those who are not alert.
- 40.** The verb *paralambanetai* ('is taken, is received') and *aphietai* ('is left, is released') have been interpreted in opposite ways: 'taken' as gathered for salvation (cf. v. 31) or 'taken' in judgment (as the flood 'took' in v. 39). The Noah context suggests 'taken' means taken in judgment and 'left' means spared, though the reverse interpretation (taken to be with the Lord) is also defended. We render the Greek without interpretive addition.
- 41.** Grinding grain at a hand mill (*mylō*) was a common daily task for women in first-century Palestine. The parallel with verse 40 extends the point: the separation will occur during the most routine activities, without warning, in both men's and women's domains of daily life.
- 42.** The imperative *grēgoreite* ('stay awake, be watchful, be alert') becomes the dominant theme from here through chapter 25. The SBLGNT reads *hēmera* ('day') rather than *hōra* ('hour') found in some manuscripts. The practical application of the preceding prophecy is not calculation but constant readiness.
- 43.** The Greek *oikodespotēs* ('master of the house, homeowner') becomes the subject of a brief parable. The *phylakē* ('watch') refers to the Roman system dividing the night into four watches. The verb *diorychthenai* ('to be dug through') reflects Palestinian construction: mud-brick walls could literally be tunneled through by a thief. The analogy is startling — the Son of Man's coming is compared to a thief's break-in (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:2, Revelation 3:3).
- 44.** The imperative *ginesthe hetoimoi* ('be ready, become prepared') calls for ongoing readiness, not a one-time preparation. The phrase *hē ou dokeite hōra* ('the hour you do not think/expect') adds an ironic twist: the one thing you can be sure of is that it will not be when you expect it.

45. The parable shifts to a household manager. The Greek *pistos* ('faithful, trustworthy') and *phronimos* ('wise, prudent') describe the ideal servant. The *oiketeia* ('household, household servants') represents those under the servant's care. The question 'who then is...?' invites the listener to identify with or aspire to this role.
46. The word *makarios* ('blessed, fortunate, happy') is the same word that opens the Beatitudes (5:3-11). The key phrase is *houtōs poiounta* ('doing thus') — blessedness is found in faithful action at the moment of the master's return, not in speculation about when the return will occur.
47. The reward for faithfulness is expanded responsibility — the servant who managed the household well is given authority over all the master's possessions (*pasin tois hyparchousin*). This principle — faithfulness in small things leading to authority over greater things — recurs in the parable of the talents (25:21, 23).
48. The phrase *en tē kardia autou* ('in his heart') indicates private calculation, not public rebellion. The verb *chronizei* ('delays, takes a long time') reveals the servant's reasoning: he assumes the master's absence will continue, so he can act with impunity. The adjective *kakos* ('wicked, evil') characterizes the servant by his response to the delay, not by a separate category of person.
49. The wicked servant's behavior manifests in two ways: abuse of those under his authority (*typtein tous syndoulous*, 'beating his fellow servants') and self-indulgence (eating and drinking with drunkards). The combination of oppression and excess characterizes unfaithful leadership — using one's position for personal gain while harming those one is supposed to serve.
50. The double expression — a day he does not expect (*ou prosdoka*) and an hour he does not know (*ou ginōskei*) — echoes verse 36. The servant's calculation that the master is delayed proves fatally wrong. The surprise element reinforces the discourse's central theme: readiness, not prediction.
51. The verb *dichotomēsei* ('will cut in two, will cut to pieces') is shockingly graphic — whether literal dismemberment or a metaphor for severe punishment is debated. The phrase *meta tōn hypokritōn* ('with the hypocrites') is distinctly Matthean (Luke's parallel has 'with the unfaithful'). The unfaithful servant is classified with the hypocrites of chapter 23 — those who had a role in God's household but served themselves instead. The formula 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' appears for the sixth and final time in Matthew.

25

Summary: *Matthew 25 continues the Olivet Discourse with three parables about readiness and accountability. The parable of the ten virgins warns against being unprepared for the bridegroom's delayed arrival. The parable of the talents teaches that faithful stewardship of what has been entrusted will be rewarded, while fearful inaction will be judged. The chapter culminates in the parable of the sheep and goats — a vision of the Son of Man judging all nations based on how they treated 'the least of these,' identifying care for the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and imprisoned as care for Christ himself.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The sheep and goats passage (vv. 31-46) is unique to Matthew and is one of the most ethically demanding texts in the Gospels. The criterion of judgment is not doctrinal correctness or religious observance but practical compassion for the vulnerable. Both the righteous and the unrighteous are surprised by the identification of Jesus with 'the least of these' — neither group knew they were serving or neglecting Christ himself. This radical identification of the exalted Son of Man with the suffering poor has shaped Christian ethics for two millennia.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of 'the least of these my brothers' (v. 40) is debated: does it refer to all suffering people, to persecuted Christians specifically, or to Christian missionaries? The Greek *adelphōn mou* ('my brothers') could support any of these. We render the text straightforwardly. The parable of the talents has been misused to justify economic exploitation; the original context is eschatological accountability, not capitalist productivity. The 'outer darkness' language (v. 30) and 'eternal punishment' (v. 46) raise questions about the nature and duration of divine judgment that we note without resolving.*

Connections: *The ten virgins echoes Song of Solomon 3:1-4 (seeking the beloved at night) and connects to the wedding feast imagery of 22:1-14. The talents parable develops the faithful/wicked servant contrast of 24:45-51. The sheep and goats scene draws on Daniel 7:9-14 (the Son of Man's tribunal), Ezekiel 34 (God judging between sheep), and Joel 3:1-3 (judgment of the nations). The six acts of mercy listed in vv. 35-36 became foundational for Christian charitable practice.*

¹"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³When the foolish ones took their lamps, they did not take oil with them. ⁴But the wise ones took oil in flasks along with their lamps. ⁵When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. ⁶B

ut at midnight a shout rang out: 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' ⁷Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹But the wise answered, 'There may not be enough for both us and you. Go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' ¹⁰While they were going away to buy oil, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast. And the door was shut. ¹¹Later the other virgins came and said, 'Lord, lord, open the door for us!' ¹²But he answered, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' ¹³Therefore stay alert, for you know neither the day nor the hour. ¹⁴"For it is like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one — each according to his own ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and made five more. ¹⁷In the same way, the one with two talents gained two more. ¹⁸But the one who had received one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time, the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰The one who had received five talents came forward and brought five more, saying, 'Master, you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' ²¹His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²²The one with two talents also came forward and said, 'Master, you entrusted me with two talents. See, I have gained two more.' ²³His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴Then the one who had received one talent came forward and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter seed. ²⁵So I was afraid and went and hid your talent in the ground. Here — you have what is yours.' ²⁶His master answered him, 'You wicked and lazy servant! You knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received it back with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. ²⁹For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. ³⁰And throw the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' ³¹"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people from one another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. ³⁴Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and come to you?' ⁴⁰And the King will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' ⁴¹Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴²For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not serve you?' ⁴⁵Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *parthenois* ('virgins, unmarried young women') refers to the bridal attendants, not the bride herself. The *lampadas* ('torches, lamps') were likely torchlike lamps — oil-soaked cloths wrapped around sticks — used in wedding processions. The scene depicts a nighttime bridal procession, a common feature of Jewish weddings where the bridegroom came to collect the bride and bring her to his home.
2. Matthew reverses the typical order and names the foolish (*mōrai*) first, emphasizing their failure. The adjectives *mōrai* ('foolish') and *phronimoi* ('wise, prudent') are the same terms used for the builders on sand and rock in 7:24-26 — folly and wisdom are defined by preparedness for what is coming.

3. The Greek *elaion* ('olive oil') was the standard lamp fuel. Taking lamps without extra oil reveals short-term thinking — they prepared for the event but not for a delay. The folly is not malice but negligence.
4. The *ageiois* ('vessels, containers, flasks') represent reserve supply. The wise virgins' preparation was not extraordinary — they simply anticipated that the bridegroom might be delayed. Wisdom, in this parable, is realistic expectation combined with adequate preparation.
5. The participle *chronizontos* ('delaying, being late') uses the same root as 24:48 where the wicked servant said 'my master is delayed.' Crucially, all ten — wise and foolish — fell asleep. Sleep is not the failing; lack of oil is. The distinction between the two groups is not greater vigilance but better preparation.
6. The timing — *mesēs nyktos* ('middle of the night') — fulfills the theme of unexpected arrival (24:44, 50). The *kraugē* ('shout, cry') pierces the sleeping darkness. The imperative *exerchesthe* ('come out!') demands immediate action. The verb *apantēsin* ('meeting, encounter') was used technically for the welcoming delegation that went out to meet a visiting dignitary.
7. The verb *ekosmēsan* ('trimmed, arranged, put in order') involves adjusting the wicks and refueling — standard lamp maintenance. All ten perform the same action, but only now does the difference in preparation become apparent.
8. The present tense *sbennyntai* ('are being extinguished, are going out') describes the lamps flickering and dying — there is still a brief window, but it is closing. The request *dote hēmin* ('give us') reveals the crisis: preparation cannot be borrowed at the last moment.
9. The refusal is not selfishness but realism — *mēpote ou mē arkesē* ('perhaps there will certainly not be enough') acknowledges that sharing would leave all ten without adequate oil. The parable's point is that some things cannot be shared or transferred at the last moment: personal spiritual preparedness is not a communal resource.
10. The timing is cruel in its precision: the bridegroom arrives during the foolish virgins' absence. The word *hetoimoi* ('ready, prepared') is the same term from 24:44 ('you also must be ready'). The passive *ekeleisthē* ('was shut') has the finality of divine decision — the door, once closed, will not reopen. The shut door is the parable's climactic image.
11. The doubled vocative *kyrie kyrie* ('Lord, lord!') echoes 7:21-23, where Jesus warned that saying 'Lord, Lord' would not be enough without corresponding obedience. The frantic repetition conveys desperation. The request *anoixon hēmin* ('open for us!') meets the closed door of verse 10.
12. The bridegroom's response *ouk oida hymas* ('I do not know you') is not a factual claim of unfamiliarity but a legal-relational declaration of non-recognition — equivalent to disowning. This parallels 7:23 ('I never knew you'). In Semitic idiom, 'to know' implies relationship; 'not to know' means the relationship does not exist.
13. The SBLGNT does not include 'wherein the Son of man comes' (*en hē ho huiois tou anthrōpou erchetai*), which appears in later manuscripts and the KJV. The imperative *grēgoreite* ('stay alert, keep watch') provides the moral of the parable, linking back to 24:42. The emphasis is on the double ignorance: neither the day (*hēmeran*) nor the hour (*hōran*) is knowable.
14. The Greek *apodēmōn* ('going abroad, traveling away') indicates an extended absence — the master's return is indefinite. The verb *paredōken* ('handed over, entrusted') implies both trust and accountability. The master's property (*ta hyparchonta autou*) represents whatever God entrusts to his people. The SBLGNT does not include 'the kingdom of heaven is as' explicitly, but the meaning is implied by the connecting *gar* ('for').
15. A *talanton* ('talent') was a unit of weight (about 75 pounds / 34 kg), and when applied to money, represented approximately 6,000 denarii — about 20 years' wages for a laborer. Even one talent was an enormous sum. The phrase *kata tēn idian dynamin* ('according to his own ability') indicates that the distribution was personalized, not arbitrary — the master knew each servant's capacity.
16. The adverb *eutheōs* ('immediately, at once') indicates prompt action. The verb *ērgasato* ('worked, traded, did business') implies active investment. The verb *ekerdēsen* ('gained, profited') is from *kerdos* ('gain, profit'). The 100% return represents exceptional stewardship, not a specific investment strategy.
17. The word *hōsautōs* ('in the same way, likewise') establishes that the proportional return, not the absolute amount, is what matters. Both the five-talent and two-talent servants achieved 100% return — identical faithfulness despite different scales.
18. Burying money (*ōryxen gēn*, 'dug the earth') was a common method of safeguarding valuables in the ancient world and was considered a reasonable precaution in rabbinic law (b. Baba Metzia 42a). The servant did not lose the money or steal it — he preserved it. His failure was in doing nothing more than preserving it.
19. The phrase *meta polyn chronon* ('after much time') reinforces the theme of delayed return from 24:48 and 25:5. The expression *synairei logon* ('settles accounts,' literally 'takes up a reckoning together') is a commercial term for auditing — the time of accountability has come.
20. The servant's report is straightforward and factual: he acknowledges what was given (*paredōkas*, 'you entrusted') and presents the result (*ekerdēsa*, 'I gained'). There is no boasting — the credit structure of the sentence places the master's entrustment before the servant's achievement.
21. The exclamation *eu* ('well done!') is a single Greek word conveying approval. The adjectives *agathe* ('good') and *piste* ('faithful, trustworthy') describe character, not just performance. The phrase *epi oligā* ('over a few things') is remarkable — five talents was an enormous sum, yet the master calls it 'a few things' compared to what is coming. The invitation *eiselthe eis tēn charan* ('enter into the joy') transcends mere reward — it is admission to participation in the master's own celebration.

- 22.** The two-talent servant's report mirrors the five-talent servant's almost verbatim. The parallel structure emphasizes that the proportion of faithfulness, not the absolute amount, is what the master evaluates.
- 23.** The master's response is word-for-word identical to verse 21. The two-talent servant receives exactly the same commendation, the same reward, and the same invitation to joy as the five-talent servant. This is the parable's most important structural feature: God's approval is based on faithfulness relative to what was given, not on absolute output.
- 24.** The one-talent servant does not report results but offers an accusation: *egnōn se* ('I knew you') becomes a character indictment. The adjective *sklēros* ('hard, harsh, demanding') frames the master as exploitative. The agricultural metaphor — reaping where you did not sow (*therizōn hopou ouk espeiras*), gathering where you did not scatter (*synagōn hothēn ou dieskorpisas*) — accuses the master of profiting from others' labor. Whether this is an accurate description of the master or the servant's self-justifying distortion is the interpretive question.
- 25.** The participle *phobētheis* ('being afraid, having feared') reveals the servant's motivation: fear, not laziness. The phrase *ide echeis to son* ('look, you have what is yours') is simultaneously a return of property and a rejection of relationship. The servant treats the talent as a liability to be preserved, not a gift to be invested.
- 26.** The master's reply uses the servant's own words against him. The adjectives *ponēre* ('wicked') and *oknēre* ('lazy, slothful, hesitant') provide the master's counter-assessment. The word *oknēros* implies not just idleness but timid shrinking back. The master's question *ēdeis hoti* ('you knew that...?') can be read as accepting the servant's premise for argument's sake: 'Even if that were true, it should have motivated you to act, not to freeze.'
- 27.** The *trapezitais* ('bankers, money-changers,' literally 'table-men' from *trapeza*, 'table') operated exchange tables in the marketplace. The word *tokō* ('interest,' literally 'offspring' — money begetting money) refers to the return on a deposit. The master's argument is devastating: even the minimum effort — simply depositing the money — would have been acceptable. The servant did not even do that. The prohibition against charging interest to fellow Israelites (Deuteronomy 23:19-20) did not apply to banking deposits.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 23:19-20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** The command to redistribute the talent to the most productive servant (not divided equally) follows the principle stated in verse 29. The one talent is not returned to the master's treasury but given to another servant — unfaithfulness results in the loss of what was entrusted.
- 29.** This paradoxical principle appears four times in the Gospels (Matthew 13:12, 25:29; Mark 4:25; Luke 19:26). In context, 'having' means having produced results through faithful stewardship. The one who uses what is given receives more; the one who does not use it loses even the original gift. This is a spiritual principle about faithfulness, not an economic observation about wealth concentration.
- 30.** The adjective *achreion* ('useless, worthless, unprofitable') describes the servant's net contribution: nothing. The phrase *to skotos to exōteron* ('the outer darkness') and the formula 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' appear for the final time in Matthew (cf. 8:12, 22:13, 24:51). The severity of the punishment — identical to the hypocrites' fate — indicates that inactive preservation of what God gives is as culpable as active rebellion.
- 31.** The scene shifts from parable to apocalyptic vision. The Son of Man arrives *en tē doxē autou* ('in his glory') — the same glory foretold in 24:30. The phrase *thronos doxēs* ('throne of glory') echoes the divine throne room of Daniel 7:9-10 and 1 Enoch 62:5. Jesus claims the judicial authority that in the Old Testament belongs exclusively to God.
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 7:9-10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 32.** The phrase *panta ta ethnē* ('all the nations/peoples') is universal in scope. The verb *aphorisei* ('will separate, will set apart') uses the same root as 'Pharisee' (*pharisaïos*, 'separated one'). The pastoral imagery of a shepherd (*poimēn*) dividing sheep from goats echoes Ezekiel 34:17-22, where God himself judges between sheep. In Palestine, sheep and goats often grazed together but were separated at night.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 34:17-22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 33.** The right side (*dexiōn*) is the position of honor and favor throughout Scripture and the ancient world (cf. Psalm 110:1). The left (*euōnymōn*, literally 'well-named' — a euphemism, since the left was considered unlucky) is the position of disfavor. The spatial arrangement visualizes the coming verdict.
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 110:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 34.** The title *basileus* ('King') replaces 'Son of Man' — the judge is also the king. The passive *eulogēmenoi* ('blessed ones') is a divine passive: blessed by God. The verb *klēronomēsate* ('inherit') frames the kingdom as an inheritance, not an earned wage — it was prepared (*hētoimasmenēn*, 'made ready') before the beneficiaries existed, from the foundation of the world (*apo katabolēs kosmou*). The kingdom is God's gift, even though the criterion of entry involves human action.
- 35.** The six acts of mercy begin. The first-person statements are extraordinary — the King identifies himself with the recipients of care. The word *xenos* ('stranger, foreigner') denotes someone outside the community, without local connections or legal protections. The verb *synēgagete* ('you gathered together, you took in') implies hospitality — bringing the outsider into community.

36. The final three acts: clothing the naked (*gymnos*, which can mean 'poorly clothed' as well as completely unclothed), visiting the sick (*epeskepsasthe*, from *episkopeō*, 'to look upon, to visit, to care for' — the root of 'bishop/overseer'), and visiting prisoners (*en phylakē*, 'in custody/prison'). Ancient prisons provided no food or care — prisoners depended entirely on outside visitors for survival. These six acts (feeding, giving drink, hospitality, clothing, caring for the sick, visiting prisoners) became the traditional 'corporal works of mercy' in Christian ethics.
37. The righteous (*dikaioi*) are genuinely surprised — their compassion was not calculated to earn a reward. The question *pote se eidomen* ('when did we see you?') reveals that they were unaware they were serving Christ. This unconscious righteousness is precisely the point: authentic compassion does not perform for an audience.
38. The questions continue through the same six categories, emphasizing the righteous ones' complete lack of awareness that their acts of mercy had any connection to Christ. The repetition creates a liturgical rhythm.
39. The final pair — sick and imprisoned — represents the most marginalized members of society. Visiting the sick and imprisoned carried social stigma and personal risk. The righteous ones' question implies they would have done more had they known.
40. This is the theological center of the passage. The phrase *eph' hoson* ('inasmuch as, to the extent that, whatever') creates a comprehensive equivalence. The superlative *elachistōn* ('least, smallest, most insignificant') identifies Christ with society's most overlooked members. The phrase *tōn adelphōn mou* ('my brothers') has been interpreted as referring to all suffering people, to fellow Christians, or to Christian missionaries. The Greek *adelphōn* is rendered 'brothers and sisters' as the context addresses all nations. The identification *emoi epoiēsate* ('you did it to me') makes compassion for the vulnerable a direct encounter with Christ.
41. The contrast with verse 34 is sharp: 'Come' versus 'Depart' (*poreuesthe ap' emou*); 'blessed by my Father' versus 'cursed' (*katēramenoi*); 'inherit the kingdom prepared for you' versus 'into the eternal fire prepared for the devil.' Note that the kingdom was prepared 'for you' while the fire was prepared 'for the devil and his angels' (*tō diabolō kai tois angelois autou*) — the fire's intended occupants are demonic, not human. Humans who end up there are in a place not designed for them. The adjective *aiōnion* ('eternal, age-long') is from *aiōn* ('age'); its precise meaning — unending or age-long — is debated.
42. The accusation mirrors verses 35-36 point by point, with the devastating addition of *ouk* ('not') before each verb. The judgment is not for active harm but for passive neglect — sins of omission rather than commission.
43. The six categories are compressed slightly here — 'sick and in prison' are combined into one clause — but the same acts of neglect are catalogued. The passive construction makes the failing clear: they saw need and did nothing.
44. The goats' question mirrors the sheep's (vv. 37-39) — they too are surprised. They did not realize that neglecting the vulnerable was neglecting Christ. The verb *diēkonēsamen* ('we served, we ministered to') is from *diakoneō*, the root of 'deacon/servant.' Their defense is ignorance, but ignorance of Christ's identification with the suffering is not accepted as an excuse.
45. The negative counterpart to verse 40. The word *adelphōn* ('brothers') is absent from the SBLGNT here (present in v. 40 but not v. 45), which may broaden the identification beyond 'my brothers' to 'the least' in general. The principle works in both directions: service to the least is service to Christ; neglect of the least is neglect of Christ.
46. The parallel structure places *kolasin aiōnion* ('eternal punishment') and *zōēn aiōnion* ('eternal life') in direct opposition, both modified by the same adjective *aiōnion*. The word *kolasin* ('punishment, correction') comes from *kolazō* ('to prune, to cut short, to punish'). Whether *aiōnion* means 'everlasting' (without end) or 'of the age to come' (pertaining to the coming age) is debated; the same adjective modifies both destinies, so consistency requires reading them the same way. This verse concludes the Olivet Discourse and Jesus's public teaching in Matthew.

26

Summary: *Matthew 26 narrates the events leading to Jesus's arrest and trial. The chapter opens with the plot to kill Jesus, the anointing at Bethany, and Judas's agreement to betray him. Jesus then shares the Passover meal with his disciples, institutes the Lord's Supper, predicts Peter's denial, agonizes in prayer at Gethsemane, and is arrested. The chapter concludes with Jesus's trial before the high priest Caiaphas, Peter's three denials, and Peter's bitter weeping.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter is dense with irony and theological significance. The woman who anoints Jesus performs a prophetic act that the disciples cannot understand — she is anointing him for burial while they debate the waste. Judas's betrayal price of thirty silver coins echoes Zechariah 11:12-13. The Last Supper reinterprets the Passover in terms of Jesus's own body and blood, establishing a 'new covenant.' Jesus's prayer in Gethsemane — 'not as I will, but as you will' — is the ultimate expression of submission to the Father. The arrest scene includes Jesus's enigmatic statement that he could summon twelve legions of angels but chooses not to, placing his suffering squarely within divine purpose.*

Translation Friction: The institution narrative (vv. 26-29) is among the most theologically disputed texts in Christianity — different traditions interpret 'this is my body' and 'this is my blood' in radically different ways (transubstantiation, consubstantiation, memorial, spiritual presence). We render the Greek without theological interpretation. The phrase 'blood of the covenant poured out for many' (v. 28) echoes both Exodus 24:8 (covenant blood) and Isaiah 53:12 (poured out for many). Jesus's statement 'the one who dipped his hand in the bowl with me' (v. 23) does not identify Judas publicly — in the reclining posture, multiple people shared the same dish.

Connections: The Passover setting connects to Exodus 12. The anointing echoes the anointing of priests and kings (Exodus 29, 1 Samuel 16). The thirty silver coins fulfill Zechariah 11:12. The cup language draws on Isaiah 51:17 and Jeremiah 25:15 (cup of God's wrath). Gethsemane ('oil press') connects to the Mount of Olives and the crushing imagery of Isaiah 53. Peter's denial fulfills Jesus's prediction and echoes the scattering of the sheep (Zechariah 13:7, quoted in v. 31). The trial before Caiaphas involves the Son of Man language of Daniel 7:13 and the right-hand imagery of Psalm 110:1.

¹When Jesus had finished all these words, he said to his disciples, ²"You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified." ³Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the courtyard of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, ⁴Plotted that they might take Jesus by subtility, and kill him. ⁵But they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people." ⁶In the house of Simon the leper,, and now after Jesus was in Bethany. ⁷There arrived to him a lady having an alabaster box of very costly ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. ⁸When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. ⁹"This could have been sold for a large sum and the money given to the poor." ¹⁰Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you troubling this woman? She has done a beautiful thing for me. ¹¹For you will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. ¹²By pouring this perfume on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial. ¹³Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her." ¹⁴Went to the chief priests,, then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot. ¹⁵Stated to them, What will you give me, and I will deliver him to you? then they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶From that time on, he looked for an opportunity to hand Jesus over. ¹⁷On the first day of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?" ¹⁸He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My time is near. I will observe the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" ¹⁹The disciples did as Jesus directed them and prepared the Passover. ²⁰When evening came, he reclined at the table with the Twelve. ²¹While they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." ²²Deeply distressed, they began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" ²³He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me — he will betray me. ²⁴The Son of Man goes as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." ²⁵Judas, who was betraying him, answered, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus said to him, "You have said it yourself." ²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take, eat. This is my body." ²⁷Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you, from now on I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." ³⁰After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ³¹Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'" ³²But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." ³³Peter answered him, "Even if everyone else falls away because of you, I will never fall away." ³⁴Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." ³⁵Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will never deny you." And all the disciples said the same thing. ³⁶Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷Taking Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him, he began to be sorrowful and deeply troubled. ³⁸Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." ³⁹Going a little farther, he fell face down and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." ⁴⁰Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter,

"So, could you not keep watch with me for one hour? ⁴¹Stay awake and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." ⁴²Again, a second time, he went away and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." ⁴³Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So he left them and went away once more, praying a third time, saying the same thing again. ⁴⁵Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Get up, let us go. See, my betrayer is near." ⁴⁷While he was still speaking, suddenly Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, and with him a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I kiss — that is the man. Seize him." ⁴⁹Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you came to do." Then they came forward, seized Jesus, and arrested him. ⁵¹Suddenly, one of those with Jesus reached for his sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. ⁵²Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?" ⁵⁵At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out as if against a rebel, with swords and clubs to arrest me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶But all this has happened so that the writings of the prophets would be fulfilled." Then all the disciples abandoned him and fled. ⁵⁷Those who had arrested Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and elders had gathered. ⁵⁸But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He went inside and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. ⁵⁹The chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, ⁶⁰But discovered none — yea, though numerous false witnesses arrived, yet discovered they none. At the last arrived two false witnesses, ⁶¹Stated, This fellow stated, I am able to destroy the sanctuary of God, and to build it in three period. ⁶²The high priest stood up and said to him, "Have you no answer? What is it that these men are testifying against you?" ⁶³But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I put you under oath by the living God: tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." ⁶⁴Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven." ⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his robes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have just heard the blasphemy. ⁶⁶What is your verdict?" They answered, "He deserves death." ⁶⁷Then they spat in his face and struck him with their fists, and some slapped him, ⁶⁸Declaring, Prophecy to us, you Christ, Who is he that smote you? ⁶⁹Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant girl came up to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." ⁷⁰But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." ⁷¹When he went out to the gateway, another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." ⁷²Again he denied it, with an oath: "I do not know the man." ⁷³After a little while, the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them too — your accent gives you away." ⁷⁴Then he began to invoke curses on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man!" And immediately a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵And Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The formula *kai egeneto hote etelesen* ('and it happened when he finished') marks the conclusion of each of Jesus's five major discourses in Matthew (7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1). This is the fifth and final occurrence, signaling the end of Jesus's teaching ministry. The verb *etelesen* ('finished, completed') shares its root with *tetelestai* ('it is finished,' John 19:30).
2. Jesus yokes the Passover (to *pascha*) to his own crucifixion — the Passover lamb and the Son of Man converge. The present tense *paradidotai* ('is being handed over') suggests the process is already underway. The verb *staurōthēnai* ('to be crucified') is the first explicit prediction of crucifixion as the method of death in Matthew's passion narrative.
3. The Greek *aulēn* ('courtyard, palace') refers to the enclosed court of the high priest's residence. Caiaphas (Joseph bar Caiaphas) served as high priest from approximately 18-36 AD — an unusually long tenure that suggests political skill. The SBLGNT does not include 'scribes' (*grammateis*), which appears in some manuscripts reflected in the KJV.

4. The verb *synebouleusanto* ('they counseled together, they plotted') indicates a formal conspiracy. The word *dolō* ('by guile, by stealth, by treachery') reveals that even the authorities recognized they could not act openly — Jesus's popularity required covert action.
5. The word *heortē* ('festival, feast') refers to Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when Jerusalem's population swelled with pilgrims. The fear of *thorybos* ('uproar, riot, tumult') reflects the political volatility of Passover — a celebration of liberation from oppression — under Roman occupation. Ironically, events will force them to act during the festival after all.
6. Bethany was a village about two miles east of Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. Simon 'the leper' (*tou leproū*) was presumably healed — he would not host a dinner while ritually unclean. The designation likely preserves his former identity. This Simon is otherwise unknown.
7. Matthew does not name the woman (John 12:3 identifies her as Mary of Bethany). The *alabastron* ('alabaster flask') was a stone container with a sealed neck, broken open for use — a one-time expenditure. The *myron barytimou* ('very expensive ointment/perfume') was likely *spikenard*. Pouring it on Jesus's head (*epi tēs kephalēs*) evokes priestly and royal anointing (Exodus 29:7, 1 Samuel 16:13).
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 29:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Samuel 16:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Matthew attributes the indignation (*ēganaktēsan*) to the disciples generally, not to Judas specifically (as in John 12:4-5). The word *apōleia* ('waste, destruction, loss') is ironic — the same word is used for perdition and damnation elsewhere. What the disciples see as waste, Jesus will interpret as prophetic worship.
9. The Greek *pollou* ('for much') is vague where Mark 14:5 specifies 'more than 300 denarii' (nearly a year's wages). The argument — resources should go to the poor (*ptōchois*) rather than to extravagant gestures — sounds reasonable, which is what makes Jesus's response surprising.
10. The Greek *ergon kalon* ('good/beautiful work/deed') uses *kalon*, which means both 'good' and 'beautiful' — the act is morally good and aesthetically fitting. Jesus reframes the anointing from 'waste' to 'beauty,' countering the disciples' utilitarian calculus with a different set of values.
11. Jesus echoes Deuteronomy 15:11 ('the poor will never cease from the land'). This is not a dismissal of poverty relief but a recognition of the unique moment: Jesus's death is imminent, and the window for this act is closing. The contrast between *pantote* ('always') for the poor and *ou pantote* ('not always') for Jesus underscores the urgency.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 15:11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The verb *entaphiasai* ('to prepare for burial, to anoint for burial') reveals the prophetic dimension of her act. Whether the woman intended this meaning or not, Jesus interprets her anointing as anticipating his death — she has done what the disciples will not have the opportunity to do properly after the crucifixion.
13. The phrase *eis mnēmosynon autēs* ('as a memorial of her') uses liturgical language — *mnēmosynon* is the word for a memorial offering. Jesus guarantees that this unnamed woman's act will be remembered worldwide and perpetually — a remarkable promise for a single spontaneous gesture. The prophecy itself fulfills itself: the story is being told.
14. The placement of Judas's betrayal immediately after the anointing story creates a devastating juxtaposition: extravagant devotion versus calculated treachery. Matthew emphasizes Judas's identity — *heis tōn dōdeka* ('one of the Twelve') — the betrayer comes from the innermost circle. 'Iscaiot' (*Iskariōtēs*) may derive from Hebrew 'ish Qeriyot' ('man of Kerioth'), indicating his hometown.
15. Judas's question *ti thelete moi dounai* ('what are you willing to give me?') reduces betrayal to a transaction. The thirty silver coins (*triakonta argyria*) echoes Zechariah 11:12, where thirty pieces of silver is the contemptuous price for the shepherd of Israel — the price of a slave (Exodus 21:32). The verb *estēsan* ('they set, they weighed out, they paid') may indicate payment in advance.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 11:12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 21:32 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The imperfect *ezētei* ('he was seeking, he kept looking for') indicates ongoing, deliberate effort. The word *eukairian* ('a good opportunity, a favorable moment') implies calculated patience — Judas needed a time when Jesus was away from the protective crowds.
17. The 'first day of Unleavened Bread' (*prōtē tōn azymōn*) technically refers to 15 Nisan, but colloquially included the preparation day (14 Nisan) when the Passover lamb was slaughtered. The question about preparation reflects the practical logistics: a room must be secured, a lamb purchased and sacrificed at the temple, and the meal prepared according to Passover regulations.
18. The phrase *ton deina* ('a certain man, such-and-such a person') is deliberately vague in Matthew — Mark and Luke provide more detail about how to identify the host. The statement *ho kairos mou engys estin* ('my time is near') has a double meaning: the time for the Passover meal, and the time of his death. The word *kairos* ('appointed time, critical moment') is more theologically loaded than *chronos* ('sequential time').

19. The verb *synetaxen* ('directed, instructed, arranged') implies detailed instructions. The verb *hētoimasan* ('prepared') encompasses the full Passover preparation: procuring and roasting the lamb, preparing unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and wine, and setting the table according to tradition.
20. The Passover meal began after sunset (the start of 15 Nisan in Jewish reckoning). The verb *anekeito* ('reclined') reflects the Hellenistic custom adopted for Passover — reclining on couches around a low table, a posture symbolizing freedom (slaves ate standing). 'The Twelve' (*tōn dōdeka*) includes Judas.
21. The announcement comes during the meal itself — the betrayer is eating the Passover with the one he will betray. The phrase *heis ex hymōn* ('one of you') is devastating: the threat comes from within, not from outside. The verb *paradōsei* ('will hand over') is the same word used throughout the passion narrative.
22. The particle *mēti* expects a negative answer ('it's not me, is it?') but betrays uncertainty — each disciple fears it might be possible. The adverb *sphodra* ('exceedingly, greatly') and the verb *lypoumenoi* ('being grieved, being distressed') capture the emotional shock. That each one asks individually (*heis hekastos*, 'each one') rather than pointing fingers reveals genuine self-doubt.
23. The phrase *ho embapsas* ('the one having dipped') refers to the shared dish used during the Passover meal for dipping bread or bitter herbs. Since multiple people shared the same dish at a communal meal, this does not necessarily single out Judas to the other disciples. The poignancy is in the intimacy — sharing food was a bond of friendship and trust in ancient culture (cf. Psalm 41:9, 'Even my close friend who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me').
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 41:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. Jesus holds divine sovereignty and human responsibility in tension: the Son of Man goes 'as it is written' (*kathōs gegraptai*) — his death fulfills Scripture — but the betrayer is still held accountable. The phrase *kalon ēn autō ei ouk egennēthē* ('it would have been good for him if he had not been born') is the most severe personal condemnation Jesus utters in the Gospels. The divine plan does not excuse the human agent.
25. Judas asks the same question as the other disciples (*mēti egō eimi*, 'it isn't me, is it?') but addresses Jesus as 'Rabbi' (*rhabbi*) rather than 'Lord' (*kyrie*) as the others did (v. 22) — a subtle but possibly significant distinction in Matthew. Jesus's response *sy eipas* ('you have said it' or 'you yourself have said') is an affirmative that places the confession in Judas's own mouth. This exchange may have been quiet enough that the other disciples did not hear it clearly.
26. The four actions — took (*labōn*), blessed (*eulogēsas*), broke (*eklasen*), gave (*dous*) — become the liturgical pattern for the Eucharist/Lord's Supper across all Christian traditions. The blessing (*eulogēsas*) is the standard Jewish *berakah* ('Blessed are you, LORD our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth'). The declaration *touto estin to sōma mou* ('this is my body') is rendered without interpretive addition — whether 'is' (*estin*) means 'is identical with,' 'represents,' or 'becomes' is the central question of eucharistic theology, and the Greek does not resolve it.
27. The verb *eucharistēsas* ('having given thanks') is the source of the word 'Eucharist.' For the bread Jesus 'blessed' (*eulogēsas*); for the cup he 'gave thanks' (*eucharistēsas*) — the two verbs are essentially synonymous in this context. The command *piete ex autou pantes* ('drink from it, all of you') emphasizes universal participation — the cup is for everyone, not just select members.
28. The phrase *to haima mou tēs diathēkēs* ('my blood of the covenant') echoes Exodus 24:8, where Moses sprinkled 'the blood of the covenant' on the people at Sinai. Jesus reinterprets the covenant blood as his own. The SBLGNT does not include 'new' (*kainēs*) before 'covenant,' though some manuscripts include it (cf. Luke 22:20, 'the new covenant in my blood'). The participle *ekchynnomenon* ('being poured out') uses sacrificial language. The phrase *peri pollōn* ('for many') echoes Isaiah 53:12. The phrase *eis aphesin hamartiōn* ('for the forgiveness of sins') is unique to Matthew's institution narrative.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 24:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. The vow of abstinence (*ou mē piō*, 'I will certainly not drink') transforms the meal into both a farewell and a promise. The phrase *genēmatos tēs ampelou* ('fruit of the vine') is the standard Jewish blessing formula for wine. The adverb *kainon* ('new') may modify the wine (new wine in the kingdom) or the drinking (drink it in a new way). The promise *meth' hymōn* ('with you') assures reunion — this is not a final farewell but a temporary separation.
30. The hymn (*hymnēsantes*) is almost certainly the Hallel — Psalms 113-118, traditionally sung at the conclusion of the Passover meal. Psalms 115-118 would have been the final portion. The group leaves the upper room and walks east across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives, about a fifteen-minute walk.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 113-118 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 115-118 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

31. The verb skandalisthēsēsthe ('you will be caused to stumble, you will fall away') predicts total abandonment by all the disciples. Jesus quotes Zechariah 13:7, but with a significant change: the original has 'Strike the shepherd' (imperative), while Matthew has 'I will strike the shepherd' (pataxō, first person) — God himself is the agent who strikes. The scattering of the sheep (diaskorpisthēsontai) will be fulfilled in verse 56.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Zechariah 13:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The passive egerthēnai ('to be raised') is a divine passive — God will raise Jesus. The promise proaxō hymas ('I will go before you') uses shepherd imagery: the shepherd goes ahead and the sheep follow (cf. John 10:4). This promise anticipates the resurrection appearances in Galilee (28:7, 10, 16).
33. Peter's emphatic egō oudepote ('I — never!') places himself above the other disciples. The contrast between pantes ('all') and egō ('I') reveals Peter's self-confidence. The adverb oudepote ('never, at no time') is absolute — Peter makes a claim Jesus will prove false within hours.
34. Jesus counters Peter's 'never' with a precise timeframe: en tautē tē nykti ('on this very night'). The rooster's crow (alektora phonēsai) typically occurs in the early morning hours, around 3:00 AM (the Roman 'cockcrow' watch). The triple denial (tris aparnēsē, 'three times you will deny') will be fulfilled in verses 69-75.
35. Peter doubles down with the strongest possible claim: willingness to die (kan deē me syn soi apothanein, 'even if it is necessary for me to die with you'). The double negative ou mē ('absolutely not') matches Jesus's own emphatic formulations. The phrase homoiōs kai pantes ('likewise also all') indicates unanimous agreement — every disciple makes the same pledge, and every one will fail to keep it.
36. The name Gethsēmani (Γεθσημανί) comes from the Aramaic gat shemanim ('oil press'), a fitting name for a place on the Mount of Olives and grimly appropriate for what will happen there — Jesus is about to be pressed to the point of anguish. The chōrion ('place, piece of land') was apparently a garden or estate they had visited before (cf. John 18:2, 'Jesus often met there with his disciples').
37. The inner circle — Peter, James, and John (the two sons of Zebedee) — are the same three who witnessed the Transfiguration (17:1-8). They have seen his glory; now they will see his agony. The verb lypeisthai ('to be grieved, to be sorrowful') and adēmonein ('to be distressed, to be in anguish') together describe intense emotional suffering. The word adēmonein may derive from a root meaning 'away from home' — a profound disorientation and alienation.
38. The phrase perilypos estin hē psychē mou heōs thanatou ('my soul is sorrowful to the point of death') echoes Psalm 42:5-6 and Jonah 4:9. The preposition heōs ('unto, as far as, to the point of') suggests grief so intense it approaches death — emotional suffering that threatens to be fatal. The request grēgoreite met' emou ('keep watch with me') uses the same verb from the parables of readiness (24:42, 25:13) — now applied to personal accompaniment in suffering.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 42:5-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jonah 4:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. The posture — epesen epi prosōpon ('fell on his face') — expresses total prostration before God. The 'cup' (potērion) is a well-established Old Testament metaphor for suffering and divine judgment (Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15). Jesus asks for the cup to 'pass' (parelthato) — the same verb used for heaven and earth passing away in 24:35. The concluding clause ouch hōs egō thelō all' hōs sy ('not as I will but as you [will]') is the supreme expression of human will yielding to divine will. Jesus's humanity is fully engaged — his will must actively submit.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 75:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 51:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 25:15. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
40. Jesus addresses Peter specifically — the one who had pledged to die with him (v. 35) cannot even stay awake. The question carries more grief than anger. The plural ischysate ('could you [all] not?') extends the rebuke beyond Peter to all three. The 'one hour' (mian hōran) is a small ask compared to the death Peter had promised to face.
41. The imperative pair grēgoreite kai proseuchesthe ('stay awake and pray') links vigilance with prayer — one without the other is insufficient. The peirasmon ('testing, trial, temptation') refers to the coming crisis that will test their loyalty. The maxim to men pneuma prothymon hē de sarx asthenēs ('the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak') acknowledges the gap between intention and capacity — precisely the gap Peter will experience. This is not a philosophical dualism but a pastoral observation.
42. The second prayer shifts from conditional ('if it is possible') to acceptance ('if this cannot pass unless I drink it'). The closing genēthētō to thelēma sou ('your will be done') echoes the Lord's Prayer (6:10) — Jesus practices what he taught. The movement from first to second prayer shows the process of submission: not instantaneous capitulation but a wrestling that arrives at obedience.
43. The participle bebarēmenoi ('weighed down, heavy') describes exhaustion that overcomes willpower. The repeated discovery of sleeping disciples intensifies Jesus's isolation — he faces the crisis alone. There is no recorded rebuke this time.

44. The threefold prayer (ek tritou, 'for the third time') parallels the threefold denial that Peter will soon make (vv. 69-75). Where Jesus prays three times and submits to God's will, Peter will deny three times and fail. The phrase *ton auton logon* ('the same word/statement') indicates that the prayer did not change — the repetition is not rote but persistence.
45. The Greek *katheudete to loipon kai anapauesthe* can be read as a command ('sleep on and rest' — resigned permission), a question ('are you still sleeping?'), or ironic ('go ahead and sleep, if you can — it's too late'). We render it as a question, following the likely tone given the urgency of what follows. The phrase *hē hōra* ('the hour') is the decisive moment Jesus has been anticipating. The present tense *paradidotai* ('is being handed over') indicates the betrayal is happening now.
46. The imperatives *egeisthe* ('rise, get up') and *agōmen* ('let us go') are not flight but advance — Jesus walks toward his betrayer, not away from him. The participle *ho paradidous* ('the one handing over, the betrayer') identifies Judas without naming him. The verb *ēggiken* ('has drawn near, is at hand') is the same verb used for the kingdom of heaven being near (4:17) — an ironic echo.
47. The phrase *eti autou lalountos* ('while he was still speaking') emphasizes the immediacy — Jesus barely finishes speaking before Judas appears. The repeated identification *heis tōn dōdeka* ('one of the Twelve') drives home the betrayal's origin. The *ochlos polys* ('large crowd') with swords (*machairōn*) and clubs (*xylōn*) suggests a mixed force: temple police with swords and perhaps hired assistants with wooden clubs.
48. The pre-arranged signal (*sēmeion*, 'sign') uses the act of friendship — a kiss (*philēsō*, from *phileō*, 'to love, to show affection') — as the instrument of betrayal. The cruel inversion of an intimate gesture into a marker for arrest is universally recognized as one of history's most treacherous acts. The imperative *kratēsate* ('seize him, arrest him') reveals Judas directing the arrest operation.
49. The greeting *chaire* ('greetings, hail, rejoice') and the address *rhabbi* ('Rabbi') maintain the pretense of respect. The verb *katephilēsen* ('kissed') is intensified with the prefix *kata-*, suggesting an emphatic or prolonged kiss — making certain the crowd identifies the right person. Once again Judas addresses Jesus as 'Rabbi' rather than 'Lord' (cf. v. 25).
50. The address *hetaire* ('friend, companion') is the same ominous word used in 20:13 and 22:12 — a term of address that acknowledges the relationship while confronting the violation. The phrase *eph' ho parei* is notoriously difficult to translate: it could be a question ('why have you come?'), a command ('do what you came for'), or a statement ('this is why you have come'). We follow the imperatival reading, which fits the context of Jesus actively accepting his fate. The arrest (*ekratēsan*, 'they seized') follows immediately.
51. Matthew does not identify the swordsman (John 18:10 names him as Peter). The action is impulsive: *ekteineas* ('stretching out his hand'), *apespasen* ('drew'), *pataxas* ('struck'). The *doulos tou archierōs* ('servant of the high priest') is named Malchus in John's account. The *ōtion* ('ear') could mean the entire ear or the earlobe. The act of violence represents the disciples' instinct to fight — the very response Jesus will reject.
52. The command *apostrepson* ('put back, return') rejects armed resistance. The proverbial statement *pantes hoi labontes machairan en machairē apolountai* ('all who take up the sword will perish by the sword') functions as a principle of reciprocal violence — those who initiate violence will meet violence. Jesus refuses to be defended by force even when his life is at stake.
53. A Roman legion (*legiōn*) consisted of approximately 6,000 soldiers, so twelve legions would be over 72,000 angels. The number twelve may correspond to the twelve disciples — one legion for each. Jesus's point is not military calculation but the voluntary nature of his suffering: he has access to overwhelming supernatural force but chooses not to use it. The verb *parakalesai* ('to call alongside, to appeal to, to ask') indicates that help is available for the asking.
54. The rhetorical question reveals Jesus's interpretive framework: the Scriptures (*hai graphai*) require (*dei*, 'it is necessary') that events unfold this way. Jesus's submission to arrest is not weakness but obedience to the scriptural plan. The verb *plērōthōsin* ('be fulfilled') connects to Matthew's fulfillment theology throughout the Gospel.
55. The word *lēstēs* ('bandit, rebel, insurrectionist') is the same word used for the men crucified alongside Jesus (27:38) and for those who made the temple a 'den of bandits' (21:13). Jesus points out the absurdity: he was publicly available every day in the temple, but they come at night with weapons as if he were a dangerous revolutionary. The contrast between his public teaching and their covert arrest exposes the injustice of the proceedings.
56. The fulfillment formula (*hina plērōthōsin*) appears here for the last time in the passion narrative. The statement *hoi mathētai pantes aphen tes auton ephygon* ('the disciples all, having left him, fled') fulfills both Jesus's prediction (v. 31) and Zechariah's prophecy (13:7). The word *pantes* ('all') is emphatic — no exceptions, despite the pledges of verses 33-35.
57. The verb *apēgagon* ('led away') implies forcible removal. Caiaphas the high priest is the same figure from verse 3 — the plot has reached its execution. The scribes (*grammateis*) and elders (*presbyteroi*) assembled at night suggests a hastily convened council, likely not a full formal Sanhedrin session but an irregular hearing.
58. The phrase *apo makrothen* ('from afar, at a distance') captures Peter's conflicted state — close enough to follow, too afraid to stand with Jesus. The word *hypēretōn* ('attendants, guards, officers') refers to the temple police. The phrase *idein to telos* ('to see the end/outcome') is poignant — Peter wants to know what will happen but is powerless to affect it.
59. The word *synedrion* ('council, Sanhedrin') refers to the Jewish ruling body. Matthew's description — they sought pseudomartyrian ('false testimony') — characterizes the trial as predetermined: they are not seeking truth but seeking a basis for execution. The verb *thanatōsōsin* ('they might put to death') reveals the goal from the outset.

60. The failure to find consistent testimony (ouch heuron, 'they did not find') despite many volunteers indicates that the witnesses contradicted each other — Deuteronomy 19:15 required at least two agreeing witnesses. The word hysteron ('finally, at last') suggests a prolonged and frustrating process for the council.
60. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 19:15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
61. The accusation distorts something Jesus apparently said (cf. John 2:19, 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up'). The shift from 'destroy this temple' (a challenge to others) to 'I am able to destroy' (a threat by Jesus) is the crucial distortion. The verb katalysai ('to destroy, to tear down') and oikodomēsai ('to build, to construct') frame the claim as both demolition and reconstruction — an absurd claim if taken literally about Herod's temple.
62. The high priest's rising (anastas) is a dramatic gesture of authority. The double question — first about Jesus's silence, then about the testimony — presses for a response. The verb katamartyrosin ('testify against') uses the prefix kata- ('against'), making the adversarial nature of the testimony explicit.
63. Jesus's silence (esiōpa, 'was silent') fulfills Isaiah 53:7 ('like a sheep before its shearers is silent'). The high priest escalates to a formal oath-adjudication: exorkizō se kata tou theou tou zōntos ('I adjure you by the living God'). Under this oath, silence would constitute contempt of court. The question combines two titles — ho Christos ('the Christ/Messiah') and ho huioi tou theou ('the Son of God') — forcing Jesus to make an explicit claim.
63. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
64. The response sy eipas ('you have said it') is affirmative but nuanced — Jesus accepts the titles but redefines them on his own terms. The plēn ('but, moreover') introduces a counter-declaration. Jesus combines Psalm 110:1 (seated at the right hand) with Daniel 7:13 (coming on the clouds) — the two most important messianic texts in early Christianity. 'Power' (tēs dynamēōs) is a circumlocution for God — 'the right hand of Power' means 'God's right hand.' The phrase ap' arti ('from now on') suggests that the exaltation begins immediately.
64. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 110:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
64. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 7:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
65. The tearing of robes (dierrhēxen ta himatia) was the prescribed response to hearing blasphemy (cf. Mishnah, Sanhedrin 7:5). Ironically, the high priest was prohibited from tearing his garments (Leviticus 21:10) — though some interpret this prohibition as applying only to mourning, not to judicial response. The charge of blasphemia ('blasphemy') rests on Jesus's claim to sit at God's right hand — a claim to divine status that, if false, constitutes the gravest offense against God.
65. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 21:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
66. The phrase enochos thanatou ('liable to death, deserving of death, guilty of a capital offense') is a formal legal verdict. The sentence is passed without formal vote procedure as described in the Mishnah — another irregularity in the proceedings.
67. The progression of abuse — spitting (eneptusam, fulfilling Isaiah 50:6), punching (ekolaphisan, 'struck with fists'), and slapping (erapisan, 'struck with open hand') — constitutes deliberate humiliation. The spitting in the face was the most degrading insult in the ancient world (cf. Numbers 12:14, Deuteronomy 25:9).
67. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 50:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
67. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 12:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
67. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 25:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
68. The taunt 'prophecy!' (prophēteuson) is ironic on multiple levels: Jesus has just prophesied about the Son of Man's exaltation, and the very events unfolding fulfill his earlier prophecies. The game — blindfolding someone and asking them to identify who struck them — mocks his claim to supernatural knowledge. The title Christe ('Christ') is used mockingly.
69. The scene shifts to the courtyard (aulē) where Peter sits with the guards (v. 58). The first accuser is a paidiskē ('servant girl, female slave') — the lowest-status person in the household. The identification 'Jesus the Galilean' (Iēsou tou Galilaiou) marks Jesus as an outsider, a northern provincial. Peter's denial before the least threatening accuser makes his cowardice more stark.
70. The first denial. The verb ěrnēsato ('denied') is the same root as aparnēsē ('you will deny') from Jesus's prediction in verse 34. The phrase emprosthen pantōn ('before all') makes the denial public. Peter's response ouk oida ti legeis ('I do not know what you are saying') is evasive rather than a direct denial — a strategy of feigned ignorance.

71. Peter retreats from the courtyard to the gateway (pylōna) — attempting to distance himself physically from the identification. A second servant girl (allē) makes the accusation to bystanders rather than to Peter directly, broadening the circle of awareness. The identification shifts from 'the Galilean' to 'of Nazareth' (tou Nazōraiou).
72. The second denial escalates — meta horkou ('with an oath') means Peter swears. This is deeply ironic given Jesus's teaching against oath-taking in 5:33-37. The phrase ouk oida ton anthrōpon ('I do not know the man') depersonalizes Jesus — 'the man' rather than 'Jesus' — creating verbal distance from the relationship.
73. The third accusation comes from multiple bystanders (hoi hestōtes, 'those standing by'). The evidence is now Peter's lalia ('speech, accent, dialect') — his Galilean accent was distinctive and recognizable (cf. the Shibboleth test, Judges 12:6). The adverb alēthōs ('truly, certainly') indicates growing confidence in the identification. Peter can no longer hide.
73. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Judges 12:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
74. The third denial reaches maximum intensity: katathematizein ('to invoke curses upon oneself') means Peter calls down divine punishment if he is lying — but he is lying. The verb omnuein ('to swear') adds formal oath-taking. Peter's denial has progressed from evasion (v. 70) to oath (v. 72) to self-cursing (v. 74). The rooster's crow (alektōr ephōnēsen) fulfills Jesus's exact prediction from verse 34 with devastating precision.
75. The verb emnēsthē ('remembered') marks the moment of devastating recognition — memory and reality collide. The adverb pikrōs ('bitterly') describes the quality of Peter's weeping — not gentle tears but anguished, bitter sobbing. Unlike Judas (27:3-5), Peter's response to failure is grief rather than despair. This is the last we see of Peter until the resurrection, and Matthew leaves him weeping — the restoration will come later (cf. John 21).

27

Summary: *Matthew 27 narrates the crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus. The chapter opens with the council's formal decision to hand Jesus to Pilate, Judas's remorse and suicide, and the trial before Pontius Pilate. Pilate offers to release either Jesus or Barabbas; the crowd demands Barabbas and calls for Jesus's crucifixion. After scourging, mocking, and the journey to Golgotha, Jesus is crucified between two criminals. Darkness covers the land for three hours, and Jesus cries out in Aramaic from Psalm 22. At his death, the temple curtain tears, the earth quakes, and tombs open. Joseph of Arimathea buries Jesus in a new tomb, and the chief priests secure the tomb with a guard.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Matthew's passion narrative contains several elements unique to this Gospel: Judas's return of the silver and suicide (vv. 3-10), Pilate's wife's dream (v. 19), Pilate's hand-washing (v. 24), the crowd's cry 'His blood be on us and on our children' (v. 25), the earthquake and resurrection of the saints at Jesus's death (vv. 51-53), and the posting of the guard at the tomb (vv. 62-66). The Zechariah fulfillment citation (vv. 9-10) is attributed to Jeremiah, a well-known difficulty. The tearing of the temple curtain (v. 51) symbolizes the removal of the barrier between God and humanity.*

Translation Friction: *Verse 25 ('His blood be on us and on our children') has been weaponized throughout history to justify antisemitic violence and persecution. This is a misreading: the verse records the words of a specific crowd in a specific moment, not a divine curse on all Jewish people for all time. We render the Greek as given and note the historical misuse. The Barabbas episode raises historical questions — was the custom of releasing a prisoner at Passover a regular practice? The evidence is thin outside the Gospels. We render the narrative as given.*

Connections: *Judas's thirty silver coins and the potter's field connect to Zechariah 11:12-13 (and possibly Jeremiah 18-19, 32:6-9). The Barabbas release echoes the Day of Atonement scapegoat ritual (Leviticus 16). Jesus's cry from Psalm 22:1 connects to the entire psalm, which moves from abandonment to vindication. The torn curtain connects to Exodus 26:33 and the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). The darkness echoes Amos 8:9-10. The burial by Joseph of Arimathea fulfills Isaiah 53:9 ('with a rich man in his death'). The guard at the tomb sets up the resurrection narrative of chapter 28.*

¹When the daybreak was come, all the leading priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. ²They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor. ³Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus had been condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and

elders, ⁴Indeed, declaring, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. Then they stated, What is that to us? see you to that. ⁵He threw the silver coins into the temple sanctuary and left. Then he went away and hanged himself. ⁶The chief priests picked up the silver coins and said, "It is not lawful to put this into the temple treasury, since it is blood money." ⁷After conferring together, they used the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. ⁸For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. ⁹Then what was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, ¹⁰Offered them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me. ¹¹Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." ¹²But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. ¹³Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many charges they are bringing against you?" ¹⁴But he did not answer him, not even a single word, so that the governor was greatly amazed. ¹⁵Now at the festival the governor had a custom of releasing to the crowd one prisoner whom they wanted. ¹⁶At that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you — Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" ¹⁸For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed him over. ¹⁹While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him: "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered greatly today because of a dream about him." ²⁰But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus destroyed. ²¹The governor answered them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" They said, "Barabbas." ²²Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let him be crucified!" ²³He said, "Why? What crime has he committed?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!" ²⁴When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere and that a riot was starting instead, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your responsibility." ²⁵All the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" ²⁶Then he released Barabbas to them, and after having Jesus flogged, he handed him over to be crucified. ²⁷Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's headquarters and gathered the whole cohort around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹Following they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand — then they bowed the knee prior to him, and mocked him and stated, Hail, King of the Jews! ³⁰They spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹When they had finished mocking him, they stripped him of the robe, put his own clothes back on him, and led him away to crucify him. ³²As they were going out, they found a man from Cyrene named Simon, and they forced him to carry Jesus's cross. ³³When they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴They offered him vinegar to drink mingled with gall — and following he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. ³⁵After they crucified him, they divided his garments among themselves by casting lots. ³⁶Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. ³⁷Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ³⁸Then two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰Declaring, you that destroyest the sanctuary, and buildest it in three period, rescue thyself. If you be the Descendant of God, come down from the cross. ⁴¹In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ⁴²"He saved others, but he cannot save himself! He is the King of Israel — let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³He trusts in God — let God rescue him now, if he wants him! For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴The rebels who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. ⁴⁵From noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶About three in the afternoon, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" — that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ⁴⁷When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." ⁴⁸Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a reed, and held it up for him to drink. ⁴⁹But the rest said, "Leave him alone! Let us see if Elijah comes to save him." ⁵⁰Then Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and breathed his last. ⁵¹At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, the earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵²The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ⁵³They came out of the tombs after his resurrection, entered the holy city, and appeared to many. ⁵⁴When the centurion and those with him who were keeping watch over Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" ⁵⁵Many women were there watching from a distance — those who had followed Jesus

from Galilee, serving him. ⁵⁶Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. ⁵⁷When evening came, a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph arrived — he himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. ⁵⁹Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. ⁶⁰Placed it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock — then he rolled a remarkable stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there, facing the tomb. ⁶²The next day — that is, the day after the Day of Preparation — the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³Declaring, Sir, we remember that that deceiver stated, while he was yet alive, following three days I will rise again. ⁶⁴So give the order for the tomb to be secured until the third day. Otherwise his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You have a guard. Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." ⁶⁶So they went and secured the tomb by sealing the stone and posting a guard.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The morning session (prōias, 'early morning') may represent the formal ratification of the nighttime verdict, since Jewish law required capital sentences to be confirmed during daylight. The phrase symboulion elabon ('took counsel, reached a decision') indicates a formal resolution. The purpose clause hōste thanatōsai ('so as to put to death') confirms the death sentence from 26:66.
2. The verb dēsantes ('having bound') indicates Jesus was physically restrained for transfer. The verb paredōkan ('handed over') is the same word used for Judas's betrayal — the chain of 'handing over' continues from Judas to the council to Pilate. The Greek hēgemoni ('governor, prefect') is the general term for a Roman provincial administrator. Pontius Pilate served as prefect of Judea from approximately 26-36 AD.
3. The verb metamelētheis ('having felt regret, having changed his mind') is distinct from metanoeō ('to repent'). Metamelētheis describes emotional regret over consequences, not the spiritual turning (teshuvah/metanoia) that leads to restoration. Judas regrets the outcome but does not seek reconciliation with God or Jesus. The act of returning (estrepseis) the silver attempts to undo the transaction but cannot undo the betrayal.
4. Judas's confession hēmarton ('I have sinned') and his acknowledgment of haima athōon ('innocent blood') are genuine recognitions of guilt. The priests' response — ti pros hēmas ('what is that to us?') — is chillingly dismissive: having used Judas, they discard him. The phrase sy opsē ('you will see to it,' or 'that is your concern') places all responsibility back on Judas.
5. The word naon ('temple sanctuary') refers specifically to the inner sanctuary, not the outer courts — Judas threw the money into the sacred space itself. The verb apēnxato ('hanged himself') describes suicide by hanging. Acts 1:18 gives a different account of Judas's death (falling and bursting open); the two accounts have been harmonized in various ways throughout church history. We render Matthew's account as given.
6. The irony is devastating: the priests who paid for innocent blood now scruple about the ritual propriety of depositing that payment. The word korbanan ('treasury,' from the Hebrew qorban, 'offering') refers to the temple treasury where offerings were deposited. The phrase timē haimatos ('price of blood') acknowledges what they paid for — they know they have purchased a man's life.
7. The 'potter's field' (agron tou kerameōs) was apparently a tract of land associated with pottery-making, perhaps where potters dug clay. Its purchase as a burial ground for xenois ('foreigners, strangers') — non-Jews who died in Jerusalem — ironically connects to Zechariah 11:13 (silver thrown 'to the potter').
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zechariah 11:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The name Agros Haimatos ('Field of Blood') corresponds to the Aramaic Akeldama (Acts 1:19). The phrase heōs tēs sēmeron ('until today') is an etiological formula indicating that the name persisted into Matthew's own time, connecting past event to present landmark.
9. The attribution to Jeremiah (Jeremiou) when the quotation primarily derives from Zechariah 11:12-13 is a well-known difficulty. Several explanations have been proposed: (1) Jeremiah was named because the quotation also draws on Jeremiah 18:1-4 (the potter) and 32:6-9 (buying a field); (2) Jeremiah stood first in the prophetic scroll and could refer to the entire collection; (3) a scribal error. We render the text as given and note the difficulty.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Zechariah 11:12-13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 18:1-4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The quotation freely adapts Zechariah 11:13 with elements from Jeremiah. The phrase katha synetaxen moi kyrios ('as the Lord directed me') indicates that the disposal of the blood money was under divine sovereignty — even the priests' solution for the tainted silver fulfills prophecy.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 11:12-13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

11. The charge has shifted from the religious 'Christ/Son of God' (26:63) to the political 'King of the Jews' (basileus tōn Ioudaiōn) — the formulation relevant to Roman authority. Pilate's concern is political sedition, not theological heresy. Jesus's response *sy legeis* ('you say so') is the same ambiguous affirmation given to Caiaphas (26:64) and Judas (26:25).
12. Jesus's silence before accusers again evokes Isaiah 53:7. The verb *katēgoreisthai* ('to be accused') is a legal term from which 'category' derives. The phrase *ouden apekritnato* ('he answered nothing') emphasizes total silence despite multiple accusations.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 53:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Pilate's question reveals his expectation: a defendant should respond to accusations. The verb *katamartyrosin* ('testify against') and *posa* ('how many') suggest numerous charges. Roman legal procedure allowed the accused to defend himself.
14. The phrase *pros oude hen rhēma* ('not even one word') emphasizes the completeness of Jesus's silence. The governor's amazement (*thaumazein lian*) indicates this was extraordinary behavior — defendants typically fought for their lives. Jesus's silence is an active choice, not passive resignation.
15. The custom (*eiōthei*, 'was accustomed') of releasing a prisoner at Passover is not independently attested outside the Gospels, though analogous prisoner releases are documented in other Roman contexts. The phrase *hon ēthelon* ('whom they wanted') gives the crowd a choice — the mechanism that Pilate will attempt to use in Jesus's favor.
16. The adjective *episēmon* ('notable, notorious, well-known') suggests Barabbas was a famous criminal. The name Barabbas (Barabbas) means 'son of the father' (*bar-abba*) in Aramaic — a striking irony given that Jesus is the Son of the Father. Some manuscripts include the first name 'Jesus Barabbas' (*Iēsoun Barabban*), which, if original, would make the choice between two men named Jesus even more pointed.
17. Pilate's question frames the choice as a binary: Barabbas or Jesus. The phrase *ton legomenon Christon* ('the one called Christ') uses the title without committing to its truth — Pilate reports the title attributed to Jesus. Pilate's strategy is transparent: he expects the crowd to choose Jesus, the less dangerous of the two.
18. The narrator provides Pilate's internal assessment: *dia phthonon* ('because of envy') — the chief priests' motivation was jealousy of Jesus's popularity and authority, not genuine concern about blasphemy or sedition. This editorial note reveals Pilate's political awareness — he understands the real dynamics at play.
19. This episode is unique to Matthew. Pilate's wife (tradition names her Claudia Procula) sends a message from outside the proceedings. The phrase *tō dikaiō ekeinō* ('that righteous man') provides an external witness to Jesus's innocence. Dreams in Matthew carry divine significance (1:20, 2:12, 2:13, 2:19, 2:22) — this is yet another dream-warning that the Roman authorities choose to ignore.
20. The verb *epeisan* ('persuaded, convinced') reveals active manipulation: the crowd's demand for Barabbas is not spontaneous but orchestrated by the religious leaders. The verb *apolesōsin* ('they should destroy') is stark — they do not merely want Jesus released or exiled but destroyed.
21. Pilate repeats his question, perhaps expecting a different answer. The crowd's single-word response — *ton Barabban* ('Barabbas') — is decisive. The brevity conveys the crowd's settled determination.
22. Pilate's question *ti oun poiēsō* ('what then should I do?') reveals his loss of control over the situation. The unanimous response — *legousin pantes* ('they all say') — and the passive imperative *staurōthētō* ('let him be crucified!') is the crowd's explicit demand for Roman execution. Crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment but a Roman one, reserved for slaves, rebels, and the lowest criminals.
23. Pilate's question *ti gar kakon epoiēsen* ('what evil has he done?') is his third attempt to prevent the execution. The comparative *perissōs* ('more exceedingly, all the more') indicates the crowd's response is escalating beyond reason — they are not answering his question but repeating their demand with increasing volume.
24. Pilate's hand-washing (*apenipsato tas cheiras*) is unique to Matthew and evokes the Deuteronomic ritual for unsolved murder (Deuteronomy 21:6-7), where elders wash their hands and declare innocence of blood. Whether a Roman governor would adopt a Jewish ritual is debated — this may be Matthew's theological interpretation of Pilate's attempt to deflect blame. The phrase *athōos eimi* ('I am innocent') uses the same word Judas used for Jesus's blood in verse 4. Pilate's *hymeis opsesthe* ('you will see to it') echoes the priests' dismissal of Judas in verse 4 — a chain of responsibility shifting.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 21:6-7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. This verse has been the most misused text in the history of Jewish-Christian relations, weaponized to justify centuries of antisemitic persecution. The text records the words of a specific crowd (*pas ho laos*, 'all the people' present) at a specific moment, incited by specific leaders (v. 20). It is not a divine curse on all Jewish people for all time — such a reading contradicts the entire prophetic tradition and Paul's teaching in Romans 9-11. The phrase *to haima autou eph' hēmas* ('his blood upon us') is a legal formula accepting responsibility for a death (cf. Joshua 2:19, 2 Samuel 1:16). We render the Greek as given.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 2:19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Samuel 1:16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

- 26.** The verb phragellōsas ('having flogged, having scourged') describes the Roman flagellum — a whip with leather thongs embedded with bone or metal fragments. This was not a light beating but a severe punishment that often left victims near death. Pilate's action — releasing a criminal and scourging an innocent man — epitomizes the injustice of the proceedings. The verb paredōken ('handed over') completes the chain: Judas handed Jesus to the priests, the priests to Pilate, and now Pilate to the executioners.
- 27.** The praitōrion ('praetorium, governor's residence') was likely the Herodian palace on the western side of Jerusalem or the Antonia Fortress near the temple. The speira ('cohort') was a Roman military unit of 600 soldiers, though the entire cohort may not have been present — 'whole' (holēn) may be hyperbolic.
- 28.** The chlamyda kokkinēn ('scarlet cloak') was a Roman military cloak, used here as a mock royal robe (Mark and John describe it as purple). The mockery takes the form of a parody investiture — dressing Jesus as a king to ridicule the charge of kingship.
- 29.** The mock investiture includes three elements: a crown (stephanon ex akanthōn, 'crown from thorns' — painful and parodic), a scepter (kalamon, 'reed' — a flimsy imitation of royal authority), and obeisance (gonypetēsantes, 'kneeling'). The greeting chaire basileu tōn Ioudaiōn ('Hail, King of the Jews!') parodies the imperial salute Ave Caesar. The soldiers' mockery, intended as cruelty, unwittingly proclaims the truth.
- 30.** The imperfect etyton ('they kept striking') indicates repeated blows. Striking his head would drive the thorns deeper. The spitting (emptysantes) reprises the abuse at the Jewish trial (26:67). The reed given as a mock scepter is now used as a weapon — the symbols of kingship become instruments of torture.
- 31.** The re-dressing in Jesus's own clothes (ta himatia autou) before the crucifixion procession was standard procedure — the condemned carried their crossbeam through the streets as a public deterrent. The verb apēgagon ('led away') begins the final journey.
- 32.** The verb ēngareusan ('they compelled, they pressed into service') is a Persian loanword for requisitioning — Roman soldiers had the legal right to conscript civilians for temporary service (cf. 5:41, 'if anyone forces you to go one mile'). Cyrene was a city in North Africa (modern Libya) with a large Jewish community. Simon may have been a Jewish pilgrim in Jerusalem for Passover. The stauros ('cross') he carried would have been the crossbeam (patibulum), not the entire cross.
- 33.** Golgotha (Golgotha) is Aramaic for 'skull' (gulgalta). The Latin equivalent Calvaria gives us the English 'Calvary.' The name may refer to the shape of the hill or to its use as an execution site. The location was outside the city walls (Hebrews 13:12) but near enough for public visibility.
- 34.** The Greek cholēs ('gall, bile') may refer to a bitter substance (Matthew changes Mark's 'myrrh' to 'gall' to echo Psalm 69:21). A drugged wine was sometimes offered to condemned prisoners as a mild sedative. Jesus tastes it (geusamenos) but refuses (ouk ēthelēsen) — he will face the crucifixion fully conscious.
- 34.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 69:21. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 35.** The act of crucifixion itself is stated in a single participle — staurōsantes ('having crucified') — with no description of the physical process. The Gospel writers consistently avoid graphic details of the crucifixion itself. The division of garments (diemerisanto ta himatia) fulfills Psalm 22:18. The soldiers' share of the condemned person's clothing was a legal perquisite. The SBLGNT does not include the explicit Psalm 22 quotation found in some manuscripts and the KJV.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 22:18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** The verb etēroun ('they were watching, they were guarding') indicates the soldiers' duty to prevent rescue attempts or premature removal. Their sitting (kathēmenoi) while Jesus hangs creates a stark visual contrast — bored guards and a dying man.
- 37.** The titulus (aitian, 'charge, accusation') was a placard stating the crime, carried ahead of the condemned or fixed to the cross. The inscription houtos estin Iēsous ho basileus tōn Ioudaiōn ('This is Jesus the King of the Jews') states the political charge — sedition by claiming kingship. Each Gospel records the inscription slightly differently; Matthew's version is the longest. Like the soldiers' mockery, the inscription proclaims what it intends to ridicule.
- 38.** The Greek lēstai ('bandits, rebels, insurrectionists') is the same word from 26:55 — not mere thieves (kleptai) but violent criminals or political revolutionaries. Crucifixion between two criminals fulfills Isaiah 53:12 ('he was numbered with the transgressors'). The positions 'right and left' recall the request of James and John in 20:21 — the positions of honor in the kingdom are filled by criminals at the cross.
- 38.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 39.** The verb eblasphēmoun ('they were blaspheming, they were reviling') is the same word used for the charge against Jesus (26:65) — now passersby commit the very act Jesus was condemned for. The head-shaking (kinountes tas kephalas) fulfills Psalm 22:7 and echoes Lamentations 2:15.
- 39.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 22:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 39.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Lamentations 2:15. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 40.** The taunt recycles the distorted testimony from 26:61. The conditional ei huios ei tou theou ('if you are the Son of God') echoes Satan's temptation in 4:3, 6 — the same structure, the same challenge. The demand sōson seauton ('save yourself') misunderstands the nature of Jesus's mission: he saves others precisely by not saving himself.

41. The religious leaders who orchestrated Jesus's arrest and trial now come to witness and mock his execution. The presence of chief priests (archiereis), scribes (grammateōn), and elders (presbyterōn) — the full complement of the Sanhedrin — makes this an institutional act of rejection.
42. The taunt allous esōsen heauton ou dynatai sōsai ('he saved others, himself he cannot save') is theologically profound in ways the speakers do not intend — it states the precise logic of the atonement. The promise pisteusomen ('we will believe') is conditional on a sign (katabatō, 'let him come down') — the same demand Jesus consistently refused (12:39, 16:4).
43. This taunt directly echoes Psalm 22:8 ('He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him'). The leaders unknowingly recite the very psalm that Jesus is living out on the cross. The conditional ei thelei auton ('if he wants him') questions whether God actually cares about Jesus — the deepest possible taunt against a man of faith.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 22:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
44. Matthew records both criminals joining in the mockery (unlike Luke 23:39-43, where one repents). The verb ōneidizon ('reviled, insulted, reproached') indicates verbal abuse. Jesus is mocked from every quarter — passersby, leaders, and fellow condemned.
45. The sixth hour (hektēs hōras) is noon; the ninth hour (enatēs) is 3:00 PM. The three hours of darkness (skotos) during midday echoes Amos 8:9 ('I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight') and the ninth plague on Egypt (Exodus 10:21-23). The Greek gēn can mean 'land' (of Israel) or 'earth' (the whole world) — the scope is ambiguous.
45. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Amos 8:9 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
45. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 10:21-23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
46. Jesus quotes Psalm 22:1, partially in Aramaic (lema sabachthani) and partially in Hebrew (Eli, Eli — 'my God'). Matthew preserves the Semitic words and provides a Greek translation. This is the only saying from the cross recorded in Matthew. The cry expresses the experience of divine abandonment — whether as a genuine theological crisis, as the opening line of a psalm that ends in vindication, or as both, is a question the text does not resolve. The depth of this cry resists systematic theological explanation.
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 22:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
47. The confusion between Eli ('my God') and Ēlian ('Elijah') may be genuine (the words sound similar, especially in a cry of anguish) or deliberate mockery. The popular expectation that Elijah would return before the Messiah (Malachi 4:5) gives the misidentification a theological edge — they wonder if the dying man is calling for supernatural rescue.
47. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Malachi 4:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
48. The oxos ('sour wine, vinegar') was the cheap wine (posca) that Roman soldiers drank. The act may be compassionate (offering liquid to a dying man) or cruel (prolonging consciousness to extend suffering). The sponge on a reed (kalamō) was necessary to reach Jesus's mouth on the cross. The scene echoes Psalm 69:21 ('for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink').
48. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 69:21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
49. The bystanders' response — aphes idōmen ('let us see') — treats Jesus's dying cry as entertainment. The phrase ei erchetai Ēlias sōsōn auton ('whether Elijah comes to save him') expresses mocking curiosity rather than genuine expectation. Even at the moment of death, the watching crowd is more interested in spectacle than compassion.
50. The second loud cry (kraxas phōnē megalē) is not identified with specific words in Matthew. The phrase aphēken to pneuma ('released the spirit') is unique to Matthew — the other Gospels say he 'breathed out' (exepneusen) or 'handed over' (paredōken) the spirit. Matthew's choice of aphēken ('released, let go, sent away') implies volition: Jesus did not have his life taken but actively gave it up.
51. The katapetasma tou naou ('curtain of the temple sanctuary') most likely refers to the inner curtain separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Exodus 26:33) — the barrier that only the high priest could pass through, once a year, on the Day of Atonement. The tearing ap' anōthen heōs katō ('from top to bottom') indicates divine action — it was torn from God's side, not from below. The accompanying earthquake (hē gē eseisthē) and splitting rocks (hai petrai eschisthēsan) represent cosmic responses to Jesus's death, echoing theophanic language from the Old Testament.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 26:33. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
52. This event is unique to Matthew and is one of the most enigmatic episodes in the Gospels. The phrase kekoimēmenōn hagiōn ('saints who had fallen asleep') uses the standard metaphor of death as sleep. The passive ēgerthēsan ('were raised') is a divine passive — God raised them. The relationship between these resurrections and Jesus's own resurrection (detailed in the next verse) is theologically complex.
53. The phrase meta tēn egersin autou ('after his resurrection') creates a chronological puzzle: if the tombs opened at Jesus's death (v. 52) but the saints emerged after his resurrection, what happened in between? Various solutions have been proposed. The 'holy city' (tēn hagian polin) is Jerusalem.

The verb *enephanisthēsan* ('appeared, became visible to') implies recognizable manifestations to multiple witnesses (*pollois*, 'many').

54. The confession comes from Gentile soldiers — the centurion (*hekatontarchos*, commander of 100 men) and his squad. The evidence that convinces them is the *seismon* ('earthquake') and *ta genomena* ('the things that happened'). The declaration *alēthōs theou huios ēn houtos* ('truly this was God's Son') echoes the disciples' confession in 14:33. The absence of the article before *theou huios* ('Son of God') might allow the reading 'a son of God' (i.e., a divine man), but in Matthew's narrative context the full Christological meaning is intended. The first people to confess Jesus as Son of God after his death are pagan soldiers.
55. The women who remained at the cross after all the male disciples had fled (26:56) are now named as witnesses. They watched *apo makrothen* ('from a distance') — the same phrase used for Peter's distant following in 26:58. The participle *diakonousai* ('serving, ministering to') uses the root of 'deacon' — these women had been active supporters of Jesus's ministry, a detail often overlooked.
56. Three women are named: Mary Magdalene (from Magdala on the Sea of Galilee), Mary the mother of James and Joseph (possibly Jesus's mother, since James and Joseph are brothers of Jesus in 13:55, though this identification is uncertain), and the mother of Zebedee's sons (James and John, who requested seats of honor in 20:20–21). These women become the essential witnesses who link the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection.
57. Evening (*opsias*) signals urgency: the Sabbath begins at sunset, and bodies must be buried before then (Deuteronomy 21:22–23). Joseph's wealth (*plousios*) is significant — it fulfills Isaiah 53:9 ('with a rich man in his death'). *Arimathea* is probably *Ramathaim* (1 Samuel 1:1). The verb *emathēteuthē* ('had become a disciple') indicates secret discipleship, now made public by this bold act.
57. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 21:22–23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
57. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 53:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
57. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Samuel 1:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
58. Requesting the body of an executed criminal required courage and status — a crucified person's body could be denied burial as additional punishment. The verb *ētēsato* ('requested, asked for') and Pilate's prompt order (*ekeleusen*, 'commanded') suggest Joseph had sufficient standing to make the request successfully.
59. The *sindoni kathara* ('clean linen cloth') was used for Jewish burial wrapping. The adjective *kathara* ('clean, pure') indicates both physical cleanliness and ritual purity — Joseph ensures proper, respectful burial. The wrapping (*enetylixen*, 'wound around, wrapped') was the first step of Jewish burial preparation.
60. The tomb was *kainō* ('new') and *autou* ('his own') — Joseph donated his personal tomb. Rock-cut tombs (*elatomēsen en tē petra*, 'hewn in the rock') were expensive, consistent with Joseph's wealth. The large stone (*lithon megan*) was a disc-shaped stone rolled in a channel to seal the entrance — these are well-attested archaeologically in first-century Jerusalem.
61. Two of the women from verse 55–56 remain as witnesses to the burial location. Their presence establishes continuity — the same women who saw Jesus die now see where he is buried, and they will be the first to discover the empty tomb (28:1). The phrase *kathēmenai apenanti* ('sitting opposite') indicates a vigil of grief.
62. The chronological note identifies the day: the day after Preparation (*paraskeuen*), which is the Sabbath. The chief priests and Pharisees approach Pilate on the Sabbath — an action that reveals the urgency of their concern about the tomb. This episode (vv. 62–66) is unique to Matthew and sets up the guard at the tomb.
63. The address *kyrie* ('sir, lord') is politely deferential. They call Jesus *ekeinos ho planos* ('that deceiver') — *planos* means 'wanderer, deceiver, impostor.' Their quotation *meta treis hēmeras egeiromai* ('after three days I rise/am raised') shows they understood Jesus's resurrection predictions even though the disciples apparently did not (cf. 16:21, 17:23, 20:19).
64. The request *asphalisthēnai* ('to be made secure') leads to the guard posting. The fear of body-snatching (*klepsōsin*, 'they might steal') by the disciples reveals that the leaders took the resurrection claim seriously enough to guard against it. The phrase *hē eschatē planē cheirōn tēs prōtēs* ('the last deception worse than the first') identifies the 'first deception' as Jesus's ministry and the feared 'last deception' as a resurrection claim. Ironically, Matthew includes this episode to show that the authorities themselves ensured the tomb was under guard — making the resurrection that much harder to explain away.
65. The phrase *echete koustōdian* could be imperative ('take a guard') or indicative ('you have a guard' — i.e., use your own temple police). The *koustōdia* is a Latin loanword (*custodia*) for a military guard unit. Pilate's response is terse and slightly dismissive — *asphalisasthe hōs oidate* ('secure it as you know how') leaves the details to them.
66. The verb *sphragisantes* ('having sealed') indicates that a seal — probably a cord with a wax or clay seal impression — was placed across the stone, so that any tampering would be immediately evident. The combination of a sealed stone and an armed guard represents the maximum human effort to prevent the resurrection from being claimed. Matthew's narrative irony is that these very precautions will become evidence that the resurrection was genuine: when the tomb is found empty despite a sealed stone and armed guard, natural explanations become far more difficult.

28

Summary: *Matthew 28, the final chapter of the Gospel, narrates the resurrection of Jesus and its immediate aftermath. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary come to the tomb at dawn and encounter an angel who announces that Jesus has risen. They meet the risen Jesus himself on their way to tell the disciples. The chief priests bribe the guards to spread the lie that the disciples stole the body. The chapter — and the entire Gospel — culminates with the Great Commission on a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus claims all authority in heaven and on earth and sends his disciples to make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching, with the promise of his presence until the end of the age.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Great Commission (vv. 18-20) is Matthew's theological climax. The Gospel that began with 'Emmanuel — God with us' (1:23) ends with 'I am with you always' (28:20) — the entire narrative is framed by divine presence. The Trinitarian baptismal formula ('in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit') is the most explicit Trinitarian statement in the Gospels. The universal scope — 'all nations' (panta ta ethnē) — fulfills the promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:3) and the trajectory that began with the Magi (2:1-12). The guards' bribery (vv. 11-15) represents Matthew's engagement with the competing narrative circulating in his day: the claim that the disciples stole the body.*

Translation Friction: *The guard story (vv. 11-15) is unique to Matthew and is often seen as apologetic — a response to Jewish counter-claims about the empty tomb. The phrase 'this story has been spread among the Jews to this day' (v. 15) reflects the tension between Matthew's community and the broader Jewish community. The Great Commission's Trinitarian formula has been questioned by some scholars as reflecting later liturgical development rather than Jesus's exact words. We render the Greek as given. The note that 'some doubted' (v. 17) at the resurrection appearance is a remarkably honest admission that even among the eleven, faith was not unanimous.*

Connections: *The angel's appearance echoes Daniel 10:5-6 and connects to the angel at Jesus's birth (1:20). The earthquake parallels 27:51-54. The mountain setting for the Great Commission recalls the mountain of the Sermon on the Mount (5:1), the Transfiguration (17:1), and ultimately Sinai/Horeb. The promise of universal presence ('I am with you always') echoes the divine name revealed at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14) and the Emmanuel prophecy (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23). The phrase 'the end of the age' (synteleias tou aiōnos) connects to the Olivet Discourse (24:3).*

¹After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²Suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, came and rolled back the stone, and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was white as snow. ⁴The guards shook with fear of him and became like dead men. ⁵The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶He is not here, for he has been raised, just as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and look — he is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see him.' See, I have told you." ⁸So they left the tomb quickly, with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" They came to him, clasped his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." ¹¹While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹²After the chief priests had assembled with the elders and devised a plan, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³Declaring, Say you, His followers arrived by night, and stole him away while we slept. ¹⁴If this reaches the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." ¹⁵The soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jewish people to this day. ¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷When they noticed him, they worshipped him — but some doubted. ¹⁸Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰Teaching them to observe all matters whatsoever I have

commanded you — and, lo, I am with you always, indeed to the end of the world. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *opse sabbatōn* ('late on the Sabbath' or 'after the Sabbath') combined with *tē epiphōskousē eis mian sabbatōn* ('as it was dawning toward the first of the week') describes the early morning of Sunday. The two Marys are the same women who witnessed the burial (27:61). The verb *theōrēsai* ('to see, to observe') suggests they came to visit the tomb, not expecting resurrection. Mark adds that they brought spices for anointing.
2. The second earthquake (*seismos megas*, cf. 27:51) accompanies divine action. The angel (*angelos kyriou*, 'angel of the Lord') descends from heaven (*katabas ex ouranou*) — the same phrase used for divine agents throughout Matthew. The angel rolls away the stone not to let Jesus out (he has already risen) but to show the women the empty tomb. The detail that the angel sat (*ekathēto*) on the stone conveys sovereign composure — the guards' seal and the massive stone are trivial obstacles.
3. The description echoes Daniel 7:9 (the Ancient of Days with garment 'white as snow') and Daniel 10:6 (face like lightning). The combination of *astrapē* ('lightning') and *chiōn* ('snow') — brilliant light and pure whiteness — are the standard biblical markers of heavenly beings. The word *eidea* ('appearance, form') occurs only here in the New Testament.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 10:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The verb *eseisthēsan* ('they shook, they were shaken') uses the same root as *seismos* ('earthquake') — the guards experience their own personal earthquake of terror. The phrase *egenēthēsan hōs nekroi* ('they became as dead men') describes paralysis from fear — ironic, since they were guarding a dead man who is now alive, and the living guards appear dead.
5. The emphatic *hymeis* ('you,' as opposed to the guards) distinguishes the women from the soldiers — the women need not fear because they come seeking (*zēteite*, 'you are seeking') Jesus. The perfect participle *estaurōmenon* ('the crucified one') keeps the crucifixion in view even at the moment of resurrection — the risen Jesus is still the crucified Jesus.
6. The announcement *ouk estin hōde* ('he is not here') is the empty tomb's testimony. The passive *ēgerthē* ('he was raised') is a divine passive — God raised Jesus. The phrase *kathōs eipen* ('just as he said') links the resurrection to Jesus's own predictions (16:21, 17:23, 20:19). The invitation *deute idete* ('come, see') makes the women eyewitnesses of the empty tomb. The SBLGNT does not include 'the Lord' (*ho kyrios*) before 'lay,' which appears in some manuscripts and the KJV.
7. The command is urgent: *tachy poreutheiasai* ('going quickly'). The women are commissioned as the first witnesses and messengers of the resurrection — apostles to the apostles. The phrase *proagei hymas eis tēn Galilaian* ('he goes ahead of you to Galilee') fulfills Jesus's promise in 26:32 and uses the shepherd imagery of going ahead of the flock. The closing *idou eipon hymin* ('see, I have told you') functions as a formal charge — the message has been entrusted.
8. The combination *meta phobou kai charas megalēs* ('with fear and great joy') captures the complex emotional state of encountering the divine — the two emotions are not contradictory but complementary. Fear at the angel's presence and joy at the news coexist. The verb *edramon* ('they ran') conveys urgency — they do not walk to deliver this message.
9. The greeting *chairete* ('Rejoice! Greetings!') is the ordinary Greek salutation, but in this context it carries its full weight — 'Rejoice!' The women's response — *kratēsan autou tous podas* ('they grasped his feet') — demonstrates both physical reality (the risen body can be touched) and devotion (clasping the feet is a posture of worship). The verb *prosekynēsan* ('they worshiped') is the same word used for worship of God throughout Matthew — applied to the risen Jesus without reservation.
10. Jesus repeats the angel's command (*mē phobeisthe*, 'do not be afraid') and the instruction about Galilee. Remarkably, he calls the disciples *tois adelphois mou* ('my brothers') — the men who abandoned him (26:56) are not disowned but claimed as family. This is the first word of the risen Jesus to his followers: reassurance and reconciliation, not rebuke.
11. The narrative shifts to the guards' report. The phrase *tines tēs koustōdias* ('some of the guard') suggests that not all the guards came — some may have fled in different directions. They report to the chief priests (*archiereusin*), not to Pilate — indicating that these were temple guards, not Roman soldiers, or that the priests were their primary employers. The word *hapanta* ('all things') means they gave a complete account of the earthquake, the angel, and the empty tomb.
12. The verb *synachthentes* ('having assembled') and *symbolion labontes* ('having taken counsel') mirror the conspiracy of 27:1 — the same group that plotted Jesus's death now plots to suppress his resurrection. The phrase *argyria hikana* ('sufficient silver, a large sum') repeats the pattern of financial corruption: first they paid Judas (26:15), now they pay the guards. Money is the weapon of choice.
13. The fabricated story is internally contradictory: if the guards were sleeping (*koimōmenōn*, 'while we were sleeping'), how would they know who took the body? The fact that sleeping on guard duty was a capital offense in the Roman military makes the story even less plausible — no soldier would voluntarily confess to this. Matthew includes this detail to expose the alternative explanation as absurd.

14. The priests promise protection: *peisomen auton* ('we will persuade him') and *hymas amerimous poiēsomen* ('we will make you free from worry/care'). The word *amerimous* ('without anxiety, free from concern') assures the soldiers that the political consequences of admitting they slept on duty will be handled. The priests are confident in their ability to manage Pilate — a confidence consistent with their political influence throughout the narrative.
15. The phrase *diēphēmisthē ho logos houtos* ('this story was spread abroad') indicates that the stolen-body theory was actively circulated and had currency in Matthew's time. The phrase *para Ioudaiois* ('among the Jews') reflects the distinction between Matthew's community and the broader Jewish community — a distinction that had sharpened by the time of writing. The phrase *mechri tēs sēmeron hēmeras* ('until the present day') is an authorial aside placing Matthew's writing at some distance from the events described.
16. The number 'eleven' (*hendeka*) is a permanent reminder of Judas's absence. The mountain (*to oros*) is not identified but connects to Matthew's mountain theology — major revelations occur on mountains (5:1, 17:1). The verb *etaxato* ('had directed, had appointed') indicates a prearranged meeting place, showing that the resurrection appearance was not random but planned.
17. The response is divided: *prosekynēsan* ('they worshiped') from some and *edistasan* ('they doubted, they hesitated') from others. The verb *distazō* ('to doubt, to waver, to hesitate') appears only twice in the New Testament — here and in 14:31 (Peter sinking in the water). Matthew's honesty about doubt within the resurrection community is remarkable — even a direct encounter with the risen Jesus does not compel unanimous faith. The 'some' (*hoi de*) who doubted may be a smaller group, but their presence is not hidden.
18. The claim *edothē moi pasa exousia* ('all authority has been given to me') is the most comprehensive authority claim in the New Testament. The passive *edothē* ('was given') indicates the Father as the source. The scope — *en ouranō kai epi tēs gēs* ('in heaven and on earth') — is total and universal. This fulfills Daniel 7:14, where the Son of Man receives authority, glory, and sovereign power from the Ancient of Days. The word *exousia* ('authority, right, power') has been a key theme in Matthew from the beginning (7:29, 9:6, 9:8, 10:1, 21:23-27).
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The main imperative is *mathēteusate* ('make disciples') — not merely 'go' (*poreuthentes* is a participle). The task is disciple-making, not just traveling. The scope *panta ta ethnē* ('all nations/peoples') breaks open the Jewish-focused mission of 10:5-6 ('do not go to the Gentiles') into universal mission. The Trinitarian baptismal formula *eis to onoma tou patros kai tou huiou kai tou hagiou pneumatos* ('into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit') is unique in the Gospels. The singular 'name' (*onoma*) governing three persons is theologically significant — one name, three persons. This formula became the standard baptismal rite of the early church.
20. The second participle *didaskontes* ('teaching') defines discipleship: it involves instruction in *panta hosa eneteilamēn* ('everything I commanded') — the entire ethical and theological teaching of Jesus recorded in Matthew. The closing promise *egō meth' hymōn eimi pasas tas hēmeras* ('I am with you all the days') is the Gospel's final and climactic statement. It echoes the Emmanuel prophecy of 1:23 ('God with us'), forming an inclusio that frames the entire Gospel with the theme of divine presence. The phrase *heōs tēs synteleias tou aiōnos* ('until the completion of the age') connects to the eschatological language of 13:39-40, 49 and 24:3. The SBLGNT does not include 'Amen' (*amēn*) at the end, which appears in some manuscripts and the KJV. Matthew's Gospel ends not with a period but with a promise — the open-ended assurance of Christ's continuing presence.

Mark

Summary: *Mark 1 opens with the ministry of John the Baptist in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance and preparing the way for the one coming after him. Jesus arrives from Nazareth, is baptized by John, and the Spirit descends on him like a dove while a voice from heaven declares him God's beloved Son. The Spirit immediately drives Jesus into the wilderness for forty days of testing. After John's arrest, Jesus begins his public ministry in Galilee, announcing that the kingdom of God has drawn near. He calls his first disciples — Simon, Andrew, James, and John — then demonstrates his authority through exorcisms, healings, and teaching in Capernaum and throughout Galilee. The chapter culminates with Jesus healing a leper and being unable to enter towns openly because of the growing crowds.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Mark's Gospel begins without a birth narrative or genealogy, plunging directly into the action with John the Baptist. The word euthys ('immediately') appears repeatedly — a hallmark of Mark's urgent, fast-paced narrative style. The messianic secret theme emerges early: Jesus commands demons and the healed leper to remain silent about his identity. The opening verse may function as a title for the entire Gospel. Mark's Jesus is a man of decisive action who teaches with authority unlike the scribes, and whose identity the demons recognize even as humans struggle to comprehend it.*

Translation Friction: *The opening quotation in verses 2-3 is attributed to 'Isaiah the prophet' but actually combines Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3. Some manuscripts read 'in the prophets' to avoid this difficulty, but the SBLGNT follows the harder reading. We render the Greek as given. The phrase 'Son of God' in verse 1 is absent from some early manuscripts (notably Sinaiticus); we include it following the SBLGNT. Mark's abrupt transitions and paratactic style ('and... and... and...') are smoothed slightly in English while preserving the narrative urgency.*

Connections: *The opening quotation from Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi 3:1 frames Jesus's arrival as the fulfillment of Israel's prophetic hope for God's return to his people. The wilderness setting evokes Israel's exodus experience. The Spirit's descent at baptism recalls Genesis 1:2 (the Spirit hovering over the waters). The forty days of testing parallel Israel's forty years in the wilderness and Moses's forty days on Sinai. Jesus's authority over unclean spirits and disease demonstrates the in-breaking of God's kingdom that he announces.*

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in Isaiah the prophet: "Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way." ³"A voice crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" ⁴John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him, and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John wore clothing made of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "One who is more powerful than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." ⁹In those days, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰Immediately, as he came up out of the water, he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased." ¹²Immediately the Spirit drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness forty days, being tested by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and the angels were serving him. ¹⁴After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵Saying, The time is fulfilled, and God's kingdom is drawing near. Repent you, and believe the gospel. ¹⁶As he passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷Jesus said to them, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." ¹⁸Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹Going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and his brother John in their boat mending their nets. ²⁰Immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired workers and went after him. ²¹They went to Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and began teaching. ²²They were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, ²⁴"What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God!" ²⁵Jesus rebuked it, saying, "Be silent and come out of him!" ²⁶The unclean spirit convulsed the man, screamed with a loud voice, and came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." ²⁸Immediately the news about him spread everywhere throughout the whole surrounding region of Galilee. ²⁹Immediately after leaving the synagogue, they went to the house of Simon and Andrew, along with James and John. ³⁰Simon's mother-in-law was lying ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. ³¹He went to her, took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her, and she began serving them. ³²That evening, after the sun had set, they brought to him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. ³³The whole town was gathered at the door. ³⁴He healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons, and he would not allow the demons to speak, because they knew him. ³⁵Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and withdrew to a deserted place, and there he was praying. ³⁶Simon and those with him searched for him, ³⁷After they had found him, they stated to him, All men seek for you. ³⁸He said to them, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." ³⁹So he went throughout all of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons. ⁴⁰A man with a skin disease came to him, kneeling and begging him, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." ⁴¹Moved with compassion, he stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing. Be clean." ⁴²Immediately the skin disease left him, and he was made clean. ⁴³Jesus sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, ⁴⁴Says to him, See you say nothing to any man — but go your way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer since your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony to them. ⁴⁵But the man went out and began to proclaim it widely and spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed out in deserted places. Yet people came to him from everywhere.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek euangelion ('good news, gospel') was not originally a religious term — in the Roman world it referred to imperial proclamations, especially announcements of military victory or a new emperor's accession. Mark's use of it for Jesus is a counter-imperial claim. The phrase may function as a title for the entire book rather than the first sentence of a narrative.

1. The phrase 'Son of God' (huiou theou) is absent from Codex Sinaiticus and a few other witnesses, but the SBLGNT includes it. If original, it frames the entire Gospel with a christological declaration that the narrative will progressively unfold.
2. This verse actually quotes Malachi 3:1 (combined with Exodus 23:20), not Isaiah. The Isaiah quotation comes in verse 3. Mark attributes the composite quotation to Isaiah, likely because Isaiah was the more prominent prophet and the primary source. Some later manuscripts changed 'Isaiah the prophet' to 'the prophets' to resolve the difficulty, but the SBLGNT preserves the harder reading.
2. The Greek angelos ('messenger') is the same word used for 'angel.' Here it refers to John the Baptist as God's human messenger.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Malachi 3:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 23:20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. This quotes Isaiah 40:3 from the Septuagint. In the Hebrew original, the phrase division is 'A voice cries out: In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD' — the wilderness is where the road is built, not where the voice cries. The Septuagint and Mark connect 'in the wilderness' with the voice, which conveniently describes John's actual location. The Greek euthys ('straight') here is an adjective, different from the adverb euthys ('immediately') that will become Mark's signature word.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 40:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The Greek egeneto Iōannēs ho baptizōn ('there appeared John the one baptizing') introduces John as a figure bursting onto the scene. Mark uses his characteristic participial style. The word metanoia ('repentance') means a fundamental change of mind and direction, corresponding to the Hebrew teshuvah ('return'). Aphasis hamartōn ('forgiveness/release of sins') uses aphesis, which carries the sense of release or liberation — as in releasing a prisoner or canceling a debt.
5. The 'all' (pasa, pantes) is hyperbolic, a common Semitic literary device emphasizing the magnitude of the response. The imperfect tenses (exeporeueto, ebaptizonto) indicate ongoing, repeated action — the crowds kept coming and kept being baptized. Exomologoumenoi ('confessing') is a present participle indicating that confession accompanied the act of baptism.
6. John's appearance deliberately echoes Elijah's description in 2 Kings 1:8 ('a man wearing a garment of hair with a leather belt around his waist'). Mark presents John as the returning Elijah prophesied in Malachi 4:5, a connection Jesus makes explicit later (9:13). Locusts were a permissible food under Levitical law (Leviticus 11:22) and remain part of the diet in some regions of the Middle East today.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Kings 1:8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Malachi 4:5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 11:22. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Untying sandals was a task considered too menial even for a Hebrew slave — a rabbinic tradition held that a disciple must do everything for his teacher except remove his sandals. John claims he is not even worthy of the task that was beneath a slave. The comparative ischyroteros ('more powerful') is emphatic — John is not describing a slight superiority but an incomparable difference in status and power.
8. The contrast between water and Spirit baptism is stark. The pronoun ego ('I') and autos ('he') are both emphatic in Greek, creating a sharp personal contrast. Mark omits 'and fire' found in Matthew 3:11 and Luke 3:16, focusing solely on the Spirit. The verb baptizō literally means 'to immerse, to dip' — the Spirit baptism implies being immersed in God's Spirit.
9. Mark introduces Jesus abruptly — no birth narrative, no genealogy, no childhood. He simply arrives from the obscure village of Nazareth. The phrase en ekeinai tais hēmerais ('in those days') is a general temporal marker connecting Jesus's appearance to John's ministry. The preposition eis ('into') with the Jordan may suggest full immersion, though the preposition alone is not conclusive.
10. This is the first occurrence of Mark's characteristic euthys ('immediately, at once'), which appears over forty times in this Gospel, creating a sense of urgency and rapid action. The Greek schizomenous ('being torn, split') is much more violent than 'opened' — it is the same root used for the tearing of the temple curtain at Jesus's death (15:38). Mark depicts not a gentle opening but a forceful rending of the barrier between heaven and earth. The vision is described as Jesus's experience — 'he saw' (eiden) — making it a personal revelation rather than a public spectacle in Mark's account.
11. Mark's version addresses Jesus directly ('You are') rather than speaking about him in the third person ('This is') as in Matthew 3:17. The declaration combines Psalm 2:7 ('You are my Son') — a royal enthronement psalm — with Isaiah 42:1 ('my chosen one, in whom my soul delights') — the first Servant Song. Jesus is thus identified simultaneously as the Davidic king and the Suffering Servant, two strands that Mark's Gospel will weave together throughout. The Greek agapētos ('beloved') may also carry the sense of 'only' or 'unique,' echoing Genesis 22:2 where Isaac is called Abraham's 'beloved son.'

11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 2:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 42:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 22:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The verb *ekballei* ('drives out, casts out, expels') is startlingly forceful — it is the same word Mark uses for casting out demons. The Spirit does not lead or guide Jesus into the wilderness; he is thrust there. Mark's use of the historical present tense (*ekballei* rather than the aorist) makes the action vivid and immediate. The wilderness (*erēmos*) connects to the wilderness motifs of Exodus and Isaiah 40.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 40. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Mark compresses what Matthew and Luke expand into three specific temptations into a single, vivid summary. The 'forty days' echoes Israel's forty years in the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:2), Moses's forty days on Sinai (Exodus 34:28), and Elijah's forty-day journey to Horeb (1 Kings 19:8). The detail about wild animals (*thērion*) is unique to Mark and may evoke either danger or the Edenic peace of Isaiah 11:6–9 where the messianic figure restores harmony with the animal kingdom. The Greek *peirazomenos* can mean 'tempted' or 'tested' — we use 'tested' to capture the broader sense of being put to the proof.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 8:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 34:28 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Kings 19:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 11:6–9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The Greek *paradothēnai* ('to be handed over, arrested') is the same verb used later for Jesus's own betrayal and arrest (14:10, 41). Mark subtly foreshadows that the fate of the forerunner will become the fate of the one he announced. The phrase 'good news of God' (*euangelion tou theou*) means the good news that comes from God, about God, or both — the genitive is intentionally ambiguous.
15. The Greek *kairos* ('time') denotes an appointed or decisive moment, distinct from *chronos* (ordinary sequential time). The perfect tense *peplērōtai* ('has been fulfilled') indicates a completed action with ongoing significance — the decisive moment has arrived and remains in effect. The perfect tense *ēngiken* ('has drawn near') similarly indicates that the kingdom has arrived at the threshold and remains there. The two imperatives — *metanoete* ('repent') and *pisteuete* ('believe') — form the twofold human response to the kingdom's arrival.
16. The Greek *thalassa* ('sea') is technically a lake (Lake Gennesaret/Kinneret), but the Gospels consistently call it a 'sea,' which reflects local usage. The verb *amphiballontas* ('casting a net') is a technical fishing term — casting a circular hand net. Mark introduces Simon without explanation, suggesting his audience already knew who Simon Peter was.
17. The call narrative is remarkably brief — no prior conversation, no credentials, no negotiation. The metaphor 'fishers of people' (*halieis anthrōpōn*) draws on their existing vocation but transforms it. The plural *anthrōpōn* ('of people') is rendered inclusively rather than with the gendered 'of men,' since the Greek *anthrōpos* refers to human beings generally.
18. The word *euthys* ('immediately') again emphasizes the instantaneous nature of the response. The verb *aphentes* ('leaving, abandoning') conveys a decisive break. The aorist tense *ēkolouthēsan* ('followed') marks the beginning of a new course of life. The cost of discipleship is implicit — nets represent livelihood, investment, and family trade.
19. The verb *katartizontas* ('mending, preparing, making ready') suggests the brothers were repairing or preparing their nets for the next fishing trip — they were in the middle of their workday. James is named before John, likely indicating he was the elder brother.
20. Again *euthys* ('immediately') underscores the urgency of Jesus's call and the decisiveness of the response. The mention of hired workers (*misthōtōn*) is unique to Mark and indicates that Zebedee's fishing business was substantial enough to employ laborers — James and John were not destitute. Their leaving is therefore a sacrifice of relative comfort, not desperation.
21. Mark shifts to the historical present tense (*eisporēuontai*, 'they enter') for vivid narration, then back to the aorist. Capernaum (Kfar Nahum, 'village of Nahum') served as Jesus's base of operations in Galilee. The imperfect *edidasken* ('he was teaching') indicates ongoing or repeated action — he taught at length, not just a brief remark.
22. The Greek *exēplēsonto* ('were astonished, were struck out of their senses') is stronger than mild surprise — it conveys being overwhelmed or stunned. The scribes typically taught by citing prior rabbinic authorities ('Rabbi Hillel says... Rabbi Shammai says...'). Jesus taught on his own authority, without appealing to tradition. The noun *exousia* ('authority, power, right') implies both the right to speak and the power behind the words.

23. The phrase 'in an unclean spirit' (en pneumatī akathartō) describes the man as being under the spirit's domination — literally 'in' its sphere of influence. The unclean spirit's presence in the synagogue is jarring — the place of worship is invaded by the impure. Mark's use of euthys here connects the teaching about authority directly to the demonstration of that authority.
24. The phrase ti hēmin kai soi ('what to us and to you?') is a Semitic idiom meaning 'what business do we have with each other?' or 'leave us alone.' The spirit alternates between plural ('us') and singular ('I know'), perhaps speaking for the entire demonic realm. The title 'Holy One of God' (ho hagios tou theou) demonstrates supernatural knowledge of Jesus's identity — a key element in Mark's messianic secret theme. The spirit's recognition contrasts sharply with human incomprehension throughout the Gospel.
25. The verb epetimēsen ('rebuked') carries the force of a commanding reprimand. The imperative phimōthēti ('be muzzled, be silenced') is vivid — literally 'be muzzled' as one would muzzle an animal. Jesus's first miracle in Mark is an exorcism, establishing that his ministry is fundamentally a conflict with evil powers. The command to silence is the first instance of the messianic secret — Jesus does not want his identity proclaimed by demons.
26. The verb sparaxan ('convulsed, tore at, threw into spasms') describes violent physical distress. The spirit's departure is not quiet or easy — it is violent and loud, demonstrating both the spirit's malice and Jesus's superior power. Despite the spirit's resistance, it cannot disobey Jesus's command.
27. The Greek ethambēthēsan ('were amazed, alarmed, astonished') conveys not just wonder but a sense of alarm or awe — something unsettling has happened. The crowd links Jesus's teaching and his exorcism as two expressions of the same authority (exousia). The adjective kainē ('new') can mean new in kind (qualitatively unprecedented) rather than merely new in time — this is teaching unlike anything they have encountered.
28. The Greek akoē ('report, news, fame, what is heard') literally means 'the hearing' — what people were saying and hearing about Jesus. Again euthys ('immediately') drives the narrative forward. The geographic scope — 'the whole surrounding region of Galilee' — shows how rapidly Jesus's reputation expanded.
29. Again euthys marks the rapid transition. The four disciples just called now accompany Jesus. The house of Simon and Andrew in Capernaum becomes a base of operations. Archaeological excavations at Capernaum have identified a first-century house beneath the later 'Church of St. Peter' that tradition associates with this location.
30. The detail that Simon had a mother-in-law presupposes he was married, a detail Paul confirms in 1 Corinthians 9:5. The verb katekeito ('was lying down') indicates she was bedridden. The impersonal 'they told him' reflects Mark's characteristic vagueness about who exactly is speaking.
31. The verb ēgeiren ('raised') is the same verb used for resurrection throughout the New Testament. Mark may intend a double meaning — Jesus 'raises' Simon's mother-in-law from her sickbed, foreshadowing the greater raising to come. The verb diēkonei ('she was serving') uses the root from which 'deacon' comes; her immediate service demonstrates both complete healing and a model of discipleship as responsive service.
32. The double time reference — 'evening' and 'after the sun had set' — is significant: the Sabbath ended at sundown, and only then could people carry the sick without violating Sabbath law. Mark shows the community's eagerness by noting they came as soon as they legally could. The distinction between those who are 'sick' (kakōs echontas, 'having it badly') and 'demon-possessed' (daimonizomenous) maintains two categories of affliction.
33. Another Markan hyperbole — 'the whole town' (holē hē polis) creates a vivid image of the entire community crowding around the doorway of Simon's house. The periphrastic construction (ēn episynēgmenē) emphasizes the state of being gathered rather than the act of gathering — they were assembled and waiting.
34. The shift from 'all' (v. 32) to 'many' (pollous) has been debated — does Mark mean he healed many but not all? More likely 'many' simply describes the large number healed from the large crowd brought. The silencing of demons (ouk ēphien lalein, 'he was not allowing them to speak') continues the messianic secret motif. The reason given — 'because they knew him' (hoti ēdeisan auton) — confirms that the demons possess supernatural knowledge of Jesus's identity that Jesus does not want publicly proclaimed at this stage.
35. The piling up of temporal markers — prōi ('early morning'), ennycha ('while still night'), lian ('very') — emphasizes just how early Jesus rose. After the intense demands of the previous day, Jesus seeks solitude for prayer. Mark records Jesus praying at three key moments: here, at Gethsemane (14:32-42), and possibly by implication at other points. The imperfect prosēucheto ('he was praying') indicates extended, ongoing prayer, not a brief petition.
36. The verb katediōxen ('pursued, hunted down, tracked') is much stronger than 'followed' — it implies an urgent, determined search. The KJV's 'followed after' is too gentle. Simon takes the initiative, already emerging as the leader and spokesman of the group.
37. The disciples' report — 'everyone is looking for you' (pantes zētousin se) — reveals their expectation: the crowds want more miracles, and Jesus should return to meet the demand. The verb zēteō ('to seek, search for') is neutral here but will carry negative connotations later in Mark when opponents 'seek' to arrest Jesus.
38. The word kōmopoleis ('market-towns') describes settlements larger than villages but smaller than cities — the small towns of rural Galilee. Jesus resists the pull of popular demand in Capernaum, insisting his mission extends beyond one location. The phrase eis touto gar exēlthon ('for this is why I came out') is ambiguous — 'came out' could mean from Capernaum, from his prayer retreat, or from God (a statement of divine mission). The ambiguity may be deliberate.

39. This verse serves as a summary statement for Jesus's early Galilean ministry, linking proclamation and exorcism as the twin activities that characterize his mission. The synagogues were the natural venues for a traveling teacher, and their mention 'throughout all Galilee' indicates a comprehensive itinerant ministry.
40. The Greek *lepros* traditionally rendered 'leper' covers a range of skin conditions described in Leviticus 13-14, not limited to modern Hansen's disease. 'Skin disease' is more accurate to the biblical category. The man's statement is remarkable — he does not doubt Jesus's power ('you can') but only questions his willingness ('if you are willing'). Kneeling (*gonypetōn*) expresses desperate supplication. Under Levitical law, a person with such a disease was ritually unclean and excluded from community life.
40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 13-14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The Greek *splanchnistheis* ('moved with compassion') derives from *splanchna* ('intestines, bowels'), indicating a deep, visceral emotional response — compassion felt in the gut. Some manuscripts read *orgistheis* ('moved with anger') instead, which would describe anger at the disease or the system that ostracized the man. The SBLGNT follows the compassion reading. The physical touch is the most striking detail — by touching a ritually unclean person, Jesus would normally contract uncleanness himself. Instead, the cleanness flows in the opposite direction.
42. The dual statement — the disease 'left' (*apēlthen*) and he 'was made clean' (*ekatharisthē*) — addresses both the physical condition and the ritual status. Healing and cleansing are distinct: the disease departs (medical), and the person is restored to cleanness (ritual/social). The word *euthys* again emphasizes the instantaneous nature of Jesus's healing power.
43. The verb *embrimēsamenos* ('sternly warned, snorted with indignation') is a strong word that implies deep emotion — it is used of horses snorting. The intensity is puzzling: why such a forceful warning after a compassionate healing? Some scholars suggest Jesus was moved by anger at the disease, the social system that excluded the man, or the situation that would unfold if the healing became public. The verb *exebalen* ('sent away, cast out') is the same word used for casting out demons, adding to the forcefulness of the scene.
44. The command to silence (the messianic secret) is combined with a command to obey the Levitical purification procedure of Leviticus 14:1-32. Jesus does not abolish the law but upholds it. The phrase *eis martyriōn autois* ('as a testimony to them') is ambiguous — 'to them' could refer to the priests (as proof of healing), to the people (as evidence of God's power), or as a witness against the religious establishment. The double negative *mēdeni mēden* ('to no one, nothing') is emphatic — absolute silence is demanded.
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 14:1-32. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
45. The healed man's disobedience has ironic consequences — he does what Jesus commanded him not to do (proclaim the healing) and presumably neglects what Jesus commanded him to do (go to the priest). The verb *diaphēmizein* ('to spread abroad, make known far and wide') indicates enthusiastic, widespread broadcasting. The result inverts the leper's situation: the formerly excluded man now moves freely in society while Jesus, who touched the unclean, now remains outside in deserted places. Yet even in isolation, the crowds find him — the messianic secret cannot be contained.

2

Summary: *Mark 2 presents a series of five controversy stories that escalate tension between Jesus and the religious authorities. Jesus heals a paralytic and forgives his sins, provoking accusations of blasphemy. He calls Levi the tax collector and eats with sinners, scandalizing the Pharisees. Questions arise about fasting and Sabbath observance. Through these encounters, Jesus reveals himself as one with authority to forgive sins, as a physician for the sick rather than the righteous, and as lord of the Sabbath.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The five controversy stories in chapters 2-3 follow a chiastic or escalating pattern common in ancient rhetoric. The paralytic's healing is the first time Jesus explicitly claims divine prerogative (forgiving sins). The 'Son of Man' title appears here for the first time in Mark — Jesus's preferred self-designation, drawn from Daniel 7:13-14. The grain-plucking episode reveals Jesus's interpretive method: he appeals to narrative precedent (David) rather than legal technicality, subordinating Sabbath regulation to human need.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'Son of Man' (ho huīos tou anthrōpou) is notoriously difficult — it can mean simply 'a human being' (as in Ezekiel), or it can evoke the heavenly figure of Daniel 7. In Mark, Jesus uses it with both ordinary and exalted connotations. We render it literally and note the ambiguity. The identity of 'Levi son of Alphaeus' and his relationship to Matthew and to 'James son of Alphaeus' among the Twelve remains debated.*

Connections: The forgiveness of sins connects to Isaiah's new exodus themes (Isaiah 43:25). Jesus's table fellowship with sinners enacts the eschatological banquet. The David and showbread episode (1 Samuel 21:1-6) establishes a precedent for human need superseding ritual law. The bridegroom metaphor echoes Old Testament imagery of God as Israel's husband (Hosea 2, Isaiah 54).

¹When he returned to Capernaum after some days, word got out that he was at home. ²So many gathered that there was no longer room for them, not even around the door, and he was speaking the word to them. ³Some people came bringing a paralyzed man to him, carried by four men. ⁴Since they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above where he was, and after digging through it, they lowered the mat on which the paralyzed man was lying. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Child, your sins are forgiven." ⁶Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, ⁷"Why does this man speak this way? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins except God alone?" ⁸Immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they were reasoning this way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? ⁹Which is easier — to say to the paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, pick up your mat, and walk'? ¹⁰But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he said to the paralyzed man — ¹¹"I say to you, get up, pick up your mat, and go home." ¹²He got up, immediately picked up his mat, and went out in front of everyone, so that they were all astounded and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" ¹³He went out again beside the sea, and the whole crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them. ¹⁴As he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. ¹⁵As Jesus reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were dining with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹⁷When Jesus heard this, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." ¹⁸Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. People came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁹Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. ²⁰But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day. ²¹No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise the new patch pulls away from the old, and the tear becomes worse. ²²And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins are ruined. Instead, new wine is for fresh wineskins." ²³One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick heads of grain as they made their way. ²⁴The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" ²⁵He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him — ²⁶How he traveled into the home of God in the period of Abiathar the elevated priest, and did consume the shewbread, which is not lawful to consume but for the priests, and offered as well to them which were with him? ²⁷Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath. ²⁸So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *en oikō estin* can mean 'in a house' or 'at home,' suggesting Capernaum had become Jesus's home base — likely Simon and Andrew's house from 1:29. The passive *ēkousthē* ('it was heard') vividly captures how news travels in a small town.
2. The phrase *ton logon* ('the word') in Mark refers to the message of the kingdom — the good news Jesus proclaimed in 1:14-15. The imperfect *elalei* ('he was speaking') indicates ongoing teaching when the interruption of the next verse occurs. The overcrowding sets the stage for the dramatic entry through the roof.
3. Mark's historical present (*erchontai*, 'they come') creates immediacy. The detail of 'four' carriers is unique to Mark, adding eyewitness specificity. The Greek *paralytikos* describes someone with paralysis or severe motor impairment.
4. Palestinian houses typically had flat roofs made of wooden beams covered with branches, mud, and packed earth, accessible by an exterior staircase. The verb *exoryxantes* ('having dug through') indicates the physical labor of breaking through this material. The *krabattos* ('mat, pallet') was a poor person's bed — a simple mat rather than a proper bed frame. The determination of the four friends is extraordinary and becomes a model of faith in

action.

5. Jesus sees 'their faith' (tēn pistin autōn) — the faith of the four friends, not just the paralytic. Faith in Mark is often corporate and active, not merely individual belief. The address teknon ('child') is tender and personal. The present passive aphientai ('are being forgiven') is a divine passive — God is the implied agent, and Jesus speaks with God's authority. The crowd came for a healing; Jesus addresses a deeper need first.
6. The scribes' objection is internal — dialogizomenoi en tais kardiais ('reasoning in their hearts') — not spoken aloud. This makes Jesus's response in verse 8 all the more striking, since he perceives their unspoken thoughts. The verb dialogizomai can mean 'to reason, debate, question' and here carries a tone of hostile deliberation.
7. The scribes' theological logic is sound: in Jewish theology, only God can forgive sins (cf. Isaiah 43:25, 'I, I am he who blots out your transgressions'). Their accusation of blasphemy (blasphēmei) is the most serious religious charge possible. The irony in Mark is that the reader knows from 1:1 that Jesus is the Son of God — the scribes are theologically correct about who can forgive sins, but wrong about who is standing before them.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 43:25. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The phrase epignous tō pneumati autou ('perceiving in his spirit') describes supernatural insight — Jesus knows their unspoken thoughts. The word euthys ('immediately') again marks the swift narrative pace. Jesus's question does not deny their premise (that only God forgives sins) but challenges them to draw the right conclusion from it.
9. Jesus's question is a masterful argument: pronouncing forgiveness is 'easier' to say because no one can verify it, while commanding a paralytic to walk demands visible proof. By performing the harder, verifiable act, Jesus validates the easier, unverifiable one. The logic assumes that the power to heal and the power to forgive both come from the same divine source.
10. This is the first appearance of 'Son of Man' (ho huios tou anthrōpou) in Mark. The title is drawn from Daniel 7:13-14, where 'one like a son of man' receives dominion and authority from God. In Aramaic, 'son of man' (bar enash) can also simply mean 'a human being.' Jesus uses the title to make a veiled claim — those who know Daniel will recognize the authority claim, while others may hear only a self-reference. The phrase 'on earth' (epi tēs gēs) may emphasize that this divine authority is now operative on earth, not only in heaven.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 7:13-14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The emphatic soi legō ('to you I say') places the full weight of Jesus's authority behind the command. Three imperatives follow in rapid succession: egeire ('get up'), aron ('pick up'), hypage ('go'). The command to go home implies full restoration — the man can now resume his place in family and community life.
12. The healing is instantaneous and complete — the man performs all three commanded actions. The verb existasthai ('to be astounded, beside oneself') is stronger than ordinary amazement; it suggests being overwhelmed to the point of losing composure. The crowd's response — glorifying God — is the correct theological interpretation of what they have witnessed. Their exclamation 'we have never seen anything like this' confirms the unprecedented nature of Jesus's ministry.
13. This transitional verse moves the setting from the house to the seaside. The imperfect tenses (ērchetō, edidasken) indicate continuous, repeated action — the crowds kept coming, and Jesus kept teaching. The seaside becomes a recurring venue for Jesus's teaching in Mark (cf. 3:7, 4:1).
14. The call of Levi mirrors the call of the fishermen in 1:16-20 — Jesus sees, calls, and the person immediately follows. The telōnion ('tax booth, customs post') was where tolls were collected on goods passing through. Levi was likely a toll collector for Herod Antipas rather than a direct agent of Rome, but the occupation was despised nonetheless as collaborationist and prone to corruption. The relationship between this Levi and the apostle Matthew (cf. Matthew 9:9) is uncertain — Mark never identifies them as the same person.
15. The phrase 'in his house' (en tē oikia autou) is ambiguous — it could be Levi's house or Jesus's house. Given the context of Levi's call, Levi's house is more likely. The verb synanekeinto ('were reclining together') describes the Greco-Roman dining posture of reclining on couches. Shared meals in the ancient world signified acceptance and fellowship. The category 'sinners' (hamartōloi) likely refers to those whose occupations or lifestyles placed them outside the boundaries of Torah observance as defined by the Pharisees.
16. The phrase 'scribes of the Pharisees' (hoi grammateis tōn Pharisaion) designates legal scholars aligned with the Pharisaic movement specifically. They address the disciples rather than Jesus directly — perhaps a social convention of indirect confrontation. The Pharisaic concern about table fellowship reflected their understanding that eating together constituted a form of religious communion; sharing a meal with the impure made one impure by association.
17. The physician metaphor reframes the entire controversy: Jesus is not endorsing sin by eating with sinners but treating a disease. The SBLGNT does not include 'to repentance' (eis metanoian), which appears in some manuscripts harmonizing with Luke 5:32. The statement 'I did not come to call the righteous' may be ironic — in Mark's theology, no one is truly righteous apart from God's action. The verb kalēsai ('to call, invite') connects to the calling of disciples — Jesus's table fellowship is itself an act of calling sinners to follow him.
18. The question groups John's disciples with the Pharisees against Jesus's disciples — a surprising alignment, since John opposed the religious establishment. The fasting in question likely refers to voluntary fasting beyond the required Day of Atonement fast, which the Pharisees practiced twice weekly (cf. Luke 18:12). The implied criticism is that Jesus's disciples are insufficiently pious.

19. The phrase *hoi huioi tou nymphōnos* ('the sons of the bridal chamber') is a Semitic idiom for wedding guests, particularly the close friends of the groom. The bridegroom metaphor carries rich Old Testament resonance — God is frequently portrayed as Israel's bridegroom (Isaiah 54:5, 62:5; Hosea 2:16-20). By identifying himself as the bridegroom, Jesus implicitly claims a divine role. Jewish wedding celebrations lasted seven days, during which fasting was considered inappropriate and even prohibited.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 54:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Hosea 2:16-20. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. This is Jesus's first veiled reference to his death in Mark. The passive *aparthē* ('is taken away') implies violent removal, not voluntary departure. The sudden shift from celebration to mourning foreshadows the Passion. The phrase 'on that day' (*en ekeinē tē hēmera*) may refer specifically to the day of Jesus's death or to the entire period of his absence.
21. The word *agnaphou* ('unshrunk, unfulled') refers to cloth that has not been processed by a fuller — it will shrink when washed, pulling away from the surrounding fabric. The parable illustrates that Jesus's ministry cannot simply be patched onto existing religious structures. The 'old garment' represents the current religious framework; the 'new cloth' represents what Jesus brings. The two are not merely different but incompatible.
22. The *askoi* ('wineskins') were made of animal hides. Old wineskins had lost their elasticity and could not expand with the fermentation of new wine. The metaphor reinforces the previous parable: the ferment of Jesus's ministry requires entirely new containers. Mark uses two different words for 'new' — *neos* (new in time, freshly made wine) and *kainos* (new in kind, qualitatively different wineskins) — a distinction that may be theologically significant.
23. The phrase *hodon poiein* ('to make a way, to make a path') combined with *tillontes tous stachyas* ('plucking the grain heads') describes the disciples pulling off grain heads as they walked through a field. Plucking grain from a neighbor's field was permitted under Deuteronomy 23:25, but the Pharisees considered it a form of 'reaping' — one of the thirty-nine categories of work prohibited on the Sabbath in later rabbinic tradition.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 23:25 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. The imperfect *elegon* ('were saying') may suggest ongoing complaint rather than a single objection. The phrase *ho ouk exestin* ('what is not lawful') frames the issue as a legal violation. The Pharisees hold Jesus responsible for his disciples' behavior, which was standard in the teacher-disciple relationship — a rabbi was accountable for his students' conduct.
25. Jesus's response appeals to Scripture rather than engaging in legal debate on Pharisaic terms. The rhetorical question 'Have you never read?' (*oudepote anegnōte*) is pointed — he is asking legal experts if they know their own Scriptures. The appeal to David's precedent (1 Samuel 21:1-6) is an argument from the greater to the lesser: if David could override ritual law in a time of need, how much more can the Son of David?
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Samuel 21:1-6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The reference to 'Abiathar the high priest' poses a difficulty: according to 1 Samuel 21:1-6, the priest was Ahimelech, Abiathar's father. Various explanations have been proposed — the preposition *epi* can mean 'in the time of' (a general era reference), or this may be a genuine historical error in the tradition. The 'bread of the Presence' (*artous tēs protheseōs*) translates the Hebrew *lechem hapanim* — the twelve loaves placed before God in the tabernacle/temple weekly (Leviticus 24:5-9), restricted to priests.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Samuel 21:1-6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 24:5-9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. This revolutionary principle reorients Sabbath theology: the Sabbath is a gift designed to serve human well-being, not an institution to which humans are subordinated. The Greek *anthrōpos* ('human being') is generic, not male-specific, so 'people' captures the intended scope. A similar sentiment appears in later rabbinic literature (*Mekhilta* on Exodus 31:13: 'The Sabbath is handed over to you, not you to the Sabbath'), though Jesus draws a more radical conclusion in the next verse.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 31:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The concluding claim is extraordinary: Jesus asserts authority over the Sabbath itself — an institution established by God at creation (Genesis 2:2-3). The word *kyrios* ('lord, master') denotes sovereign authority. If the Sabbath was made for humanity (v. 27), and the Son of Man has authority over it (v. 28), then Jesus claims the right to define how the Sabbath is properly observed. The word 'even' (*kai*) in 'even of the Sabbath' suggests that lordship over the Sabbath is one instance of a broader authority.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 2:2-3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

3

Summary: *Mark 3 concludes the five controversy stories with a Sabbath healing that provokes the Pharisees to conspire with the Herodians against Jesus. Crowds from across the region press in on Jesus, and unclean spirits fall before him, recognizing him as the Son of God. Jesus withdraws to a mountain to appoint the Twelve as his inner circle. The chapter closes with two linked controversies: scribes from Jerusalem accuse Jesus of operating by Beelzebul's power, and Jesus's own family comes to seize him, thinking he is out of his mind. Jesus redefines family as those who do God's will.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Beelzebul controversy contains some of Jesus's most tightly reasoned argumentation: the divided-kingdom analogy, the strong-man parable, and the warning about blaspheming the Holy Spirit. The appointment of the Twelve echoes Israel's twelve tribes and signals the reconstitution of God's people. The tension between Jesus's biological family and his spiritual family is stark — Mark uniquely records that his family thought he was 'out of his mind' (3:21). The twelve are called both to 'be with him' (relationship) and to 'be sent out' (mission).*

Translation Friction: *The 'unforgivable sin' passage (vv. 28-30) has generated centuries of theological debate. We render the Greek faithfully and note the interpretive range without resolving it. The list of the Twelve varies slightly across the Synoptics; we follow the SBLGNT text of Mark. The identity of Jesus's 'brothers' (adelphoi) in verse 31 is disputed among Christian traditions — biological siblings, half-siblings, or cousins.*

Connections: *The appointment of twelve apostles on a mountain echoes Moses and the twelve tribes at Sinai. The Beelzebul accusation connects to the broader theme of cosmic conflict in Mark. The redefinition of family anticipates the new community that will form around Jesus. The 'strong man' parable illuminates Jesus's exorcism ministry as plundering Satan's household.*

¹He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. ²They were watching him closely to see if he would heal the man on the Sabbath, so that they could accuse him. ³He said to the man with the withered hand, "Stand up here in the middle." ⁴Then he said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save a life or to kill?" But they were silent. ⁵He looked around at them with anger, grieved at the hardness of their hearts, and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. ⁶The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against him, plotting how to destroy him. ⁷Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the sea, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. Also from Judea, ⁸Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and the region around Tyre and Sidon — a large crowd, hearing about all that he was doing, came to him. ⁹He told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him because of the crowd, so that they would not crush him. ¹⁰For he had healed many, so that all who had diseases were pressing forward to touch him. ¹¹Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God!" ¹²He sternly ordered them not to make him known. ¹³He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴He appointed twelve — whom he also named apostles — so that they would be with him and so that he could send them out to preach ¹⁵To have authority to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: ¹⁶He appointed the Twelve: Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter; ¹⁷James the son of Zebedee and his brother John — he gave them the name Boanerges, which means "Sons of Thunder"; ¹⁸Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, ¹⁹Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him — then they traveled into an home. ²⁰Then he went home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat a meal. ²¹When his family heard about it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, "He is out of his mind." ²²The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He has Beelzebul," and "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." ²³He called them to himself and spoke to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴That kingdom cannot stand, and if a kingdom be divided against itself. ²⁵And if a household is divided against itself, that household will not be able to stand. ²⁶And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand — his end has come. ²⁷But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can plunder his house. ²⁸"Truly I say to you, all sins

will be forgiven the children of humanity, and whatever blasphemies they utter. ²⁹But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin." ³⁰He said this because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit." ³¹Then his mother and his brothers came, and standing outside, they sent word to him, calling for him. ³²A crowd was sitting around him, and they said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you." ³³He replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" ³⁴Looking around at those seated in a circle around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵Whoever does the will of God — that person is my brother and sister and mother."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The perfect participle *exērammenēn* ('having been withered, dried up') suggests a condition that was not congenital but developed over time — the hand had dried up and remained in that state. The scene is set for a confrontation: Jesus, the synagogue, a person in need, and watching opponents.
2. The imperfect *paretēroun* ('they were watching closely') implies sustained, hostile surveillance. The verb carries connotations of lying in wait. The purpose clause *hina katēgorēsōsin* ('so that they might accuse') reveals their intent from the outset — they are not seeking truth but building a case. Later rabbinic law permitted healing on the Sabbath only when life was in danger; a withered hand was not life-threatening.
3. Jesus deliberately makes the healing public by calling the man to the center (*eis to meson*). He does not heal secretly to avoid confrontation but forces the issue in full view of his opponents. The command *egaire* ('rise, stand up') is the same word used in resurrection contexts.
4. Jesus reframes the legal question in stark binary terms: not healing is not neutral — it is 'doing evil' and 'killing.' The Pharisees' silence (*esiōpōn*) is telling — they cannot answer without either condemning themselves or conceding Jesus's point. The verb *sōsai* ('to save') and *apokteinai* ('to kill') may be doubly ironic, since the Pharisees are about to plot to kill Jesus (v. 6) on the very Sabbath when they forbid saving a life.
5. Mark is the only evangelist who records Jesus's anger (*met' orgēs*) and grief (*sylypoumenos*) together in this scene. The combination reveals a complex emotional response: anger at the opponents' callousness, grief at their spiritual blindness. The word *pōrōsis* ('hardness, callousness') literally refers to the calcification of bone — their hearts have become petrified. The same word describes Pharaoh's hardened heart in the Septuagint. The healing requires no touch, no word of power — just a command to stretch, and the restoration is immediate.
6. The alliance between Pharisees and Herodians is deeply ironic — these were natural enemies. The Pharisees represented strict Jewish piety; the Herodians supported the Herodian dynasty and its accommodation with Rome. Their shared hostility toward Jesus unites them. The verb *apolesōsin* ('might destroy') makes the murderous intent explicit. The word *euthys* ('immediately') underscores the urgency of their response — the Sabbath healing has pushed them to decisive action.
7. The verb *anechōrēsen* ('withdrew') indicates a strategic retreat from the hostility described in verse 6. The geographic catalog that follows (vv. 7-8) shows that Jesus's fame has spread far beyond Galilee, drawing people from virtually every region of Jewish settlement.
8. The geographic scope is remarkable: Galilee (north), Judea and Jerusalem (south), Idumea (far south — Edomite territory), Transjordan (east), and Tyre and Sidon (Phoenician northwest, Gentile territory). This represents virtually the entire extent of the Jewish diaspora in the region, plus Gentile areas. Mark presents Jesus's appeal as transcending all geographic and ethnic boundaries.
9. The verb *thlibōsin* ('press upon, crush, squeeze') conveys genuine physical danger from the pressing crowd. The small boat (*ploiaron*, diminutive form) would serve as both an escape route and a floating platform from which to teach (as in 4:1). This practical detail adds eyewitness vividness to the narrative.
10. The verb *epipiptein* ('to fall upon, press against') describes an almost frantic surge. The noun *mastigas* (literally 'whips, scourges') is used metaphorically for diseases — afflictions experienced as divine scourging. The desire to touch (*hapsōntai*) reflects the ancient belief that healing power could be transmitted through physical contact, a belief Mark affirms in the case of the woman with the hemorrhage (5:28-30).
11. The imperfect tenses (*etheōroun*, *prosepipten*, *ekrazon*) indicate repeated, habitual action — this happened consistently, not just once. The demons' recognition of Jesus as 'the Son of God' (*ho huios tou theou*) contrasts sharply with the human characters' inability to grasp his identity. The prostration (*prosepipten*, 'fell before') could express both involuntary submission to superior power and an attempt to gain control by naming Jesus.
12. The adverb *polla* ('much, repeatedly') with *epetima* ('rebuked, commanded') indicates that Jesus had to silence the demons repeatedly and emphatically. The messianic secret continues — Jesus controls the revelation of his identity. The phrase *phaneron poiēsōsin* ('make manifest, make known') implies public disclosure of his messianic identity.
13. The mountain setting (*to oros*, with the article — 'the mountain') evokes Sinai, where God constituted Israel as a people through Moses. Jesus now constitutes a new community. The verb *proskaleitai* ('summons, calls to himself') emphasizes Jesus's sovereign initiative — he chose them, not the reverse. The phrase *hous ēthelen autos* ('whom he himself wanted') stresses the personal, deliberate nature of the selection.
14. The verb *epoiēsen* ('made, appointed, created') is striking — the same verb used for God's creative acts. Jesus 'makes' the Twelve as a new creation. The number twelve corresponds to the twelve tribes of Israel, signaling the reconstitution of God's people. The dual purpose is significant: first, 'to be with him' (relationship and formation), and second, 'to be sent out' (mission). Some manuscripts omit 'whom he also named apostles,' but the SBLGNT includes it.

15. The SBLGNT does not include 'to heal sicknesses' (therapeuīn tas nosous), which appears in some later manuscripts. The authority (exousia) given to the Twelve is a delegated form of Jesus's own authority demonstrated in chapters 1-2. The focus on exorcism aligns with Mark's emphasis on Jesus's ministry as cosmic conflict with demonic powers.
16. The repetition of 'he appointed the Twelve' (epoiēsen tous dōdeka) may indicate that verses 14-15 state the general purpose while verses 16-19 list the specific members. The name Petros is the Greek translation of the Aramaic Kepha ('rock, stone'). The renaming signifies a new identity and mission, echoing the Old Testament pattern of God renaming Abram to Abraham and Jacob to Israel.
17. The Aramaic nickname Boanerges is difficult to reconstruct — the Greek transliteration does not correspond neatly to known Aramaic forms. It may derive from bene regesh ('sons of tumult/thunder'). Mark provides the translation for his Greek-speaking audience. The nickname may reflect the brothers' temperament (cf. Luke 9:54, where they want to call fire from heaven) or their powerful speaking style.
18. The name Kananaion is not 'Canaanite' (an ethnicity) but a transliteration of the Aramaic qan'ana ('zealot, enthusiast'), which Luke renders with the Greek Zēlōtēs. This may indicate membership in the Zealot movement or simply a zealous temperament. Thaddaeus appears here and in Matthew's list, while Luke has 'Judas son of James' in the same position — these may be the same person with different names, or the lists may reflect some variation in the group's composition.
19. Judas is listed last, and the note about his betrayal (paredōken, 'handed over') is attached immediately, ensuring the reader knows from the start what role he will play. The name Iskariōth may mean 'man of Kerioth' (a Judean town), which would make Judas the only non-Galilean among the Twelve. The verb paradidōmi ('hand over, betray, deliver up') is the same verb used for John's arrest in 1:14 and for Jesus's passion predictions.
20. The phrase eis oikon ('into a house' or 'home') likely refers again to the house in Capernaum. The detail that they cannot even eat (mēde arton phagein, literally 'not even bread to eat') underscores the overwhelming demand on Jesus — the ministry has become so consuming that basic needs go unmet.
21. The phrase hoi par' autou ('those from beside him') most likely refers to Jesus's family, as confirmed by verse 31 where his mother and brothers arrive. The verb kratēsai ('to seize, take hold of forcibly') is strong — the same verb used for arresting someone. The word exestē ('he has lost his mind, is beside himself') is a frank assessment that Jesus's behavior appeared mentally unstable. This remarkably candid detail is unique to Mark and would not have been invented by the early church.
22. These are not local scribes but representatives from Jerusalem — an official delegation sent to investigate and pronounce judgment. The accusation has two parts: Jesus is himself possessed ('He has Beelzebul'), and his exorcisms operate through demonic power. The name Beelzebul likely derives from the Philistine deity Ba'al Zebub ('Lord of the Flies,' 2 Kings 1:2), modified to Beelzebul ('Lord of the Dwelling/Dung'). The charge is devastating: Jesus's power is real, but its source is satanic.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 1:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The phrase en parabolais ('in parables') here refers to figurative speech and analogies rather than the extended narrative parables of chapter 4. Jesus addresses the scribes' charge with logical argumentation. The question itself exposes the absurdity of the accusation — if Satan were working against his own forces, his realm would collapse.
24. The conditional clause presents a self-evident political principle that any listener could verify from history. The verb meristhē ('is divided') implies internal faction and civil war. Jesus is arguing from common experience to expose the logical impossibility of the scribes' accusation.
25. The word oikia can mean both a physical 'house' and a 'household' (the extended family and its affairs). The second analogy moves from the political sphere to the domestic, making the point more personal and immediate. The same principle applies at every level of social organization.
26. Jesus applies the principle to the specific case: if Satan is fighting against his own agents (the demons Jesus expels), then Satan's kingdom is in self-destructive civil war. The phrase telos echei ('has an end') means 'is finished, is done for.' Jesus's argument is: either the accusation is false (Satan is not behind the exorcisms) or Satan's kingdom is collapsing — either way, the scribes' position fails.
27. Jesus now offers his own explanation of the exorcisms through the 'strong man' parable. Satan is the 'strong man' (ischyros); his 'house' is the domain of demonic oppression; his 'possessions' (skeuē) are the people held captive. Jesus is the one who has 'bound' (dēsē) the strong man — likely a reference to the wilderness testing (1:12-13) — and is now systematically plundering Satan's realm through exorcisms. The verb diarpasai ('plunder, thoroughly rob') implies a complete ransacking.
28. The introductory amēn legō hymin ('truly I say to you') is a solemn formula of authority unique to Jesus in the Gospels — no rabbi preceded his own statements with 'amen.' The sweeping scope of forgiveness — 'all sins' (panta ta hamartēmata) and 'all blasphemies' (hai blasphēmiai) — makes the exception in the next verse all the more striking. The phrase tois huiōis tōn anthrōpōn ('to the sons of men') is a Semitic expression for human beings in general.
29. The SBLGNT reads 'eternal sin' (aiōniou hamartēmatos) rather than 'eternal condemnation/judgment' found in some manuscripts. The phrase ouk echei aphesin eis ton aiōna ('has no forgiveness into the age') is an emphatic negation. The context (v. 30) defines this blasphemy specifically as attributing the Holy Spirit's work to Satan — calling divine good demonic evil. This is not a momentary sin of speech but a settled, deliberate posture of calling light darkness. Many interpreters note that the very anxiety about having committed this sin is itself evidence that one has not, since it presupposes sensitivity to the Spirit.

30. Mark provides the explicit reason for Jesus's warning: the scribes had attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to an unclean spirit. The imperfect elegon ('they were saying') suggests this was not a one-time remark but a sustained accusation. The blasphemy against the Spirit consists precisely in this inversion — seeing the Spirit's liberating work and calling it demonic.
31. This resumes the narrative begun in verse 21 — the family that set out to 'seize' Jesus has now arrived. The word adelphoi ('brothers') most naturally means biological siblings in Greek, though Catholic tradition interprets it as 'cousins' or 'step-brothers.' They stand 'outside' (exō), which becomes symbolically significant: they are on the outside while those sitting around Jesus are on the inside (v. 34).
32. The spatial arrangement is significant: the crowd sits 'around' (peri) Jesus in a circle, while the family stands 'outside' (exō). The verb zētousin ('are seeking, looking for') recalls the earlier note that the family came to seize him (v. 21). The crowd serves as messengers, informing Jesus of his family's presence.
33. The question is not a denial of his biological family but a redefinition of family itself. In a culture where kinship was the primary social bond and honoring parents was a foundational commandment, this question would have been shocking. Jesus does not go outside to his family; instead, he uses their arrival as a teaching moment.
34. The verb periblepsámenos ('looking around') is characteristically Markan — Jesus surveys the circle of listeners with a deliberate gaze. The demonstrative 'Here are' (ide, 'look, see') draws attention to those physically present. The insiders (those seated around Jesus, doing God's will) are his true family; the outsiders (his biological family, who think he is mad) are not.
35. The criterion for belonging to Jesus's family is singular: doing the will of God (to thelēma tou theou). The list — 'brother and sister and mother' — is inclusive of both genders but notably omits 'father,' perhaps because God alone holds that role in Jesus's reconstituted family. This saying creates a new kinship structure based on obedience to God rather than biological descent, a radical redefinition with profound implications for the early church's self-understanding as a family of faith.

4

Summary: *Mark 4 presents Jesus's major teaching discourse: a collection of parables about the kingdom of God delivered from a boat on the Sea of Galilee. The Parable of the Sower dominates the chapter, followed by Jesus's explanation of why he teaches in parables, the private interpretation for the disciples, and additional parables about a lamp, the measure, the seed growing secretly, and the mustard seed. The chapter concludes dramatically with Jesus calming a storm on the sea, revealing his authority over nature itself.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Mark's parable discourse is shorter than Matthew's (chapter 13) but more focused on the mystery of the kingdom. The 'hardening' passage (vv. 11-12) is one of the most debated texts in the Gospels — does Jesus teach in parables to reveal or to conceal? Mark's answer appears to be both. The Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly (vv. 26-29) is unique to Mark. The storm-calming miracle transitions from the theme of hidden power in the parables to a dramatic display of cosmic authority, with the disciples' question 'Who then is this?' becoming the central question of the entire Gospel.*

Translation Friction: *The purpose of parables in verses 11-12 (quoting Isaiah 6:9-10) is theologically challenging. The Greek hina ('so that') appears to indicate purpose rather than result — Jesus teaches in parables so that outsiders will not understand. We render the Greek faithfully and note the interpretive options. The Parable of the Sower is technically a parable about soils/responses, but we retain the traditional title.*

Connections: *The sower parable draws on agricultural imagery common in prophetic literature (Isaiah 55:10-11; Hosea 10:12). The storm-calming echoes Psalm 107:23-32 and Jonah 1, where God alone controls the sea. The mustard seed parable may allude to Ezekiel 17:22-24 and Daniel 4:10-12, where great trees shelter the nations. The 'mystery of the kingdom' language connects to Daniel's apocalyptic framework.*

¹Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat down, while the whole crowd was on the shore facing the sea. ²He was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: ³"Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴As he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up immediately because the soil had no depth. ⁶When the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it produced no grain. ⁸Still other seed fell on good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing, yielding thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold." ⁹Then he said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them

hear." ¹⁰When he was alone, those around him along with the Twelve asked him about the parables. ¹¹He said to them, "To you the mystery of the kingdom of God has been given, but to those outside, everything comes in parables, ¹²That looking they may see, and not grasp the meaning. And hearing they may hear, and not understand. Lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. ¹³Then he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴The sower sows the word. ¹⁵These are the ones along the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. ¹⁶And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷But they have no root in themselves and last only a short time. Then when trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they immediately fall away. ¹⁸Others are the ones sown among thorns. These are the ones who hear the word, ¹⁹Worldly concerns, and the deception of wealth, and cravings for other things creeping in, choke out the message, and it becometh unfruitful. ²⁰But those are the ones sown on good soil: they hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit — thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold." ²¹He said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be placed on a lampstand? ²²For there is nothing hidden except to be revealed, nor is anything secret except to come to light. ²³If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear." ²⁴He said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear. With the measure you use, it will be measured back to you — and more will be added to you. ²⁵For whoever has, more will be given to them. But whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them." ²⁶He also said, "The kingdom of God is like this: a man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷He sleeps and rises, night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows — he does not know how. ²⁸The earth produces fruit by itself — first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. ²⁹But when the grain is ripe, he immediately sends in the sickle, because the harvest has come." ³⁰He also said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or with what parable shall we present it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which when sown on the ground is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. ³²Yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes the largest of all garden plants, and produces such large branches that the birds of the sky can nest in its shade." ³³With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as much as they were able to hear. ³⁴He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything. ³⁵On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." ³⁶Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along just as he was in the boat, and other boats were with him. ³⁷A fierce windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸But he was in the stern, asleep on a cushion. They woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹He woke up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Silence! Be still!" The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" ⁴¹They were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The boat from 3:9 now serves its purpose as a teaching platform. The superlative *pleistos* ('very large, greatest') indicates an extraordinary crowd. The spatial arrangement — Jesus on the water, crowd on the land — creates a natural amphitheater. The detail that Jesus 'sat down' (*kathēsthai*) reflects the standard Jewish teaching posture; a rabbi sat to teach and stood to read Scripture.
2. The Greek *parabolē* covers a range of figurative speech — from simple comparisons to extended narrative allegories. Mark notes that Jesus taught 'many things' (*polla*) in parables, though only a selection is recorded. The phrase *en tē didachē autou* ('in his teaching') frames what follows as representative of Jesus's broader teaching ministry.
3. The imperative *akouete* ('listen!') demands attention and becomes thematically central — hearing and understanding are the parable's main concern. The verb *speirai* ('to sow') describes broadcast sowing, where seed is scattered by hand across a field before plowing. In Palestinian agriculture, sowing preceded plowing, which explains why seed falls on various types of ground.
4. The 'path' (*hodos*) refers to a footpath running through or alongside the field, where the ground was packed hard by foot traffic. Seed landing there could not penetrate the surface and was easily picked off by birds. The verb *katephagen* ('devoured, ate up completely') indicates total loss.
5. The 'rocky ground' (*petrōdes*) refers to a thin layer of soil over a limestone shelf, common in Galilee. The word *euthys* ('immediately') here describes the rapid germination caused by the rock underneath retaining heat — ironically, the fastest growth comes from the worst soil. The lack of depth (*bathos*) prevents root development.
6. The sun that normally nurtures growth becomes destructive when roots are absent. The verb *ekaumatisthē* ('was scorched, burned') and *exēranthē* ('withered, dried up') describe a rapid decline. The sequence — quick growth, scorching, withering — creates a vivid agricultural picture that any

Galilean farmer would recognize.

7. The thorns (akanthai) were dormant root systems already present in the soil — invisible at planting time but growing faster and more aggressively than the grain. The verb synepnixan ('choked, strangled together') is vivid — the thorns literally suffocate the crop by competing for light, water, and nutrients. The result: karpon ouk edōken ('it gave no fruit') — total fruitlessness despite genuine growth.
8. The good soil's harvest is described with three participles — 'growing up' (anabainonta), 'increasing' (auxanomena), and 'yielding' (epheren) — creating a sense of abundant, overflowing productivity. Normal yields in ancient Palestine were roughly seven to tenfold; thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold represent extraordinary, almost miraculous abundance. The escalating numbers build toward a climax of superabundant fruitfulness that more than compensates for the three types of loss.
9. This formulaic saying (repeated in 4:23 and elsewhere) signals that the parable requires deeper reflection. Physical hearing is not enough — true 'hearing' involves understanding and response. The phrase echoes Deuteronomy's call to 'hear, O Israel' (Shema Yisrael), where hearing means obedient response.
10. The phrase kata monas ('in private, alone') indicates a shift from public teaching to private instruction. Those asking include not just the Twelve but a wider circle of followers (hoi peri auton, 'those around him'). The plural tas parabolas ('the parables') suggests they asked about the meaning of parables in general, not just the Sower.
11. The word mystērion ('mystery, secret') in biblical Greek does not mean something unknowable but something that was hidden and is now being revealed to those chosen to receive it. The concept draws on Daniel's apocalyptic language (Daniel 2:28-29), where God reveals mysteries about his kingdom. The contrast between 'you' (insiders) and 'those outside' (ekeinois tois exō) creates two categories of hearers. The passive dedotai ('has been given') is a divine passive — God is the giver of understanding.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 2:28-29. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. This quotes Isaiah 6:9-10, the prophet's commission where God tells Isaiah that his preaching will harden, not soften, the people. The conjunction hina ('so that') appears to express purpose — the parables are given so that outsiders will not understand. This is theologically difficult and has been interpreted variously: (1) the hina expresses divine purpose in hardening, (2) it should be understood as result rather than purpose ('with the result that'), (3) it reflects an Aramaic conjunction that could mean 'who' rather than 'so that.' Mark's Greek as written presents the strongest version: the parables simultaneously reveal to insiders and conceal from outsiders.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 6:9-10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Jesus expresses surprise — even mild exasperation — at the disciples' lack of understanding. The implication is that the Sower parable is foundational; it is the key that unlocks all the other parables. If they cannot grasp this one, they will struggle with the rest. This is the first hint of the disciples' persistent incomprehension, a major Markan theme.
14. The identification is simple but profound: the seed is 'the word' (ton logon) — the message of the kingdom that Jesus proclaims (cf. 1:14-15, 2:2). The parable is thus self-referential: it describes the reception of the very teaching that includes this parable.
15. The birds of verse 4 are identified as Satan. The word euthys ('immediately') here describes Satan's swift action in removing the word before it can take root. Mark's interpretation identifies the four soils as four types of human response to the proclaimed word. The first type represents a total failure of reception — the word never penetrates at all.
16. The second type receives the word with enthusiasm — meta charas ('with joy'). The immediate, joyful reception looks promising but proves shallow. Mark's euthys ('immediately') parallels the rapid germination of the seed on rocky soil — quick growth that lacks depth.
17. The word proskairoi ('temporary, lasting for a time') describes people whose commitment is seasonal. The terms thlipsis ('trouble, affliction, pressure') and diōgmos ('persecution') reflect the experience of the early church, suggesting Mark's audience would recognize themselves in this warning. The verb skandalizontai ('are caused to stumble, fall away') derives from skandalon, the trigger of a trap — they are ensnared and brought down.
18. The third soil type hears the word genuinely — the problem is not with reception but with competing commitments. The thorns represent internal rather than external obstacles, making this category perhaps the most insidious because the word does take root and grow but is gradually suffocated.
19. Three thorns are named: merimna tou aiōnos ('anxieties of the age' — daily worries), apatē tou ploutou ('the deception of wealth' — the false promise that material prosperity brings security), and epithumiai peri ta loipa ('desires for everything else' — a catch-all for competing attachments). The verb sympnigousin ('choke together') echoes the agricultural imagery. The result is akarpōs ('fruitless') — the word is present but produces nothing.
20. The good soil hearers do three things: akouousin ('hear'), paradechontai ('accept, welcome, embrace'), and karpophorousin ('bear fruit'). The verb paradechomai implies a hospitable reception — welcoming the word as one would welcome a guest. The varying yields (thirty, sixty, hundred) suggest that even among faithful hearers, there are differences in fruitfulness without any being inadequate.
21. The Greek modios is a dry measure container (roughly a peck or 8.75 liters), used here as a basket that could cover a lamp. The saying works against any interpretation of verses 11-12 that suggests permanent concealment — what is hidden now will eventually be revealed. The parable's logic: hiding

is temporary; revelation is the purpose.

22. The double negative construction emphasizes the absolute certainty of future revelation. The Greek *krypton* ('hidden') and *apokryphon* ('concealed, secret') are near synonyms used for emphasis. This saying qualifies the hardening passage of verses 11-12: the mystery is given to insiders now, but God's purpose is ultimate revelation, not permanent concealment.
23. This repetition of the hearing formula from verse 9 brackets the explanation section and emphasizes the parable's demand for responsive hearing. The conditional 'if anyone' (*ei tis*) makes the invitation universal while acknowledging that not all will respond.
24. The imperative *blepete* ('pay attention, watch out') shifts the responsibility to the hearer. The measure saying (*en hō metrō metreite metrēthēsetai hymin*) uses the figure of a measuring container: the more attention and obedience you invest in hearing, the more understanding you will receive in return. The addition (*prostēthēsetai*, 'will be added') suggests compounding returns — faithful hearing produces exponentially more understanding.
25. This paradoxical saying describes a spiritual principle: receptive hearing generates more capacity for understanding, while failure to receive causes even existing understanding to atrophy. The saying sounds harsh but describes an observable dynamic — engagement deepens capacity, while neglect erodes it. In context, it applies to the reception of Jesus's teaching.
26. This parable of the seed growing secretly is unique to Mark — neither Matthew nor Luke includes it. The introductory formula *houtōs estin hē basileia tou theou* ('thus is the kingdom of God') directly identifies the parable as describing how God's kingdom operates. The emphasis falls on the mysterious, autonomous growth of the seed apart from human effort.
27. The repetitive rhythm of 'sleeps and rises, night and day' conveys the ordinary passage of time. The farmer's ignorance (*ouk oiden autos*, 'he himself does not know') is the parable's key point: the growth happens independently of the farmer's knowledge, effort, or understanding. The kingdom of God has its own power and timetable that operates beyond human control.
28. The key word is *automatē* ('by itself, of its own accord') — from which we derive 'automatic.' The earth's productivity is inherent, not dependent on the farmer's intervention. The three stages — *chorton* (green shoot/stalk), *stachyn* (grain head), *plērēs siton en tō stachyi* ('full grain in the head') — describe the natural progression from germination to harvest. The parable assures: the kingdom will reach its fullness through God's own power, regardless of human inability to accelerate or control the process.
29. The verb *paradoi* ('yields, delivers itself up') uses the same root as *paradidōmi* ('hand over, betray') — the grain 'hands itself over' to be harvested. The harvest imagery echoes Joel 3:13 ('Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe'), which is a judgment image. The word *euthys* ('immediately') here suggests that when God's appointed time arrives, the harvest comes swiftly. The farmer's only role at harvest is to recognize the moment and act.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joel 3:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. The deliberative subjunctives (*homoiōsōmen*, 'shall we liken'; *thōmen*, 'shall we set forth') use the first person plural, inviting the audience into the process of reflection. The double question creates anticipation. The verb *homoioō* means 'to make like, compare, represent' — Jesus is searching for adequate analogies for an unprecedented reality.
31. The mustard seed (*kokkos sinapeōs*) was proverbially the smallest seed known in Palestinian agriculture. The claim 'smallest of all seeds on earth' is not a botanical absolute but a proverbial expression — 'small as a mustard seed' was a common Jewish idiom for something tiny. The contrast between the seed's smallness and the plant's size is the parable's point.
32. The mustard plant (*Brassica nigra*) can grow to 8-12 feet in a single season — large enough for birds to perch in its branches. The birds 'nesting in its shade' (*kataskēnōn*) echoes Ezekiel 17:23 and Daniel 4:12, 21, where a great tree sheltering birds represents a powerful kingdom that provides for the nations. The kingdom of God begins as the smallest, most unimpressive seed but grows into something that shelters all who come to it.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 17:23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 4:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. The phrase *kathōs ēdynanto akouein* ('as they were able to hear') suggests Jesus calibrated his teaching to his audience's capacity. This qualification softens the hardening language of verses 11-12 — Jesus did not overwhelm people but met them where they were. The word *logos* ('the word') again refers to the kingdom message.
34. The contrast between public parabolic teaching and private explanation reinforces the insider/outsider distinction of verse 11. The verb *epelyen* ('explained, solved, interpreted') literally means 'to loose, untie' — Jesus 'unties' the parables for the disciples, unwinding their meaning. The word *panta* ('everything, all things') indicates thorough instruction.
35. The temporal note 'on that day' (*en ekeinē tē hēmera*) connects the storm miracle to the teaching day. The command 'let us cross to the other side' (*dielthōmen eis to peran*) initiates a journey to the eastern (Gentile) shore of the Sea of Galilee. The 'other side' will increasingly become the space where Jesus encounters Gentiles and the margins of Jewish society.
36. The phrase *hōs ēn en tō ploio* ('just as he was in the boat') suggests they departed without preparation — Jesus was still in the teaching boat and simply set off. The mention of 'other boats' (*alla ploia*) is a detail unique to Mark that disappears from the narrative once the storm hits, adding to the sense of eyewitness recollection of incidental detail.

37. The word *lailaps* designates a sudden, violent squall — the Sea of Galilee, situated 700 feet below sea level and surrounded by hills, is notorious for sudden storms as cool Mediterranean air rushes down the surrounding valleys and collides with the warm air above the lake. The imperfect *epeballen* ('kept breaking over') describes wave after wave crashing into the boat. The passive *gemizesthai* ('being filled, being swamped') indicates the boat was taking on water to a dangerous degree.
38. The detail of Jesus sleeping on the *prospephalaion* ('cushion, headrest') in the stern (*prymna*) is remarkably specific — likely a rower's seat cushion or a sandbag used for ballast. Jesus's sleep during a life-threatening storm demonstrates either supreme faith or utter exhaustion (or both). The disciples' question — *ou melei soi* ('does it not matter to you?') — is a rebuke more than a request. Their verb *apollymetha* ('we are being destroyed, we are perishing') conveys genuine terror.
39. Jesus addresses the wind and sea with the same authority he uses against demons — *epetimēsen* ('rebuked') is the exorcism verb from 1:25. The command *pephimōso* ('be muzzled') is the same word used to silence the demon in 1:25. Mark may be implying that the storm has a demonic dimension, or simply that Jesus's authority extends over all forces, natural and supernatural. The instant result — 'a great calm' (*galēnē megalē*) — contrasts with the 'great windstorm' (*lailaps megalē*) of verse 37.
40. The word *deiloi* ('cowardly, fearful, timid') is stronger than ordinary fear — it implies a failure of nerve, a lack of trust. The question *oupō echete pistin* ('do you not yet have faith?') implies that by now, after all they have seen, they should have developed faith. The 'not yet' (*oupō*) suggests faith is a process that the disciples have barely begun.
41. The phrase *ephobēthēsan phobon megan* ('they feared a great fear') uses a cognate accusative for emphasis — the fear after the miracle is greater than the fear during the storm. They are more terrified of Jesus than of the storm. The question *tis ara houtos estin* ('who then is this?') is the central question of Mark's Gospel. The Old Testament answer is clear: it is God who controls the sea (Psalm 89:9, 'You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them'; Psalm 107:29, 'He made the storm be still'). The disciples' question thus points toward a divine identity they cannot yet articulate.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 89:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 107:29. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

5

Summary: *Mark 5 presents three powerful miracle stories that demonstrate Jesus's authority over the most extreme forms of human suffering. First, Jesus crosses to the eastern (Gentile) shore and encounters a man possessed by a legion of demons living among the tombs, whom he delivers in a dramatic exorcism involving a herd of pigs. Returning to the western shore, Jesus is approached by Jairus, a synagogue leader whose daughter is dying. On the way, a woman who has suffered from bleeding for twelve years touches Jesus's garment and is healed. Jesus then raises Jairus's daughter from death. The three stories form a crescendo: power over demons, power over chronic illness, and power over death itself.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Mark's intercalation technique is on full display — the story of Jairus's daughter is 'sandwiched' around the hemorrhaging woman's story, each enriching the other. Both feature the number twelve (the woman's twelve years of illness, the girl's age of twelve). Both involve ritual impurity — bleeding and death. Both require faith. The Gerasene demoniac is Mark's most detailed miracle account, with vivid narrative elements that suggest eyewitness memory. The healed demoniac becomes the first commissioned evangelist in Mark — and a Gentile one at that.*

Translation Friction: *The location of the Gerasene miracle is textually uncertain — manuscripts read 'Gerasenes,' 'Gadarenes,' or 'Gergesenes.' Gerasa is 30 miles from the lake, Gadara is 6 miles away, and Gergesa (modern Kursi) is on the shore. We follow the SBLGNT reading 'Gerasenes.' The drowning of the pigs raises ethical questions we do not resolve — we render the text faithfully. The Greek *talitha kum* in verse 41 is Aramaic preserved in the Greek text.*

Connections: *The Gerasene setting evokes the unclean lands of the nations. The legion of demons uses Roman military terminology — Mark's audience in Rome would not miss the irony. The hemorrhaging woman's healing connects to Levitical purity laws (Leviticus 15:25-30). Jairus's daughter anticipates Jesus's own resurrection. The command to silence in verse 43 contrasts with the command to proclaim in verse 19.*

¹They came to the other side of the sea, to the region of the Gerasenes. ²As soon as he got out of the boat, immediately a man from the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. ³He lived among the tombs, and no one could restrain him any longer, not even with a chain. ⁴For he had often been bound with shackles and chains, but he tore the chains apart and smashed the shackles, and no one had the strength to subdue him. ⁵Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains, he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones. ⁶When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell down before him. ⁷Crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore you by God, do not torment me!" ⁸For Jesus had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" ⁹Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." ¹⁰He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the region. ¹¹Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. ¹²The demons begged him, "Send us into the pigs; let us enter them." ¹³He gave them permission. The unclean spirits came out and entered the pigs, and the herd — about two thousand — stampeded down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the sea. ¹⁴Those tending the pigs fled and reported it in the town and in the countryside, and people came to see what had happened. ¹⁵They came to Jesus and saw the man who had been demon-possessed — the one who had had the legion — sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. ¹⁶Those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed man and about the pigs. ¹⁷Then they began to beg him to leave their region. ¹⁸As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹But Jesus did not permit him. Instead he said to him, "Go home to your own people and report to them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." ²⁰He went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and everyone was amazed. ²¹When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around him, and he was beside the sea. ²²One of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³Besought him greatly and stated, My little daughter lieth at the point of death — I pray you, come and lay your hands on her, that she may be healed. Then she will live. ²⁴So Jesus went with him, and a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. ²⁵A woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years, ²⁶Had suffered numerous things of numerous physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,. ²⁷When she had listened to of Jesus, arrived in the press behind, and touched his garment. ²⁸For she was saying, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be saved." ²⁹Immediately the flow of her blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. ³⁰Immediately Jesus, aware that power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" ³¹His disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing against you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" ³²But he kept looking around to see who had done this. ³³But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction." ³⁵While he was still speaking, people came from the synagogue leader's house saying, "Your daughter has died. Why bother the teacher any further?" ³⁶But Jesus, overhearing what was said, told the synagogue leader, "Do not be afraid; just believe." ³⁷He did not allow anyone to go with him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. ³⁸They came to the house of the synagogue leader, and he saw a commotion — people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹Going in, he said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping." ⁴⁰They laughed at him. But he put them all outside, took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in to where the child was. ⁴¹Taking the child by the hand, he said to her, "Talitha koum" — which means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up." ⁴²Immediately the girl stood up and began walking, for she was twelve years old. They were immediately overcome with great amazement. ⁴³He strictly ordered them that no one should know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT reads Gerasēnōn ('Gerasenes') rather than the KJV's 'Gadarenes.' The 'other side' (to peran) is the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee — predominantly Gentile territory, as the presence of a pig herd will confirm. Jesus is crossing from Jewish to Gentile space, a significant boundary in Mark's narrative geography.

2. The word euthys ('immediately') marks the instant confrontation — Jesus barely steps ashore before encountering the demoniac. The man comes 'from the tombs' (ek tōn mnēmeiōn), his dwelling place among the dead. Every detail accumulates uncleanness: Gentile territory, tombs, an unclean spirit. Jesus enters the most impure space imaginable.
3. The triple negative (oude... ouketi... oudeis, 'not even... no longer... no one') emphasizes the absolute impossibility of human control over this man. The verb dēsai ('bind, tie up') echoes the 'binding the strong man' language of 3:27 — no one can bind this man because the strong man (Satan) controls him. Only the one who has already bound the strong man can free his captive.
4. The distinction between pedais ('shackles' for the feet) and halysēs ('chains' for the hands/body) indicates repeated, thorough attempts at physical restraint. The verbs diespatthai ('tore apart') and syntetripthai ('crushed, smashed to pieces') convey superhuman strength. The verb damasai ('tame, subdue') is used for taming wild animals — the community has tried to treat this man as a beast. The perfect tenses indicate a history of failed attempts.
5. The description is harrowing: constant screaming (krazōn) and self-mutilation (katakoptōn heauton lithois, 'cutting himself down with stones'). The phrase dia pantos ('continually, always') with nyktos kai hēmeras ('night and day') portrays unceasing torment. The man oscillates between tombs (death) and mountains (isolation), with no rest and no human community. Mark paints the most extreme portrait of demonic oppression in the Gospels.
6. The verb prosekunēsēn ('fell down before, prostrated himself, worshipped') can mean either worship or obeisance. Given the demonic context, this is likely involuntary submission to Jesus's authority rather than genuine worship. The man runs toward Jesus — not away. Despite the demons' hostility, something in the man is drawn to Jesus as his only hope.
7. The demon uses the same defensive formula as in 1:24 — ti emoi kai soi ('what to me and to you?'). The title 'Son of the Most High God' (huie tou theou tou hypsistou) uses the Gentile designation for Israel's God (cf. Genesis 14:18-22), appropriate for the Gentile setting. The irony is profound: the demon adjures Jesus by God (horkizō se ton theon) — attempting to use divine authority against the divine Son. The verb basanisēs ('torment') refers to eschatological punishment — the demon fears Jesus has come to execute final judgment ahead of schedule.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 14:18-22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The imperfect elegen ('he was saying, had been saying') indicates that Jesus had already begun commanding the spirit before the exchange in verse 7. The demon's plea in verse 7 is a response to Jesus's initial exorcism command. Mark presents the encounter as a struggle, albeit one whose outcome is never in doubt.
9. In ancient practice, knowing a spirit's name gave power over it. Jesus's question asserts authority. The answer legiōn is a Latin loanword — a Roman legion numbered approximately 5,000-6,000 soldiers. The name evokes both the overwhelming number of demons and, for Mark's Roman audience, the occupying military force. The shift between singular ('my name') and plural ('we are many') reflects the blurred identity of the possessed man and the possessing spirits.
10. The imperfect parekalei ('kept begging') indicates persistent pleading. The demons' request not to be sent 'out of the region' (exō tēs chōras) is puzzling — perhaps they fear being sent to the abyss (cf. Luke 8:31) or prefer to remain in familiar territory. Their desperation and subservience to Jesus's authority is clear: they negotiate from a position of total weakness.
11. The presence of pigs confirms the Gentile setting — pigs were unclean animals under Jewish law (Leviticus 11:7) and would not be raised in Jewish territory. The word agelē ('herd') is typically used for cattle; its use for pigs may reflect the unusually large number. The hillside (pros tō orei) near the sea sets up the dramatic plunge of verse 13.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 11:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The demons' request to enter the pigs rather than be cast into the abyss reveals their desperate desire to remain embodied and in the earthly realm. Their need to ask Jesus's permission demonstrates his absolute authority — they cannot act without his consent.
13. The number 'about two thousand' (hōs dishilioi) reinforces the name 'Legion' and the scale of the oppression. The verb hōrmēsēn ('rushed, stampeded') describes a headlong, uncontrollable charge. The verb epnigonto ('were drowning, suffocating') is imperfect, depicting the ongoing process. The sea, which in Jewish cosmology was associated with chaos and evil, swallows the unclean spirits along with the unclean animals — a symbolic victory over the forces of chaos.
14. The herdsmen's flight (ephygon, 'fled') reflects terror at the supernatural event. Their report spreads to both urban (polis) and rural (agrous) areas. The phrase ti estin to gegonos ('what is the thing that has happened') uses the perfect participle — the accomplished event with ongoing implications.
15. The transformation is described in three participles: kathēmenon ('sitting' — formerly restless), himatismenon ('clothed' — formerly naked, implied), and sōphronounta ('in his right mind' — formerly raving). The fear (ephobēthēsan) is not gratitude but dread — the power that could do this is as terrifying as the demoniac himself had been. The townspeople fear Jesus's power more than they appreciate the man's healing.
16. The eyewitnesses (hoi idontes, 'those who saw') provide a detailed account (diēgēsanto, 'narrated, described'). The dual focus — what happened to the man and what happened to the pigs — reflects the community's twin concerns: the miraculous healing and the economic loss.

17. The verb *parakalein* ('to beg, urge, implore') is the same word the demons used in verse 10. The community asks Jesus to leave — they prefer the familiar misery of a demoniac to the disruptive power of the healer. The economic loss of two thousand pigs may also motivate their request. This is one of the rare occasions where Jesus is rejected by an entire community.
18. The verb *parakalei* ('was begging') appears for the third time in this passage — the demons begged (v. 10, 12), the townspeople begged (v. 17), and now the healed man begs. His request 'to be with him' (*hina met' autou ē*) echoes the purpose of the Twelve's appointment in 3:14 — he wants to become a disciple. In contrast to the community's rejection, the healed man is drawn to Jesus.
19. This is the only case in Mark where Jesus commands someone to proclaim rather than to keep silent. The messianic secret does not apply in Gentile territory, where there is no risk of politicized messianic misunderstanding. The phrase *ho kyrios* ('the Lord') could refer to God or to Jesus — the ambiguity may be intentional. The verb *ēlēēsen* ('had mercy') attributes the healing to divine compassion.
20. The man exceeds his commission — Jesus said to tell 'your own people' what 'the Lord' had done; the man proclaims throughout the entire Decapolis (a league of ten Greco-Roman cities) what 'Jesus' had done. He identifies Jesus as the Lord. The Decapolis was predominantly Gentile territory, making this man effectively the first Gentile missionary in Mark. The imperfect *ethaumazon* ('were amazed, kept marveling') indicates an ongoing response.
21. Jesus returns to the western (Jewish) shore. The recurring setting — 'beside the sea' (*para tēn thalassan*) — connects this to previous lakeside scenes. The crowd's immediate gathering indicates Jesus's continued popularity despite official opposition.
22. The title *archisynagōgos* ('synagogue ruler/leader') denotes the person responsible for managing synagogue services and facilities — a position of considerable local prestige. That such a figure would prostrate himself publicly before an itinerant teacher indicates extreme desperation. The name *Iairos* is the Greek form of Hebrew *Ya'ir* ('he will enlighten/awaken'), which becomes poignant given the story's outcome.
23. The diminutive *thygatrion* ('little daughter') conveys parental tenderness. The phrase *eschatōs echei* ('is at the last, at extremity') indicates she is near death. The verb *sōthē* ('may be saved') carries both physical healing and theological salvation in its range — Mark often uses *sōzō* with this double sense. Jairus's faith is expressed in his confidence that Jesus's touch will heal.
24. The verb *synethlibon* ('were pressing together against, crushing') recalls 3:9 where Jesus needed a boat to escape the crowd. The crushing crowd creates the condition for the next episode — the hemorrhaging woman can approach Jesus unnoticed because of the dense press of bodies.
25. The phrase *rhysis haimatos* ('flow of blood') likely refers to chronic vaginal bleeding, which under Levitical law (Leviticus 15:25-30) rendered the woman perpetually ritually unclean and made anyone or anything she touched unclean as well. For twelve years she has been excluded from the temple, synagogue worship, and normal social contact. The twelve years will be paralleled by the twelve years of Jairus's daughter's life.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 15:25-30 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. Mark's description is blunt about the medical profession: the woman suffered (*pathousa*, 'having endured much') under (*hypo* — from) the doctors, spent all her money (*dapanēsasa ta par' autēs panta*, 'having spent all that she had'), received no benefit (*mēden ōphelētheisa*), and actually deteriorated (*eis to cheiron elthousa*, 'having gone to the worse'). This frank assessment of ancient medicine is unique to Mark — Luke, the physician-evangelist, softens it considerably.
27. Her approach from behind (*opisthen*) suggests both hope and fear — hope that Jesus can help, fear of public exposure of her condition. By touching his garment, she would technically transmit her ritual impurity to him. Her action is bold but covert, reflecting a woman who has been marginalized for twelve years and is reluctant to draw attention to herself.
28. The imperfect *elegen* ('she was saying, kept saying to herself') suggests ongoing internal deliberation as she worked up courage. The verb *sōthēsomai* ('I will be saved/healed') again carries the dual sense of physical healing and spiritual wholeness. Her faith, though expressed through what might seem a superstitious mechanism (touching clothing), is directed toward Jesus personally.
29. The healing is instantaneous (*euthys*) and physically perceptible. The word *pēgē* ('spring, fountain, source') for the bleeding is a medical term. The verb *egnō tō sōmati* ('she knew in her body') describes a somatic awareness — she could physically feel the change. The word *mastigos* ('affliction, scourge') is the same word used in 3:10 for diseases, viewing illness as a kind of divine whipping.
30. The phrase *epignous en heautō tēn ex autou dynamin exelthousan* ('perceiving in himself the power having gone out from him') presents healing power as something that flows from Jesus and that he can detect. The word *dynamis* ('power') here is almost tangible — it has direction and movement. Jesus's question is not about information (he will identify the woman) but about relationship — he refuses to let the healing be anonymous.
31. The disciples' response borders on exasperation — in a crushing crowd, everyone is touching him. They cannot distinguish between the incidental contact of the crowd and the deliberate, faith-driven touch of the woman. The imperfect *elegon* ('they were saying') suggests they pressed the point.
32. The imperfect *perieblepeto* ('he was looking around') indicates a sustained, searching gaze. The feminine participle *tēn touto poiēsasan* ('the woman who had done this') reveals that Jesus already knew it was a woman. His searching look gives her the opportunity to come forward voluntarily rather than being exposed.
33. Her fear (*phobētheisa*) and trembling (*tremousa*) may reflect fear of rebuke for transmitting impurity, fear of losing the healing, or awe at the divine power she has experienced. She tells 'the whole truth' (*pasan tēn alētheian*) — her twelve years of suffering, her desperate act, her healing. The public

confession is both brave and necessary: Jesus will not allow healing to be separated from relationship.

34. The address 'Daughter' (thygatēr) restores her to family — she has been isolated for twelve years, and Jesus claims her as kin. The phrase hē pistis sou sesōken se ('your faith has saved you') uses the perfect tense — the salvation is accomplished and enduring. The verb sōzō again carries both physical and spiritual dimensions. 'Go in peace' (hypage eis eirēnēn) is the Hebrew shalom blessing — 'go into wholeness.' The command isthi hygiēs ('be healthy') confirms the healing as permanent.
35. The timing is devastating — 'while he was still speaking' (eti autou lalountos), the worst news arrives. The delay caused by the hemorrhaging woman's interruption has cost Jairus his daughter. The verb skylleis ('trouble, bother, harass') suggests they view any further appeal as pointless. The message assumes death is the absolute limit of Jesus's power. Mark's intercalation technique creates maximum dramatic tension.
36. The verb parakousas can mean either 'overhearing' or 'ignoring/disregarding.' Both readings work: Jesus either overhears the message meant for Jairus, or he deliberately disregards its hopeless conclusion. His response — mē phobou, monon pisteue ('do not fear, only believe') — calls Jairus to the same kind of faith the hemorrhaging woman demonstrated. The present imperative pisteue ('keep believing') demands sustained trust in the face of apparent impossibility.
37. The inner circle of three — Peter, James, and John — appears here for the first time. They will also be present at the Transfiguration (9:2) and Gethsemane (14:33). This select group witnesses events too profound or intimate for the larger group. The exclusion of others creates privacy for the family and limits witnesses to the raising.
38. The noun thorybos ('commotion, uproar, tumult') describes the scene of ritual mourning. Professional mourners would have been summoned quickly; Jewish custom required even the poorest family to hire at least two flute players and one wailing woman (Mishnah Ketubbot 4:4). The verb alalazontas ('wailing, shrieking') describes the loud, ritualized cries of formal lamentation.
39. Jesus's statement 'the child is not dead but sleeping' (to paidion ouk apethanen alla katheudei) has been interpreted as either (1) a metaphor for death — the girl is dead but Jesus views death as temporary sleep, or (2) a literal claim that she is merely unconscious. Given the certainty of the death announcement (v. 35) and the mockery that follows, Mark appears to present an actual death that Jesus redefines as sleep because he intends to 'wake' her. The metaphor of death as sleep becomes standard Christian language (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14).
40. The verb kategelōn ('were laughing at, ridiculing, mocking') indicates contemptuous dismissal. Their laughter confirms the girl is genuinely dead — they know death when they see it. The verb ekbalōn ('having thrown out') is the same forceful word used for casting out demons. Jesus removes the scorners and creates an intimate space with only the parents and the three disciples.
41. The preservation of the Aramaic talitha koum (or koumi in some manuscripts) is one of several instances where Mark retains Jesus's actual spoken words in Aramaic (cf. 7:34 ephphatha; 15:34 eloi eloi). Talitha means 'little girl' or 'lamb' (a term of endearment), and koum is the imperative 'arise, get up.' The tender address combined with the authoritative command creates a powerful contrast. Jesus touches a corpse, which would render him ritually unclean — but as with the leper, purity flows from Jesus rather than impurity flowing to him.
42. The girl's response is immediate (euthys) and complete — she not only rises but walks. Her age — twelve years — creates a link with the hemorrhaging woman (twelve years of illness). The woman has been ill for the girl's entire lifetime. The phrase exestēsan ekstasei megalē ('they were astonished with a great astonishment') uses a cognate construction for emphasis — the witnesses are utterly overwhelmed.
43. The messianic secret returns: diesteilato autois polla ('he ordered them repeatedly and emphatically'). Given that the mourners and crowd already know the girl died, keeping the raising secret seems impossible — yet Jesus commands it. The final detail — 'give her something to eat' — is profoundly human after the divine miracle. The command confirms the physical reality of her restoration: she is truly alive, with a living body that needs food. The juxtaposition of cosmic power and domestic tenderness is characteristically Markan.

6

Summary: *Mark 6 is the longest chapter in the Gospel and marks a turning point. Jesus is rejected at his hometown of Nazareth, then sends the Twelve on their first mission. Mark intercalates the account of John the Baptist's execution by Herod Antipas — a grim foreshadowing of Jesus's own fate. The chapter then presents two great wilderness miracles: the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus walking on the sea. The chapter closes with a summary of widespread healing activity in Gennesaret.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Nazareth rejection establishes that even Jesus's own community cannot see past his ordinary origins. The mission of the Twelve extends Jesus's authority through delegation. The death of John the Baptist is Mark's longest non-Jesus narrative and functions as a dark mirror of what awaits Jesus. The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle (besides the resurrection) found in all four Gospels. The sea-walking scene contains the mysterious phrase 'he intended to pass them by' — echoing Old Testament theophanies where God 'passes by' (Exodus 33:19-22; 1 Kings 19:11).*

Translation Friction: Herod's identity as 'king' (v. 14) is technically inaccurate — he was a tetrarch, not a king. Mark may use the popular designation or employ irony. The relationship between Herodias, Philip, and Herod is historically complex. The 'passing by' in verse 48 is theologically loaded and we render it literally with a note on the theophanic background.

Connections: The feeding miracle echoes Elisha feeding a hundred men (2 Kings 4:42-44), Moses and the manna (Exodus 16), and anticipates the Last Supper. The sea-walking draws on divine prerogatives — God alone 'treads on the waves of the sea' (Job 9:8). The disciples' hardened hearts (v. 52) echo the Pharaoh motif from Exodus.

¹He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ²On the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things? What is this wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works performed through his hands? ³Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. ⁴Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his own household." ⁵He was not able to do any mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶He was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went around among the villages teaching. ⁷He summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two, and he gave them authority over unclean spirits. ⁸He instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a staff — no bread, no bag, no money in their belts. ⁹They were to wear sandals but not put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, "Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they will not listen to you, as you leave, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. ¹⁴King Herod heard about it, for Jesus's name had become well known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him." ¹⁵Others were saying, "He is Elijah." And others were saying, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." ¹⁶But when Herod heard about it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded — he has been raised!" ¹⁷For Herod himself had sent men to arrest John and had him bound in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. ¹⁸For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹So Herodias held a grudge against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not, ²⁰For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him. And when he listened to him, he did numerous things, and listened to him gladly. ²¹An opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers, military commanders, and the leading men of Galilee. ²²When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you." ²³He swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom." ²⁴She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She said, "The head of John the Baptist." ²⁵Immediately she hurried back to the king and made her request: "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter." ²⁶The king was deeply distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded him to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, ²⁸brought his head in a charger, and offered it to the damsel — and the damsel offered it to her mother. ²⁹When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb. ³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him everything they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no opportunity even to eat. ³²So they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³But many saw them going and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴When he went ashore, he saw a large crowd, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things. ³⁵When the hour had grown late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place and the hour is already late. ³⁶Send them away so they can go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." ³⁷But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Should we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" ³⁸He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." ³⁹He directed them to have everyone sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰

They sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴²Everyone ate and was satisfied. ⁴³They picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. ⁴⁴Those who ate the loaves were five thousand men. ⁴⁵Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, toward Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶After saying farewell to them, he went up on the mountain to pray. ⁴⁷When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and he was alone on the land. ⁴⁸He saw them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night he came toward them, walking on the sea, and he intended to pass by them. ⁴⁹But when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and screamed, ⁵⁰Since they all noticed him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and says to them, Be of good cheer — it is I. Be not afraid. ⁵¹He got into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were utterly astounded, ⁵²Indeed, since they considered not the miracle of the loaves — for their heart was hardened. ⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, people immediately recognized him ⁵⁵Ran by way of that whole region round about, and started to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they listened to he was. ⁵⁶Wherever he went — into villages, towns, or countryside — they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him to let them touch even the fringe of his garment. And all who touched it were healed.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word *patris* ('hometown, fatherland') refers to Nazareth, though Mark does not name it here (cf. 1:9). The historical present *erchetai* ('he comes') is characteristic of Mark's vivid narrative style. Jesus returns home, but after all that has happened, the homecoming will prove uncomfortable.
2. The townspeople's questions acknowledge both Jesus's wisdom and power but frame them as a puzzle rather than a revelation. The passive *dothesia* ('given') is a divine passive — they recognize that his wisdom comes from God but stumble over the delivery mechanism. The word *dynameis* ('mighty works, miracles') is plural, indicating they knew of his wider ministry.
3. The title *tektōn* ('carpenter, builder, craftsman') identifies Jesus by his trade — a worker in wood and possibly stone. Mark alone calls Jesus himself a carpenter; Matthew 13:55 calls him 'the carpenter's son.' The identification as 'son of Mary' (rather than 'son of Joseph') is unusual and may suggest Joseph had died, or may carry a hint of illegitimacy. Four brothers are named, and sisters (plural) are mentioned. The verb *eskandalizōnto* ('were offended, stumbled') indicates that his ordinariness became the obstacle to faith.
4. The proverb has parallels in Greek literature and appears to have been widely known. Mark's version is the most expansive: three concentric circles of rejection — hometown (*patris*), relatives (*syngeneusin*), and household (*oikia*). Each circle narrows toward greater intimacy and greater pain. Jesus implicitly identifies himself as a prophet — a claim with dangerous implications given what happened to prophets.
5. The bold statement *ouk edynato* ('he was not able, could not') is remarkable — Mark presents unbelief as genuinely limiting Jesus's power, not just his willingness. Matthew 13:58 softens this to 'he did not do many mighty works.' The exception — healing a few sick people — shows that even limited faith allowed some access to Jesus's power.
6. The verb *ethaumazen* ('was amazed, marveled') is used elsewhere in Mark for human amazement at Jesus; here uniquely, Jesus is amazed at human unbelief. The word *apistia* ('unbelief, faithlessness, lack of trust') is the opposite of the *pistis* ('faith') he commends elsewhere. Jesus does not remain to argue but moves on to the surrounding villages.
7. The verb *apostellein* ('to send out') is the root of 'apostle' — the Twelve are now being sent. Pairing them 'two by two' (*dyo dyo*) follows the Old Testament principle that testimony requires two witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15) and provides mutual support. The authority (*exousia*) over unclean spirits extends Jesus's own exorcism ministry through his delegates.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 19:15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Mark permits a staff (*rhabdon*), while Matthew 10:10 and Luke 9:3 forbid even that — a minor discrepancy among the Synoptics. The *pēra* ('bag') was a traveler's knapsack. The *chalkon* ('copper, bronze money') represents the smallest denomination. The radical simplicity forces dependence on God and the hospitality of those they serve.
9. Mark allows sandals; Matthew 10:10 forbids them. The *chitōn* ('tunic, inner garment') was the basic garment worn next to the skin. Forbidding a second tunic means traveling without a change of clothes or an extra layer for cold nights — radical vulnerability and trust.
10. The instruction to stay in one house prevents the missionaries from trading up to better accommodations — they are to accept whatever hospitality is offered and remain loyal to their host. This practice also provides a stable base for ministry in each location.
11. Shaking off dust (*ektinaxate ton choun*) was a Jewish gesture performed when leaving Gentile territory — symbolically removing foreign contamination. Directed at fellow Jews, it declares that the rejecting town has placed itself outside the covenant community. The SBLGNT does not

- include the Sodom and Gomorrah comparison found in some manuscripts and in the KJV; this is a later scribal addition harmonizing with Matthew 10:15.
12. The Twelve's message — *metanoōsin* ('that they should repent') — echoes Jesus's opening proclamation in 1:15. They extend his call for repentance to a wider audience. The verb *kēryssō* ('proclaim, preach as a herald') is the same verb used for Jesus's own preaching.
 13. The anointing with oil (*ēleiphon elaiō*) is unique to Mark's account of this mission. Oil was used medicinally in the ancient world (cf. Isaiah 1:6; Luke 10:34), but here it functions as a vehicle for divine healing — a practice the early church continued (James 5:14). The combination of exorcism and healing mirrors Jesus's own ministry pattern.
 13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 1:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
 14. Mark calls Herod Antipas 'king' (*basileus*), though his actual title was 'tetrarch' (ruler of a quarter). This may be popular usage, Markan irony, or deliberate contrast with Jesus as the true king. The SBLGNT reads 'they were saying' (*elegon*, third person plural) rather than 'he said,' attributing the opinion about John to popular rumor rather than to Herod directly. The belief that John had risen reflects a popular view that the powers of a martyred prophet could be transferred or amplified after death.
 15. Three theories about Jesus circulate: resurrected John, returned Elijah (expected before the Day of the Lord, Malachi 4:5), or a new prophet in the line of the great prophets. Notably, none of the popular opinions identifies Jesus as the Messiah — the true answer that Peter will give in 8:29. These same three theories reappear in 8:28.
 15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Malachi 4:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
 16. The emphatic word order places 'whom I beheaded' (*hon egō apekephalisa*) first for dramatic impact. Herod's guilty conscience interprets Jesus through the lens of his own crime. The verb *apekephalisa* ('I beheaded') is blunt and brutal. His conviction that John has risen suggests both superstitious fear and an inability to escape the consequences of his deed.
 17. The flashback begins. The historical situation: Herod Antipas divorced his first wife (a Nabatean princess) to marry Herodias, who had been wife of his half-brother. Josephus (*Antiquities* 18.5.1-2) confirms the basic story but attributes John's execution to political fears rather than the banquet scenario Mark describes. The phrase 'his brother Philip's wife' identifies the relationship that made the marriage unlawful under Leviticus 18:16 and 20:21.
 17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 18:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
 18. The imperfect *elegen* ('he was saying, kept saying') indicates this was not a one-time confrontation but a repeated prophetic challenge. John stands in the tradition of prophets who confronted kings — Nathan before David (2 Samuel 12), Elijah before Ahab (1 Kings 21). The prohibition is rooted in Leviticus 18:16.
 18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Samuel 12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
 18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Kings 21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
 18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 18:16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
 19. The verb *eneichen* ('held against, bore a grudge, harbored resentment') describes Herodias's sustained hostility. The parallel with Jezebel seeking to kill Elijah (1 Kings 19:2) is unmistakable and likely intentional — John is the new Elijah opposed by a new Jezebel. Herodias's desire to kill is blocked by Herod's ambivalence (v. 20).
 19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Kings 19:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
 20. Herod's complex response to John — fear, recognition of his holiness, protection, perplexity, and fascination — makes him one of Mark's most psychologically nuanced characters. The SBLGNT reads *ēporei* ('was perplexed, at a loss') rather than *epoiei* ('did many things') found in some manuscripts. Herod is drawn to John's message but lacks the will to act on it — a tragic portrait of partial openness to truth.
 21. The word *eukairos* ('opportune, convenient') is loaded with dark irony — it is opportune for Herodias's scheme. The guest list — *megistanes* ('courtiers, nobles'), *chiliarchoi* ('commanders of a thousand,' military officers), and *prōtoi* ('leading men, elite') — represents the full spectrum of Galilean power. The birthday banquet (*genesiois*) sets the stage for the grim request that follows.
 22. The SBLGNT reads 'his daughter Herodias' (*tēs thygatros autou Hērōdiados*), which is textually difficult since the daughter is traditionally named Salome (Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.5.4). Some manuscripts read 'the daughter of Herodias herself.' The dance of a royal princess before a banquet of men was culturally extraordinary and suggests Herodias's manipulation. The rash promise echoes Esther 5:3, 6 and 7:2, where the Persian king makes a similar open-ended offer.
 22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Esther 5:3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

23. The oath (ōmosen) escalates the promise — Herod binds himself before his guests. The phrase 'up to half my kingdom' echoes Esther 5:3 almost verbatim. Since Herod was a tetrarch ruling at Rome's pleasure, the offer of half his kingdom was an empty boast, but it creates a binding social obligation.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Esther 5:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. The girl's question reveals she is acting as Herodias's agent. Herodias's response is instant and specific — she has been waiting for this opportunity (the 'opportune day' of v. 21). The request for John's 'head' (kephalēn) is shockingly literal and demands immediate execution.
25. The word euthys ('immediately') and meta spoudēs ('with haste, urgency') convey the girl's rush to lock in the request before Herod can reconsider. The addition 'on a platter' (epi pinaki) adds grotesque detail — the prophet's head served as a banquet dish. The demand exautēs ('right now, at once') leaves no room for delay or negotiation.
26. The word perilypos ('deeply grieved, exceedingly sorrowful') is the same word used for Jesus in Gethsemane (14:34). But Herod's sorrow does not lead to right action — he is trapped by his oaths (plural, horkous — he had sworn repeatedly) and by social pressure (the guests witnessed the oath). Fear of losing face costs John his life. Herod chooses honor before men over honoring God.
27. The Greek spekoulatōr is a Latin loanword (speculator) — a member of the bodyguard who could serve as executioner. The Latin military term is appropriate for Herod's court and reflects Mark's Roman audience. The execution happens with grim efficiency — euthys ('immediately') marking the speed of the killing.
28. The chain of delivery — executioner to girl to mother — is narrated with chilling matter-of-factness. The prophet's head passes through three sets of hands like a dish at a banquet. The scene is a grim anti-feast that inverts the coming banquet of the five thousand.
29. John's disciples perform the act of burial, paralleling what Joseph of Arimathea will do for Jesus (15:46). The word ptōma ('corpse, fallen body') is blunt — literally 'something that has fallen.' The burial in a tomb (mnēmeiō) provides closure to John's story and anticipates the empty tomb of chapter 16.
30. This is the only place in Mark where the Twelve are called 'apostles' (apostoloi, 'sent ones') — the title applies specifically to their role as commissioned delegates who have now returned from their mission. Their report covers both actions (hosa epoiēsan, 'what they did') and teaching (hosa edidaxan, 'what they taught'), mirroring Jesus's own ministry of deed and word.
31. Jesus recognizes the disciples' need for rest after their mission. The phrase kat' idian ('privately, by themselves') seeks solitude. The detail that they had no time to eat (oude phagein eukairoun) echoes 3:20. The word eukairoun ('had opportunity') uses the same root as the 'opportune' (eukairos) day of Herod's banquet (v. 21) — a subtle verbal link between the two scenes.
32. The boat provides transportation to the 'deserted place' (erēmon topon) — the wilderness that will become the setting for the feeding miracle. The attempt at privacy will be frustrated by the crowds who see them leaving.
33. The crowd's determination is remarkable — they outran the boat on foot (pezē), traveling along the northern shore of the lake. The verb synedramom ('ran together') describes a mass rush from multiple towns converging on the destination. The verb proēlthon ('arrived ahead of, preceded') means the crowd was waiting when the boat landed.
34. The verb esplanchnisthē ('was moved with compassion') describes the same deep, visceral response as in 1:41. The simile 'sheep without a shepherd' (probata mē echonta poimena) echoes Numbers 27:17, where Moses asks God to appoint a successor so Israel will not be 'like sheep without a shepherd.' It also evokes Ezekiel 34, where God condemns Israel's failed shepherds and promises to shepherd the flock himself. Jesus's response to the shepherdless crowd is to teach — in Mark, teaching is the primary expression of pastoral care.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 27:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ezekiel 34. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. The disciples emphasize two problems: the isolation of the location (erēmos estin ho topos) and the lateness of the hour (hōra pollē). Both are practical concerns about feeding a large crowd in the wilderness — a problem that evokes the wilderness feeding narratives of Exodus and Numbers.
36. The disciples propose the practical solution: dismiss the crowd to fend for themselves. The verb apolyson ('send away, dismiss') is an aorist imperative suggesting urgency. The surrounding farms (agrous) and villages (kōmas) would have limited supplies for such a multitude.
37. The emphatic hymeis ('you yourselves') makes the command startling — Jesus places the responsibility on the disciples. Two hundred denarii was roughly eight months' wages for a laborer. Their response drips with incredulity, possibly sarcasm. The denarius was a Roman silver coin, the standard day's wage.
38. Jesus redirects from what they cannot do to what they have. The instruction 'go and see' (hypagete idete) forces them to take inventory of their actual resources. The five loaves were likely flat barley bread, the common food of the poor. Two fish (ichthys) were probably dried or pickled fish from the lake.
39. The Greek symposia symposia ('group by group') is a distributive repetition — the crowd was organized into table-fellowship groups, the word symposion normally meaning a drinking party or dinner gathering. The detail 'green grass' (chlōrō chortō) indicates spring — near Passover (cf. John 6:4) when grass would be green in Galilee. The organized seating transforms a chaotic crowd into an ordered meal.

40. The word *prasiai* (*prasiai* 'garden beds, garden beds') paints a visual picture — from above, the arranged groups looked like rectangular garden plots. The groupings of hundreds and fifties echo the organization of Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 18:25), reinforcing the new-exodus theme of this wilderness feeding.
40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 18:25 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The four verbs — took (*labōn*), blessed (*eulogēsen*), broke (*kateklasen*), gave (*edidou*) — form the pattern that will reappear at the Last Supper (14:22) and become the structure of the Christian Eucharist. Looking up to heaven (*anablepsas eis ton ouranon*) acknowledges God as the source. The imperfect *edidou* ('kept giving') suggests the multiplication happened progressively as the bread was distributed.
42. The verb *echortasthēsan* ('were satisfied, filled to the full') originally described the feeding of animals — to be gorged, fully fed. Its use here emphasizes the abundance of the provision. The word *pantes* ('all, everyone') ensures no one was left out.
43. The twelve baskets (*dōdeka kophinōn*) correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles — the symbolism is likely intentional. The *kophinos* was a wicker basket distinctively associated with Jewish travelers (Juvenal, *Satire* 3.14). The surplus exceeds the initial supply, demonstrating superabundant provision.
44. The number *pentakischilioi andres* ('five thousand men') counts only adult males. Matthew 14:21 adds 'besides women and children,' suggesting the total crowd was much larger. The number may echo the military organization of the wilderness groups (v. 40), creating an image of a new Israel being fed by a new Moses in a new wilderness.
45. The verb *ēnagkasen* ('compelled, forced, made') is unusually strong — Jesus pressured the reluctant disciples to leave. John 6:15 explains why: the crowd wanted to make Jesus king by force, and Jesus needed to separate the disciples from the political enthusiasm. The word *euthys* ('immediately') marks the urgency. *Bethsaida* ('house of fishing') was a town on the northeastern shore.
46. The verb *apotaxamenos* ('having said farewell, having taken leave of') indicates a deliberate departure. Jesus again seeks solitude for prayer (cf. 1:35). The mountain (to *oros*) is a place of encounter with God in biblical tradition. This is Jesus's second recorded prayer in Mark, following a major public event, as in 1:35.
47. The scene is set with stark simplicity: the boat in the middle (*en mesō*) of the sea, Jesus alone (*monos*) on the land. The separation creates both physical and symbolic distance. The Sea of Galilee is roughly 7 miles wide at its widest point; 'in the middle' means 3-4 miles from shore.
48. That Jesus 'saw' (*idōn*) them from the mountain in darkness implies supernatural sight. The verb *basanizomenous* ('being tortured, strained, distressed') conveys the physical agony of rowing against a headwind. The fourth watch was 3-6 AM (Roman time reckoning). The phrase *ēthelen parelthein autous* ('he intended to pass by them') is the most theologically loaded detail; in the Old Testament, God 'passes by' Moses (Exodus 33:19-22) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:11) in theophanies — divine self-revelations. Jesus walking on the sea and intending to 'pass by' identifies him with the God of Israel.
48. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 33:19-22 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
48. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Kings 19:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
49. The word *phantasma* ('apparition, ghost, phantom') reflects their terror — they interpret the figure on the water as a spirit of the dead. The verb *anekraxan* ('screamed, cried out') conveys raw terror. Their inability to recognize Jesus is part of Mark's theme of the disciples' persistent blindness.
50. The phrase *egō eimi* ('it is I' or 'I AM') is both a simple self-identification and potentially a divine self-revelation — the same phrase used by God in Exodus 3:14 (in the Septuagint) and Isaiah 43:10. In the context of a sea-theophany, the reader is meant to hear both levels. The command 'do not be afraid' (*mē phobeisthe*) is the standard reassurance in divine appearances (Genesis 15:1; Isaiah 41:10; Daniel 10:12).
50. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 3:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
50. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 43:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
50. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 15:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
50. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 41:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
50. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 10:12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
51. The wind ceasing (*ekopasen*) when Jesus enters the boat echoes the storm-calming of 4:39 but without a verbal command — his mere presence stills the wind. The phrase *lian ek perissou* ('exceedingly, beyond all measure, utterly') piles up intensifiers to convey the disciples' overwhelming astonishment. The verb *existanto* ('were beside themselves, astounded') indicates they were mentally overwhelmed.
52. Mark's editorial comment is devastating: the disciples' astonishment at the sea-walking reveals that they missed the meaning of the feeding miracle. If they had understood *epi tois artois* ('about the loaves') — that Jesus had divine creative power — the sea-walking would not have shocked them. The phrase *hē kardia pepōrōmenē* ('their heart was hardened/calcified') uses the same word applied to Pharaoh's heart in the Septuagint and to the Pharisees in 3:5. Mark places the disciples dangerously close to Jesus's opponents.

53. Gennesaret (Gennēsaret) was a fertile plain on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee, south of Capernaum. The verb *prosōrmisthēsan* ('moored, anchored') is a nautical technical term, suggesting they pulled up at a landing or dock.
54. The adverb *euthys* ('immediately') once more. The verb *epignontes* ('recognizing, identifying') indicates Jesus was known by sight in this region — his reputation and face were familiar from previous ministry.
55. The verb *periedramon* ('ran around, ran throughout') indicates a frantic, widespread mobilization. The word *krabattois* ('mats, pallets') is the same as in 2:4 — poor people's beds on which the sick were carried. The phrase *hopou ēkouon hoti estin* ('wherever they heard he was') shows the crowd tracking Jesus's movements.
56. This summary statement covers an extended period of ministry. The *kraspedon* ('fringe, tassel, border') refers to the tassels (*tizit*) on the corners of a Jewish garment prescribed by Numbers 15:38-39. The desire to touch the fringe echoes the hemorrhaging woman's faith (5:28). The verb *esōzonto* ('were being saved/healed') is imperfect, indicating continuous, repeated healing. The word encompasses both physical restoration and the deeper salvation it signifies.
56. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 15:38-39. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

7

Summary: *Mark 7 centers on the theme of purity — what truly makes a person clean or unclean. Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem challenge Jesus about his disciples' failure to observe handwashing traditions. Jesus responds with a sharp critique of human tradition that nullifies God's commandment, using the 'Corban' example. He then teaches the crowd that defilement comes from within, not from external contact with food. The chapter shifts to Gentile territory where Jesus heals the daughter of a Syrophoenician woman after a remarkable exchange, and then heals a deaf man with a speech impediment in the Decapolis.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Mark's parenthetical comment in verse 19 — 'thus he declared all foods clean' — is one of the most theologically significant editorial asides in the Gospel, effectively ending the Levitical food laws. The Syrophoenician woman is the only person in Mark who wins an argument with Jesus, and her faith opens the door to Gentile inclusion. The Aramaic word 'Ephphatha' preserved in verse 34 is another instance of Mark retaining Jesus's actual spoken words. The chapter moves from Jewish purity concerns to Gentile healing, enacting the very boundary-crossing that the teaching about inner purity makes possible.*

Translation Friction: *The 'all foods clean' comment in verse 19 is debated — is it Mark's theological interpretation or Jesus's explicit teaching? The Greek is ambiguous. The exchange with the Syrophoenician woman contains language ('dogs,' *kynaria*) that sounds harsh; we render it faithfully and note the cultural context. The geographic itinerary in verse 31 is circuitous and difficult to map precisely.*

Connections: *The Corban teaching connects to the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12) and prophetic critiques of empty ritual (Isaiah 29:13). The Syrophoenician woman's story anticipates the Gentile mission. The healing of the deaf-mute echoes Isaiah 35:5-6 ('the ears of the deaf shall be opened... the tongue of the mute shall sing'). The 'Ephphatha' miracle in Gentile territory suggests the messianic age is dawning beyond Israel's borders.*

¹The Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him. ²They noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled — that is, unwashed — hands. ³(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands carefully, holding to the tradition of the elders. ⁴When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions they observe, such as the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and dining couches.) ⁵So the Pharisees and scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" ⁶He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied accurately about you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. ⁷They worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commandments of human beings.' ⁸You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition." ⁹He also said to them, "How skillfully you set aside the commandment of God in order to establish your own tradition!" ¹⁰For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must certainly die.' ¹¹But you say, 'If a man tells his father or mother, "Whatever support you might have received from me is Corban"' — that is, an offering to God

— ¹²You suffer him no more to do anything for his father or his mother;. ¹³Making the message of God of none effect by way of your tradition, which you have delivered — and numerous such like things do you. ¹⁴He called the crowd to him again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵There is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them." ¹⁷When he had left the crowd and entered a house, his disciples asked him about the parable. ¹⁸He said to them, "Are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile them, ¹⁹On account of the fact that it entereth not into his inner self, but into the belly, and goes out into the draught, purging all meats? ²⁰He said, "It is what comes out of a person that defiles them. ²¹For from within, out of the human heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²²Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:. ²³All these evil things come from within and defile a person." ²⁴From there he set out and went to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know, but he could not escape notice. ²⁵Immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard about him and came and fell at his feet. ²⁶The woman was a Greek, a Syrophoenician by birth. She kept asking him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." ²⁸But she answered him, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." ²⁹He said to her, "Because of this word, go — the demon has left your daughter." ³⁰She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone. ³¹Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the region of the Decapolis. ³²They brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly speak, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. ³³He took him aside from the crowd privately, put his fingers into the man's ears, and after spitting, touched his tongue. ³⁴Looking up to heaven, he sighed deeply and said to him, "Ephphatha" — that is, "Be opened." ³⁵Immediately his ears were opened, the binding of his tongue was released, and he spoke clearly. ³⁶He ordered them to tell no one, but the more he ordered them, the more widely they proclaimed it. ³⁷They were utterly astonished, saying, "He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. As in 3:22, scribes from Jerusalem represent an official investigation. Their arrival 'from Jerusalem' (apo Hierosolymōn) indicates these are not local critics but representatives of the central religious authority. The historical present *synagontai* ('they gather') creates narrative immediacy.
2. The word *koinais* ('common, defiled, ritually impure') does not mean physically dirty but ritually contaminated. Mark provides the parenthetical explanation 'that is, unwashed' (tout' estin aniptoiois) for his Gentile readers who would not know Jewish purity customs. The issue is ritual hand-washing before meals, a Pharisaic tradition not required by the Torah itself.
3. Mark inserts a long parenthetical explanation (vv. 3-4) for readers unfamiliar with Jewish customs — strong evidence that his audience was predominantly Gentile. The word *pygmē* ('with a fist' or 'carefully, thoroughly') is debated — it may describe a specific washing technique or simply mean 'diligently.' The 'tradition of the elders' (*paradosis tōn presbyterōn*) refers to the oral law later codified in the Mishnah.
4. The verb *baptisōntai* ('wash, immerse') is the same root as 'baptize,' suggesting full immersion rather than merely rinsing hands. The marketplace (*agora*) was a place of contact with Gentiles and other sources of ritual contamination. The list of items requiring purification — cups (*potēriōn*), pitchers (*xestōn*, a Latin loanword from *sextarius*), copper vessels (*chalkiōn*), and dining couches (*klinōn*) — illustrates how extensively purity concerns pervaded daily life.
5. The verb *peripatousin* ('walk') is a metaphor for conduct or lifestyle — 'why do your disciples not live according to...' The question holds Jesus responsible for his disciples' behavior, as in 2:24. The phrase 'tradition of the elders' places oral tradition on par with Scripture — precisely the equation Jesus will challenge.
6. Jesus opens with a devastating quotation from Isaiah 29:13, applying it directly to his questioners. The word *hypokritēs* ('hypocrite') originally meant a stage actor — one who wears a mask and plays a role. Jesus accuses them of performing religion without genuine devotion. The quote comes from the Septuagint, which differs slightly from the Hebrew text of Isaiah.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 29:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The word *matēn* ('in vain, to no purpose, uselessly') declares their worship empty and ineffective. The core accusation: human traditions (*entalmata anthrōpōn*) have been elevated to the status of divine teaching (*didaskalias*). The verse strikes at the heart of the Pharisaic project of building a 'fence around the Torah' — Jesus sees the fence as replacing the Torah.

8. The contrast is stark: *aphentes* ('abandoning, leaving behind, forsaking') the commandment of God versus *krateite* ('holding fast, gripping, clinging to') human tradition. The verb *kratein* ('to hold, grip') implies a tight, determined grasp. They cling to tradition while letting go of God's actual command.
9. The adverb *kalōs* ('well, skillfully, finely') is biting sarcasm — 'how expertly you reject God's command.' The verb *atheteite* ('set aside, nullify, reject') is a legal term for annulling a contract or agreement. Jesus moves from a general critique (vv. 6-8) to a specific example (vv. 10-13).
10. Jesus cites two commandments: Exodus 20:12 (the fifth commandment) and Exodus 21:17. Together they establish the inviolable obligation of children to care for and respect their parents. The phrase *thanatō teleutātō* ('let him surely die, let him die the death') is an emphatic death sentence using the cognate dative construction from the Septuagint.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 20:12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 21:17 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The Aramaic word *korban* (from the Hebrew *qorban*, meaning 'offering, gift dedicated to God') refers to a vow dedicating money or property to the temple. Mark translates it for his Gentile readers: *ho estin dōron* ('which is, a gift'). The practice Jesus critiques allowed a person to declare assets 'Corban' and thereby exempt them from being used to support aging parents — technically fulfilling a religious vow while violating the commandment to honor father and mother.
12. The verb *aphiete* ('you allow, permit') indicates that the religious authorities enforced the Corban vow even against the person's later desire to help their parents. Once declared, the vow was considered binding — tradition trumped the commandment. The irony: a supposedly pious act (vowing to God) is used to evade a clear divine command (caring for parents).
13. The verb *akyroutes* ('nullifying, invalidating, rendering void') is a legal term for canceling a valid document. The 'word of God' (*ton logon tou theou*) — the Torah itself — is voided by human tradition. The final remark, 'and many similar things you do' (*paromoia ta iauta polla poieite*), generalizes: the Corban example is one of many instances where tradition overrides Scripture.
14. Jesus shifts from the scribes and Pharisees to the general crowd (*ton ochlon*). The double imperative — *akousate* ('listen') and *synete* ('understand') — demands not just hearing but comprehension. What follows is a teaching for everyone, not just the religious elite.
15. This is a revolutionary principle: defilement is internal, not external. The verb *koinōsai* ('make common, defile, pollute') is the same word from verse 2. Jesus overturns the entire external purity system in a single sentence. The logic is spatial: nothing from outside (*exōthen*) entering (*eisporeuomenon*) can contaminate; only what exits (*ekporeuomena*) from within defiles. The implications for food laws, Gentile contact, and the whole purity system are enormous.
16. Verse 16 does not appear in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts and is not included in the SBLGNT critical text. It is a scribal addition harmonizing with 4:9 and 4:23. Some later manuscripts and the KJV include it: 'If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear.' We follow the SBLGNT in omitting it.
17. The pattern from chapter 4 repeats: public parabolic teaching followed by private explanation to the disciples. The disciples' need for explanation underscores their persistent difficulty in understanding. They call Jesus's statement a 'parable' (*parabolē*), meaning they recognized it as figurative speech requiring interpretation.
18. Jesus's exasperation is evident: *kai hymeis* ('you also, even you') — even the insiders need explanation. The adjective *asynetoi* ('without understanding, senseless') is blunt. Jesus repeats his principle and now explains the physiological reason why external food cannot defile spiritually.
19. Jesus's argument is straightforward: food enters the stomach (*kolia*), not the heart (*kardia*), and exits through the digestive system into the sewer (*aphedrōna*, 'latrine, drain'). The heart in biblical anthropology is the seat of moral and spiritual life. The parenthetical comment *katharizōn panta ta brōmata* can be read as the subject being Jesus ('he declared all foods clean') or as the process of digestion ('purifying all foods'). Most modern translations follow the former reading, understanding this as Mark's theological commentary declaring the end of kosher food laws. This is one of the most consequential editorial comments in the New Testament.
20. Jesus returns to the positive side of his principle: defilement originates from within. The repeated emphasis on what 'comes out' (*ekporeuomenon*) prepares for the vice list that follows, which catalogs the internal sources of true defilement.
21. The heart (*kardia*) is the source of all moral contamination. The list begins with *dialogismoi hoi kakoi* ('evil thoughts, wicked deliberations') as the root, then specifies manifestations. The word *porneiai* ('sexual immorality') covers all forms of sexual wrongdoing, broader than just adultery or prostitution. The list has twelve items, possibly echoing the twelve sons/tribes or simply providing a comprehensive catalog.
22. The list moves from plural actions (sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery — things done) to singular dispositions (greed, wickedness, deceit — character traits). The 'evil eye' (*ophthalmos ponēros*) is a Semitic idiom for envy or stinginess. The word *aselgeia* ('sensuality, debauchery, licentiousness') refers to unrestrained self-indulgence. *Aphrosynē* ('foolishness') in biblical wisdom literature is not intellectual deficiency but moral and spiritual blindness — the refusal to acknowledge God.
23. The summary restates the principle: *panta tauta ta ponēra esōthen ekporeuetai* ('all these evil things come from within'). The argument is complete: true defilement is moral, not ritual; internal, not external. This teaching dismantles the entire system of external purity that the Pharisees' question

presupposed.

24. Jesus travels into unambiguously Gentile territory — Tyre was a Phoenician coastal city. The SBLGNT reads 'Tyre' only; 'and Sidon' appears in later manuscripts. His desire for anonymity (*oudena ēthelen gnōnai*, 'he wanted no one to know') again fails — as in 1:45, his reputation precedes him. The timing is significant: after declaring all foods clean and teaching that external purity does not matter, Jesus crosses into the unclean Gentile world.
25. The word *euthys* ('immediately') drives the narrative. The diminutive *thygatrion* ('little daughter') conveys the mother's tenderness. The woman's prostration (*prosepesen*, 'fell before') indicates desperate supplication. An unclean spirit in a Gentile girl — the encounter concentrates every purity boundary that Jesus has been challenging.
26. Mark provides a double identification: *Hellēnis* ('Greek' — culturally Hellenistic, i.e., pagan) and *Syrophoinikissa* ('Syrophoenician' — ethnically from the Phoenician region of Syria, distinguished from Libyphoenicians of North Africa). The imperfect *ērōta* ('kept asking') indicates persistent, repeated pleading.
27. This is one of the most debated sayings in the Gospels. The 'children' (*tekna*) represent Israel; the 'dogs' (*kynaria*, diminutive — 'little dogs, house dogs,' not wild street dogs) represent Gentiles. The word 'first' (*prōton*) is crucial to Mark — it implies a sequence, not an exclusion: Israel first, then Gentiles. The diminutive *kynaria* softens the harshness somewhat — these are household pets, not scavenging strays. Some interpret Jesus as testing the woman's faith; others see him articulating the salvation-historical priority of Israel that the woman then reframes.
28. The woman does not reject Jesus's metaphor but brilliantly extends it: she accepts the priority of the children but argues that feeding the dogs does not require depriving the children — crumbs fall naturally from the table while the children eat. Her response demonstrates both humility (she does not claim to be a child at the table) and bold faith (she insists that Jesus's power is so abundant that even the overflow is sufficient). She is the only person in Mark who outargues Jesus.
29. Jesus commends her *logos* ('word, saying, argument') — it is the quality of her faith as expressed in her reply that moves him. The perfect *exelēlythen* ('has gone out') indicates the exorcism is already accomplished at a distance — Jesus does not go to the house, touch the girl, or speak a word of command. The healing is performed solely on the basis of the mother's faith expressed through clever, humble argumentation. This is the only distance healing of an exorcism in the Synoptics.
30. The perfect participles — *beblēmenon* ('lying, thrown/placed') and *exelēluthos* ('having gone out') — describe the completed states the woman finds. The child is at rest on the bed (no longer convulsing or disturbed), and the demon has departed. The scene is quiet and domestic — a sharp contrast to the violent Gerasene exorcism. Faith, not spectacle, has been the instrument of deliverance.
31. The itinerary is geographically circuitous: north from Tyre to Sidon, then southeast through the Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee — a long loop through predominantly Gentile territory. This extended journey through Gentile lands follows naturally from the principle that what defiles comes from within, not from external contact. Jesus is enacting the boundary-crossing his teaching authorized.
32. The word *mogilalon* ('having difficulty speaking, speaking with impediment') appears only here in the New Testament and only once in the Septuagint — in Isaiah 35:6 ('then the tongue of the mute will shout for joy'). Mark's use of this rare word signals that Jesus is fulfilling Isaiah's messianic prophecy. The man's condition — deaf and nearly mute — represents complete communicative isolation.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 35:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. Jesus's healing method here is unusually physical and elaborate. He takes the man aside privately (*kat' idian*) — perhaps because the man cannot hear verbal instructions and needs physical communication. The fingers in the ears and spitting on the tongue are symbolic actions directed at the organs of hearing and speech. Saliva was believed to have healing properties in the ancient world, but Jesus's use of it appears to be a sign-act communicating what he is about to do to a man who cannot hear words.
34. The sigh (*estenaxen*) expresses deep emotion — compassion for the man's suffering, or the burden of confronting a broken world, or the spiritual effort of the healing act. The Aramaic *ephphatha* (from the root *p-t-ch*, 'to open') is another instance of Mark preserving Jesus's actual spoken words. The translation for Gentile readers — *dianoichthēti* ('be opened, be completely opened') — uses a compound verb intensifying the opening. The single word commands the opening of both ears and mouth.
35. The healing is instant (*eutheōs*, variant of *euthys*). The word *desmos* ('bond, chain, binding') describes the tongue as having been tied or bound — freed from whatever held it. The adverb *orthōs* ('correctly, plainly, clearly') indicates full, normal speech. The language of binding and release connects to the strong-man parable (3:27) — Jesus releases captives from the bonds of affliction.
36. The messianic secret continues, and continues to fail. The comparative construction — 'the more he ordered, the more they proclaimed' (*hoson diesteileto, autoi mallon perisoteron ekērisson*) — creates a paradox: Jesus's commands produce the opposite effect. The verb *ekērysson* ('proclaimed, heralded') is the same word used for public proclamation of the gospel. The people cannot contain their witness.
37. The adverb *hyperperissōs* ('exceedingly, beyond all measure') is one of Mark's strongest intensifiers. The crowd's exclamation 'he has done everything well' (*kalōs panta pepoieken*) echoes Genesis 1:31 ('God saw everything that he had made, and it was very good') and Isaiah 35:5-6 ('then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped'). The people unknowingly declare that Jesus is doing the work of the Creator and fulfilling messianic prophecy in Gentile territory.

37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 1:31. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 35:5-6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

8

Summary: *Mark 8 is the pivotal chapter of the Gospel. It begins with a second feeding miracle (four thousand this time), followed by the Pharisees demanding a sign, Jesus warning about the 'leaven' of the Pharisees and Herod, and the disciples' persistent failure to understand. A two-stage healing of a blind man at Bethsaida symbolically mirrors the disciples' gradual (and still incomplete) sight. The chapter reaches its climax at Caesarea Philippi, where Peter confesses Jesus as the Christ — but immediately reveals that he misunderstands what that means. Jesus delivers the first passion prediction and teaches that discipleship requires taking up one's cross.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The two-stage healing of the blind man (vv. 22-26) is unique to Mark and functions as a parable of discipleship: the disciples, like the blind man, see partially but not yet clearly. Peter's confession is the hinge of the entire Gospel — everything before leads to this moment, and everything after redefines what 'Christ' means through the lens of suffering. The first passion prediction (v. 31) introduces the three-fold pattern of death-and-resurrection predictions. The rebuke 'Get behind me, Satan' is among the most dramatic moments in the Gospels.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between the two feeding miracles is debated — are they doublets of the same event or distinct occasions? Mark's text treats them as separate (8:19-20 distinguishes them), and the differences in numbers, vocabulary, and setting support this. Peter's confession uses 'Christ' (Christos) without further qualification — Mark may intend this as both correct and insufficient.*

Connections: *The feeding of four thousand in Gentile territory parallels the feeding of five thousand in Jewish territory, suggesting Jesus is 'bread' for all peoples. The blindness theme connects to Isaiah 42:18-19 and 35:5. Caesarea Philippi, built by Philip the Tetrarch at the source of the Jordan near a shrine to Pan, provides an ironic backdrop for confessing the true God. The cross-bearing teaching echoes the reality of Roman crucifixion that Mark's audience knew firsthand.*

¹In those days, when there was again a large crowd with nothing to eat, he called his disciples and said to them, ²"I have compassion on the crowd, because they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. ³If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, and some of them have come from a great distance." ⁴His disciples answered him, "How can anyone find enough bread to feed these people here in this desolate place?" ⁵He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven." ⁶He directed the crowd to sit down on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves, gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to his disciples to distribute, and they set them before the crowd. ⁷They also had a few small fish, and after blessing them, he said that these also should be distributed. ⁸They ate and were satisfied, and they collected seven baskets full of leftover broken pieces. ⁹There were about four thousand people. Then he sent them away. ¹⁰Immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha. ¹¹The Pharisees came out and began to argue with him, demanding from him a sign from heaven, to test him. ¹²He sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation." ¹³He left them, got back into the boat, and crossed to the other side. ¹⁴They had forgotten to bring bread and had only one loaf with them in the boat. ¹⁵He warned them, saying, "Watch out — guard against the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." ¹⁶They began discussing with one another the fact that they had no bread. ¹⁷Aware of this, he said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact that you have no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? ¹⁸Having eyes, do you not see? Having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? ¹⁹When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?" They said to him, "Twelve." ²⁰"And when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?" They said, "Seven." ²¹He said to them, "Do you still not understand?" ²²They

came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. ²³He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. After spitting on his eyes and laying his hands on him, he asked him, "Do you see anything?" ²⁴He looked up and said, "I see people, but they look like trees walking around." ²⁵Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again, and the man looked intently, and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶Jesus sent him home, saying, "Do not even go into the village." ²⁷Jesus went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸They told him, "John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." ²⁹Then he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." ³⁰He sternly ordered them to tell no one about him. ³¹And after three days rise again, he began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed. ³²He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not thinking about the things of God, but the things of human beings." ³⁴He called the crowd together with his disciples and said to them, "If anyone wants to follow me, let them deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me. ³⁵For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for my sake and the sake of the good news will save it. ³⁶For what does it profit a person to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷For what can a person give in exchange for their life? ³⁸For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of them when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *en ekeinai tais hēmerais* ('in those days') is a general temporal marker connecting this to Jesus's extended ministry in Gentile territory (Decapolis, 7:31). The word *palin* ('again') signals a parallel to the first feeding. This time Jesus takes the initiative rather than the disciples.
2. The verb *splanchnizomai* ('I have compassion, my gut is moved') is the same visceral compassion from 1:41 and 6:34. The three days (*hēmerai treis*) indicates the crowd's extraordinary persistence — they have stayed with Jesus for three days in a remote area without adequate food. This detail also foreshadows the 'three days' of the passion predictions.
3. The verb *eklythēsontai* ('will give out, collapse, become faint') describes physical exhaustion from hunger and travel. The note that some came 'from a great distance' (*apo makrothen*) may hint at the Gentile composition of the crowd — they have come from far away, perhaps symbolically representing the nations drawn to Israel's God.
4. The disciples' question is astonishing given that they witnessed the feeding of the five thousand. Their inability to connect that experience to this situation is precisely the 'hardness of heart' Mark identified in 6:52. The word *erēmia* ('wilderness, desolate place') evokes the Exodus feeding narratives. Their question *pothen* ('from where?') echoes Israel's complaint in the wilderness (Numbers 11:13).
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 11:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The number seven may carry symbolic weight — seven often represents completeness or universality in biblical numerology. Some interpreters see the five loaves of the first feeding as representing the five books of Torah (for the Jewish crowd) and seven as representing the completeness of God's provision for all nations (for the Gentile crowd).
6. The verb *eucharistēsas* ('having given thanks') differs from *eulogēsen* ('blessed') used in the first feeding (6:41). Both are standard Jewish meal blessings, but *eucharistēsas* became the technical term for the Lord's Supper (the 'Eucharist'). The same four-action pattern appears: taking, thanking, breaking, giving.
7. The diminutive *ichthydia* ('small fish') and the adjective *oliga* ('few') emphasize the meagreness of the supply. The fish receive their own separate blessing (*eulogēsas*), suggesting a careful, deliberate process. The verb *paratihenai* ('to set before, to serve') places the disciples in the role of servers at a divine banquet.
8. The word *spyridas* ('baskets') differs from the *kophinous* ('wicker baskets') of the first feeding. The *spyris* was a large rope basket, possibly large enough to hold a person (cf. Acts 9:25, where Paul is lowered in a *spyris*). Seven baskets from seven loaves — the surplus matches the initial supply, demonstrating abundance. The readers are meant to compare: twelve baskets from five loaves in the first feeding, seven from seven here.
9. The number four thousand (*tetrakischilioi*) is smaller than the first feeding's five thousand. The word 'about' (*hōs*) indicates an approximation. Jesus dismisses (*apelysen*) the crowd — the same verb used in 6:36 where the disciples wanted to dismiss the first crowd.
10. Dalmanutha is mentioned only in Mark and its location is uncertain — Matthew's parallel (15:39) reads 'Magadan' (or 'Magdala'). It was apparently on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. The word *euthys* ('immediately') again drives the narrative pace.

11. The verb *syzetein* ('to argue, debate, dispute') indicates hostile engagement. The demand for a *sêmeion apo tou ouranou* ('sign from heaven') means a cosmic, unmistakable divine authentication — something beyond the healings and exorcisms they could attribute to other sources. The participle *peirazontes* ('testing') is the same word used for Satan's testing in 1:13; the Pharisees are aligned with the tempter.
12. The verb *anastenaxas* ('sighed deeply, groaned') is intensified with the prefix *ana-* and describes profound emotional distress. The phrase *ei dothēsetai* ('if a sign will be given') is a Hebrew oath formula — literally 'if [such a thing happens, may God punish me]' — meaning emphatically 'no sign will be given.' Mark's Jesus gives no sign at all; Matthew 12:39 adds 'except the sign of Jonah.' The word *genea* ('generation') implies not just the contemporaries but a type — a faithless generation that demands proof instead of responding in faith.
13. The abrupt departure — *apheis autous* ('leaving them behind') — reflects Jesus's frustration. He does not continue the argument but withdraws. The crossing to 'the other side' (*eis to peran*) continues the pattern of back-and-forth movement across the sea.
14. The detail that they forgot bread is both a narrative setup and deeply ironic — they are with the one who has just twice multiplied bread miraculously and they worry about having only one loaf. The 'one loaf' (*hena arton*) may symbolically refer to Jesus himself, the true bread, though Mark does not make this explicit.
15. Leaven (*zymē*) is used metaphorically for a pervasive, corrupting influence — a small amount of yeast transforms an entire batch of dough. The 'leaven of the Pharisees' is their demand for signs and their replacement of God's word with human tradition. The 'leaven of Herod' may refer to political power, worldly ambition, or moral compromise. Mark mentions Herod where Matthew 16:6 has 'Sadducees.' The disciples will completely miss the point.
16. The disciples interpret Jesus's metaphorical warning literally — they think he is talking about actual bread. The verb *diellogizonto* ('were reasoning, deliberating, arguing among themselves') is the same word used for the scribes' hostile reasoning in 2:6, 8. The irony is thick: they worry about bread in the presence of the one who fed thousands.
17. Jesus fires a barrage of questions — five in rapid succession (vv. 17-21) — each one more pointed than the last. The word *pepōrōmenēn* ('hardened, calcified, petrified') for their hearts echoes 6:52 and 3:5 (the Pharisees). Jesus is saying that his own disciples have the same spiritual condition as his opponents. The phrase *oupō* ('not yet') implies an expected progression that has stalled.
18. This echoes Jeremiah 5:21 ('Hear this, O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear') and Ezekiel 12:2. Jesus places his disciples in the category of those prophetically condemned for spiritual blindness and deafness. The question 'do you not remember?' (*ou mnēmoneuete*) shifts from perception to memory — they have the data but fail to interpret it.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 5:21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 12:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. Jesus catechizes the disciples like a teacher testing students. The word *kophinous* ('wicker baskets') is the distinctive basket type from the first feeding. The answer 'twelve' is correct — they remember the facts but miss their significance.
20. The word *spyridōn* ('large baskets') is the distinctive type from the second feeding. Again the disciples answer correctly: seven. The two feedings are explicitly distinguished — five/five thousand/twelve and seven/four thousand/seven — confirming they are separate events.
21. The final question *oupō syniete* ('do you not yet understand?') is left without an answer — the reader is left to supply it. The 'not yet' preserves hope that understanding will come, but the disciples remain blind. This sets the stage for the blind man of Bethsaida (vv. 22-26), whose gradual healing mirrors the disciples' gradual perception.
22. Bethsaida ('house of fishing') was a town at the north end of the Sea of Galilee. The pattern of others bringing the afflicted person to Jesus recurs throughout Mark (cf. 2:3, 7:32). The request to 'touch' (*hapsētai*) the blind man parallels the deaf man's story in 7:32-37. This healing — unique to Mark — is the only miracle in the Gospels that happens in stages.
23. As with the deaf man (7:33), Jesus takes the man aside privately, uses saliva, and lays on hands. The question 'do you see anything?' (*ei ti blepeis*) is extraordinary — Jesus asks about the result of his healing, something he never does elsewhere. The two-stage healing is unique and appears deliberate, not because of any limitation in Jesus's power but to serve a narrative-theological purpose.
24. The man's response describes partial sight — he can see shapes and movement but cannot distinguish people clearly. The comparison of people to trees suggests blurred, indistinct vision. This intermediate stage of sight mirrors the disciples' condition after the feeding miracles: they have some perception but cannot see clearly who Jesus is.
25. Three verbs describe the progression: *dieblpesen* ('he looked through, saw clearly' — a sudden piercing clarity), *apekatestē* ('was restored' — returned to full function), and *eneblepen tēlaugōs hapanta* ('was seeing everything at a distance clearly'). The adverb *tēlaugōs* ('clearly, distinctly, far-shiningly') indicates not just restoration but enhanced vision. The two-stage healing enacts what will happen to the disciples: Peter's confession (v. 29) is partial sight; full vision awaits the resurrection.
26. The command to avoid the village continues the messianic secret — the healing is not to be publicized. The SBLGNT has the shorter reading 'do not even go into the village' (*mēde eis tēn kōmēn eiselthēs*) without the additional prohibition about telling anyone, which appears in later manuscripts.

27. Caesarea Philippi (modern Banias) was located at the northern extreme of Jewish territory, near the sources of the Jordan River, at the foot of Mount Hermon. Philip the Tetrarch had rebuilt it and named it after Caesar and himself. The region was marked by pagan shrines, including a grotto dedicated to Pan. Against this backdrop of pagan worship, Jesus asks the central question of the Gospel. The phrase *en tē hodō* ('on the way') makes this a traveling conversation — the 'way' becomes a metaphor for discipleship in Mark.
28. These are the same three categories from 6:14-15 — resurrected John, returned Elijah, or a new prophet. All three recognize Jesus as a prophetic figure but none identifies him as the Messiah. Public opinion sees Jesus through the categories of the past rather than as something new.
29. The emphatic *hymeis de* ('but you') contrasts the disciples' answer with popular opinion. Peter speaks as the group's representative. His confession — *sy ei ho Christos* ('you are the Christ/Messiah') — is the correct answer to the question posed in 1:1. Mark's version is unadorned — no 'Son of the living God' (Matthew 16:16), no commendation. The confession is right but, as the next verses will show, Peter's understanding of what 'Christ' means is dangerously wrong.
30. The verb *epetimēsen* ('sternly warned, rebuked') is the same word used for rebuking demons (1:25) and the wind (4:39). The intensity suggests that premature proclamation of a misunderstood messiahship would be dangerous. Before anyone can proclaim Jesus as Christ, they must learn that the Christ must suffer — the teaching that follows immediately.
31. This is the first of three passion predictions (cf. 9:31, 10:33-34), each more detailed than the last. The word *dei* ('it is necessary, must') indicates divine necessity — this is not mere prediction but theological imperative. The title 'Son of Man' replaces 'Christ,' redefining messiahship through Daniel 7's suffering and vindicated figure. The three groups — elders, chief priests, and scribes — constitute the Sanhedrin, Israel's supreme council. The phrase *meta treis hēmeras* ('after three days') is Mark's way of expressing what other Gospels call 'on the third day.'
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The word *parrēsia* ('openly, plainly, boldly, without concealment') contrasts with the messianic secrecy — for the first time, Jesus speaks directly about his fate rather than in parables. The verb *proslabomenos* ('taking aside, drawing to himself') and *epitiman* ('to rebuke') are astonishing: Peter presumes to correct Jesus, using the same verb (*epitimaō*) that Jesus uses against demons. The one who just confessed Jesus as Christ now opposes Christ's self-defined mission.
33. Jesus turns to face the disciples — the rebuke is public, not private, because the temptation Peter represents threatens the entire group. Calling Peter 'Satan' (*Satana*) identifies Peter's opposition to suffering as the same temptation Jesus faced in the wilderness (1:13). The verb *phroneis* ('think, set your mind on, have a mindset toward') goes deeper than a single thought — it describes an entire orientation. Peter's mind is set on human values (power, victory, avoidance of suffering) rather than God's purposes (redemption through suffering).
34. Jesus expands the audience from the Twelve to the crowd — this teaching is for all, not just apostles. Three imperatives define discipleship: *aparnēsasthō heauton* ('let them deny themselves' — renounce self as the center of life), *aratō ton stauron autou* ('let them take up their cross' — accept the possibility of execution), and *akoloutheitō moi* ('let them follow me' — walk the same path). For Mark's Roman audience, 'taking up a cross' was not a metaphor — they had seen crucifixion victims carrying their crossbeams through the streets.
35. The word *psychē* means both 'life' (physical existence) and 'soul/self' (deeper identity). The paradox works on both levels: clinging to physical safety leads to spiritual loss; risking physical life for Jesus leads to ultimate salvation. The phrase *heneken emou kai tou euangeliou* ('for my sake and the gospel's') uniquely yokes Jesus's person to the message — the two are inseparable.
36. The commercial language — *ōphelei* ('profit, benefit'), *kerdēsai* ('gain'), *zēmiōthēnai* ('suffer loss, forfeit') — frames the question in terms of a cosmic cost-benefit analysis. The 'whole world' (*ton kosmon holon*) is the maximum possible gain; one's *psychē* is what is at stake. No amount of worldly acquisition can compensate for the loss of one's true self.
37. The word *antallagma* ('exchange, ransom price, equivalent') comes from commercial vocabulary — what could possibly serve as a buyback price for a forfeited soul? The implied answer: nothing. Once the *psychē* is lost, no transaction can recover it. This echoes Psalm 49:7-9 ('no one can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for them').
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 49:7-9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. The verb *epaischynthē* ('is ashamed') describes the social pressure to distance oneself from Jesus — a very real temptation for Mark's audience facing persecution in Rome. The present generation is called *moichalidi* ('adulterous') — using the Old Testament prophetic image of Israel as an unfaithful spouse (Hosea 1-3). The Son of Man's future coming 'in the glory of his Father with the holy angels' draws on Daniel 7:13-14, where the Son of Man receives glory and dominion. The one who suffers now will be vindicated then.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Hosea 1-3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:13-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

9

Summary: *Mark 9 moves from the Transfiguration on the mountain — where Jesus is revealed in divine glory alongside Moses and Elijah — to the valley below, where a desperate father brings his demon-possessed son to disciples who cannot heal him. Jesus delivers the boy and offers the second passion prediction. The chapter continues with teachings on true greatness (the least is the greatest), radical inclusion ('whoever is not against us is for us'), and radical self-discipline (the 'cutting off' sayings about sin). The chapter's arc moves from heavenly glory to earthly failure to ethical demand.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Transfiguration is the only episode in Mark where Jesus's divine identity is openly displayed before the resurrection. The voice from the cloud — 'This is my beloved Son; listen to him' — repeats the baptismal declaration (1:11) but now addresses the disciples directly. The failed exorcism below the mountain (vv. 14-29) creates a dramatic contrast between the glory above and the struggle below. The father's cry — 'I believe; help my unbelief!' (v. 24) — is one of the most honest prayers in Scripture.*

Translation Friction: *The saying 'this kind cannot come out except by prayer' (v. 29) raises questions about exorcism methodology. Some manuscripts add 'and fasting,' but the SBLGNT omits it. The 'salt' sayings at the end of the chapter (vv. 49-50) are notoriously difficult to interpret, and their connection to the preceding material is unclear. We render the Greek as given and address the interpretive challenges in the notes.*

Connections: *The Transfiguration echoes Moses on Sinai (Exodus 24, 34) — the mountain, the cloud, the voice, the shining appearance, the six days. Elijah's presence connects to Malachi 4:5-6 and the expected return of Elijah before the Day of the Lord. The second passion prediction (v. 31) advances the trajectory toward Jerusalem. The teaching on greatness (vv. 33-37) inverts all conventional honor systems and anticipates Jesus's own self-offering.*

¹And he said to them, "Truly I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God having come in power." ²After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain by themselves, alone. And he was transfigured before them, ³His raiment became gleaming, exceeding brilliant as snow. So as no fuller on earth can white them. ⁴And Elijah appeared to them along with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. ⁵Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three shelters — one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶For he did not know what to say, because they were terrified. ⁷Then a cloud came, overshadowing them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my beloved Son — listen to him." ⁸Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus alone. ⁹As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰They kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this "rising from the dead" meant. ¹¹And they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" ¹²He said to them, "Elijah does come first and restores all things. And how is it written of the Son of Man that he should suffer many things and be treated with contempt? ¹³But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they wished, just as it is written about him." ¹⁴When they came to the other disciples, they saw a great crowd around them and scribes arguing with them. ¹⁵Immediately the whole crowd, when they saw him, were greatly amazed and ran to greet him. ¹⁶He asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" ¹⁷Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit that makes him mute. ¹⁸Whenever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." ¹⁹He answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." ²⁰They brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into convulsions, and he fell on the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. ²¹Jesus asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" He said, "From childhood. ²²It has often thrown him into fire and into water to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." ²³Jesus said to him, "If you can"! All things are possible for the one who believes." ²⁴Immediately the father of the child cried out, "I

believe — help my unbelief!" ²⁵When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again." ²⁶After crying out and convulsing him violently, it came out. The boy became like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." ²⁷But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him up, and he stood. ²⁸After he had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" ²⁹He said to them, "This kind cannot come out by anything except prayer." ³⁰They went out from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know, ³¹Since he taught his followers, and stated to them, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men, then they will kill him. And following that he is killed, he will rise the third day. ³²But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to ask him. ³³They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" ³⁴But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. ³⁵He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." ³⁶Taking a child, he set him in the middle of them. Then taking him in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives not me but the one who sent me." ³⁸John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he was not following us." ³⁹But Jesus said, "Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰For whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward. ⁴²"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. ⁴³If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go into Gehenna, into the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into Gehenna. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into Gehenna, ⁴⁸Where their decay dieth not, and the fire is not put out. ⁴⁹For every one will be refined by fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good, but if the salt loses its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. This saying is linked to 8:38 and serves as a transition to the Transfiguration. The phrase 'taste death' (geusōntai thanatou) is a Semitic idiom meaning 'experience death.' The perfect participle elēlythuiān ('having come') indicates a completed arrival, not a gradual process. The referent — what 'seeing the kingdom come in power' means — is debated: the Transfiguration, the resurrection, Pentecost, or the destruction of Jerusalem have all been proposed.
2. The 'six days' may echo Exodus 24:16, where the cloud covered Sinai for six days before God spoke to Moses on the seventh. Peter, James, and John form Jesus's inner circle (cf. 5:37, 14:33). The verb metamorphōthē ('was transfigured, was transformed') indicates a change of form (morphē), not merely appearance — the same root Paul uses in Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 24:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. Mark's description is earthy and vivid — he compares the supernatural brilliance to a launderer's best work and declares it surpassed. The word gnaphēus ('fuller, launderer, cloth-bleacher') is a working-class trade term. The whiteness signals heavenly origin (cf. Daniel 7:9, where the Ancient of Days wears white garments).
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Mark names Elijah first (Matthew and Luke name Moses first), perhaps reflecting Mark's sustained interest in the Elijah-John the Baptist connection. Moses represents the Law, Elijah the Prophets — the entire Old Testament bears witness to Jesus. The content of their conversation is not recorded in Mark (Luke 9:31 says they discussed Jesus's 'departure' in Jerusalem).
5. Peter addresses Jesus as 'Rabbi' (teacher) — a title that seems inadequate given what he is witnessing. The proposal to build three skēnas ('tents, shelters, tabernacles') may reflect the Feast of Tabernacles, when Israel dwelt in booths commemorating the wilderness wandering. Peter's impulse is to prolong the mountaintop experience and to place Jesus on an equal footing with Moses and Elijah — both errors the divine voice will correct.
6. Mark's candid editorial comment explains Peter's remark: he spoke from terror (ekphoboi, 'terrified, struck with fear'), not from understanding. This is a theophanic response — the fear that grips humans in the presence of the divine (cf. Exodus 3:6, Isaiah 6:5).

6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 3:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 6:5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The cloud (*nephelē*) is the *shekinah* — the glory-cloud of God's presence that filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35) and the temple (1 Kings 8:10-11). The voice from the cloud repeats the baptismal declaration (1:11) with a crucial change: 'This is my Son' (third person, addressed to the disciples) replaces 'You are my Son' (second person, addressed to Jesus). The command 'listen to him' (*akouete autou*) echoes Deuteronomy 18:15, where Moses promises a prophet like himself whom the people must obey.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 40:34-35. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 8:10-11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 18:15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The vision ends abruptly. Moses and Elijah have vanished; only Jesus remains. The theological point is clear: the Law and the Prophets have given way to Jesus. He alone is the one to whom they must listen.
9. The messianic secret here has an explicit time limit: silence until the resurrection. This is the clearest indication that the secrecy is temporary and pedagogical — the Transfiguration cannot be properly understood until after the cross and resurrection provide the interpretive framework.
10. The disciples obeyed the command to silence but were puzzled by the phrase 'rising from the dead.' While Jews believed in a general resurrection at the end of the age (cf. Daniel 12:2), the idea of a single individual rising before the general resurrection was unprecedented.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 12:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The appearance of Elijah on the mountain prompted the question. The scribal teaching was based on Malachi 4:5-6: 'I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD.' If Elijah must come first to restore all things, why is the Son of Man speaking of suffering?
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Malachi 4:5-6:. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. Jesus affirms the Elijah tradition but adds a counter-question: if Scripture speaks of Elijah's restoration, it also speaks of the Son of Man's suffering. The verb *exoudenēthē* ('treated with contempt, despised, counted as nothing') echoes Isaiah 53:3 and Psalm 22:6.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 53:3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 22:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The reference is to John the Baptist, whose execution by Herod was narrated in 6:14-29. The pattern Jesus establishes is clear: Elijah came and was mistreated; the Son of Man will come and be mistreated. The phrase 'as it is written about him' is difficult — no Old Testament text explicitly describes Elijah being mistreated, though 1 Kings 19:2 and 19:10 recount threats against his life.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Kings 19:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The descent from the mountain of glory to a scene of confusion and controversy mirrors Moses's descent from Sinai to find Israel's golden calf apostasy (Exodus 32). The nine disciples left behind are overwhelmed.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 32. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The crowd's amazement (*exethambēthēsan*) at seeing Jesus may suggest that some residual glory from the Transfiguration lingered on his face, as with Moses in Exodus 34:29-30, though Mark does not make this explicit.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 34:29-30 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. Jesus addresses either the crowd or the scribes (the pronoun is ambiguous), asking about the dispute with the disciples.
17. The father addresses Jesus as 'Teacher' (*Didaskale*). The spirit is called *alalon* ('mute, speechless') — it has robbed the boy of speech. The description that follows (v. 18) also suggests seizure activity, leading many to identify epilepsy as the physical manifestation of the spiritual affliction.
18. The symptoms described — seizures, foaming, teeth-grinding, rigidity (*xērainetai*, literally 'dries up, withers, becomes stiff') — are consistent with severe epileptic episodes. The disciples' inability to cast out this spirit sets up the teaching in verse 29 about prayer.

19. Jesus's exasperation echoes Moses's frustration with Israel in the wilderness (Numbers 14:27, Deuteronomy 32:5, 20). The address 'faithless generation' (*genea apistos*) encompasses not just the disciples but the entire unbelieving context. The double question — 'how long... how long...' — expresses both impatience and poignant awareness of limited time.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 14:27. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 32:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The spirit reacts violently to Jesus's presence — a pattern in Mark's exorcism accounts (1:26, 5:6-7). The verb *synesparaxen* ('convulsed violently, tore') describes the physical violence of the seizure. The scene is raw and distressing.
21. Jesus's question is not for information-gathering (as if he needed it) but to draw out the father's faith and to reveal the depth of the suffering. The answer 'from childhood' (*ek paidiothen*) indicates years of torment.
22. The spirit is actively trying to kill the boy — the fires and waters are not accidental but purposeful attempts at destruction. The father's 'if you can' (*ei ti dynē*) reveals honest doubt after the disciples' failure. His plea is for 'us' (*hēmas*), not just the boy — the whole family suffers.
23. Jesus throws the father's words back at him with the quotation 'If you can!' (to *Ei dynē*) — the issue is not Jesus's ability but the father's faith. The declaration 'all things are possible for the one who believes' (*panta dynata tō pisteuonti*) locates the power in faith's connection to God, not in faith as a psychological force.
24. This is one of the most psychologically honest prayers in Scripture. The father simultaneously affirms faith and confesses its inadequacy. He does not pretend to more faith than he has, nor does he surrender to doubt. The paradox — believing and unbelieving at once — captures the human condition before God. The SBLGNT does not include 'with tears' (*meta dakryōn*), found in some manuscripts.
25. Jesus acts quickly before the crowd grows larger — consistent with his pattern of avoiding public spectacle. The emphatic pronoun *egō* ('I myself') asserts personal authority over the spirit. The command 'never enter him again' (*mēketi eiselhthēs eis auton*) goes beyond exorcism to permanent prohibition, ensuring the boy's lasting freedom.
26. The departure of the spirit is violent — a final act of destruction on the way out. The boy's apparent death creates a narrative of resurrection: he appears dead, then Jesus raises him. This prefigures Jesus's own death and resurrection.
27. The verb *egeiren* ('raised up') is the same word used for resurrection throughout the New Testament. The boy's raising prefigures the ultimate raising that Jesus has been predicting. The physical touch — taking the hand — echoes the raising of Jairus's daughter (5:41).
28. The private setting (*kat' idian*, 'privately') continues Mark's pattern of public ministry followed by private instruction. The disciples' question reveals their awareness of having received authority over unclean spirits (6:7) and their confusion at its failure.
29. The SBLGNT reads only 'prayer' (*proseuchē*) without 'and fasting' (*kai nēsteia*), which appears in later manuscripts. The point is that the disciples relied on their delegated authority as a technique rather than maintaining dependence on God through prayer. The word *genos* ('kind, type, class') suggests categories of spiritual opposition with varying degrees of resistance.
30. The desire for secrecy here serves the need for focused teaching: Jesus is preparing the disciples for what lies ahead in Jerusalem, and public ministry would be a distraction.
31. The second passion prediction is more concise than the first (8:31) but adds the detail of being 'delivered into the hands of men' (*paradidotai eis cheiras anthrōpōn*). The present tense *paradidotai* ('is being delivered') suggests the betrayal is already in process. The wordplay between 'Son of Man' (*huios tou anthrōpou*) and 'hands of men' (*cheiras anthrōpōn*) is deliberate — the Human One is handed over to humans.
32. After Peter's rebuke in 8:33, the disciples are now afraid to question Jesus about his passion predictions. The verb *ēgnōoun* ('they did not understand') is the imperfect of *agnōō* ('to be ignorant, to not comprehend') — their incomprehension was ongoing.
33. Capernaum was Jesus's base of operations in Galilee (cf. 1:21, 2:1). 'The house' (*tē oikia*) likely refers to Peter's house, used as a regular meeting place. Jesus's question draws out a confession the disciples are embarrassed to make.
34. Their silence reveals their shame. The irony is brutal: Jesus has just predicted his death, and the disciples are competing for rank. The question 'who is greatest' (*tis meizōn*) exposes the distance between Jesus's understanding of messiahship and theirs.
35. Sitting down (*kathisas*) is the posture of an authoritative teacher. The reversal is total: the one who wants to be first (*prōtos*) must become last (*eschatos*) and servant (*diakonos*). The word *diakonos* ('servant, one who serves at table') is not the word for slave (*doulos*) but for voluntary service — though Jesus will use *doulos* in 10:44.
36. The physical gesture — embracing the child (*enagkalisamenos*, 'having taken in his arms') — is tender and deliberate. In the ancient world, children had no social standing and were valued primarily as future adults. Jesus places a person of zero social status at the center of the community.
37. The chain of identification — child to Jesus to God — inverts the honor scale. To receive (*dexētai*, 'welcome, accept') the lowest is to receive the highest. The phrase 'in my name' (*epi tō onomati mou*) means 'for my sake, as my representative, on the basis of my authority.'
38. John's report introduces a question about boundaries: who has the right to act in Jesus's name? The disciples assumed that only those in their group had authority. The imperfect *ekōlyomen* ('we were trying to stop him') suggests repeated attempts.

39. Jesus's response is strikingly generous: effective use of his name is self-authenticating. The word *dynamis* ('mighty work, miracle, act of power') refers to the exorcism. The logic is practical: someone who experiences divine power through Jesus's name is unlikely to turn against him.
40. This principle of inclusion contrasts with the exclusionary version in Matthew 12:30 ('whoever is not with me is against me'). The two sayings address different situations: Matthew 12:30 confronts neutrality in the face of spiritual warfare; Mark 9:40 addresses overzealous boundary-drawing by the disciples.
41. The example descends to the smallest possible act of kindness — a cup of water. Even this minimal gesture, if motivated by allegiance to Christ, carries eternal significance. The phrase 'because you belong to Christ' (*hoti Christou este*) uses the genitive of possession.
42. The verb *skandalisē* ('cause to stumble, cause to fall into sin') gives us the English 'scandalize.' The 'little ones' (*mikrōn*) extends beyond children to include all vulnerable believers. The *mylos onikos* ('donkey-millstone') is the large upper millstone turned by a donkey, as opposed to the small hand-mill — a weight ensuring drowning. The image is deliberately extreme to convey the severity of leading others astray.
43. The hyperbolic language demands radical action against sin, not literal self-mutilation. 'Gehenna' (*geenna*) refers to the Valley of Hinnom south of Jerusalem, where child sacrifices were once offered (2 Kings 23:10) and which became a symbol of divine judgment. 'Unquenchable fire' (to *pyr* to *asbeston*) draws on Isaiah 66:24.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Kings 23:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 66:24 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
44. Verse 44 is absent from the earliest and best manuscripts of Mark and is not included in the SBLGNT critical text. It duplicates verse 48 and was likely added by scribes for symmetry. We follow the SBLGNT in omitting it while retaining the verse number for reference.
45. The pattern continues: hand, foot, eye — each body part represents a different avenue of sin (actions, paths taken, desires). The contrast between entering 'life' (*zōē*, eternal life with God) and being thrown into 'Gehenna' (judgment) frames existence as a binary choice.
46. Verse 46, like verse 44, is absent from the SBLGNT critical text and was likely added by scribes to create a refrain after each body-part saying. We follow the critical text in omitting it.
47. The final member of the triad uses 'kingdom of God' (*basileia tou theou*) where the previous two used 'life' (*zōē*), confirming that the two expressions are synonymous in this context. The eye represents desire and covetousness (cf. 7:22, 'evil eye').
48. Jesus quotes Isaiah 66:24, the final verse of Isaiah, which describes the fate of those who rebelled against God. The 'worm' (*skōlēx*) and 'fire' represent ongoing destruction. Whether this imagery describes eternal conscious torment or complete destruction has been debated throughout Christian history; the Greek text states the permanence of the agents of destruction.
48. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 66:24 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
49. This is one of the most cryptic sayings in the Gospels. The connection between salt and fire may relate to the purifying function of both (Leviticus 2:13 required salt on every grain offering; fire tests and refines, cf. Malachi 3:2-3). The saying may mean that all disciples will undergo the refining fire of persecution and testing.
49. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 2:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
49. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Malachi 3:2-3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
50. The chapter ends with a proverbial cluster around salt. Salt that becomes *analon* ('unsalty, tasteless') is worthless — a metaphor for discipleship that loses its distinctive character. The final command — 'be at peace with one another' (*eirēneuete en allēlois*) — returns to the dispute about greatness that opened this section (v. 34). The salt sayings bind together purification (v. 49), distinctiveness, and communal harmony.

10

Summary: Mark 10 records Jesus's journey from Galilee toward Jerusalem through the region beyond the Jordan. The chapter addresses marriage and divorce, the blessing of children, the encounter with a rich man who cannot part with his possessions, the third and most detailed passion prediction, the request of James and John for positions of honor, and the healing of blind Bartimaeus at Jericho. Each episode deepens the contrast between worldly values and kingdom values as Jesus moves steadily toward the cross.

What Makes This Remarkable: *The rich man's encounter (vv. 17-27) contains Jesus's most direct teaching on wealth and the kingdom of God. The image of a camel passing through the eye of a needle is deliberately absurd — it is not softened by any appeal to narrow gates or rope-for-camel theories. The third passion prediction (vv. 33-34) is the most specific, naming the Gentiles and detailing mocking, spitting, flogging, and killing. Bartimaeus's healing (vv. 46-52) closes the journey section by restoring the sight that the disciples still lack — and Bartimaeus, unlike the healed blind man of 8:22-26, follows Jesus 'on the way' to Jerusalem.*

Translation Friction: *Jesus's teaching on divorce (vv. 2-12) has been interpreted variously across Christian traditions. We render the Greek as given: Jesus distinguishes between Moses's concession (Deuteronomy 24:1-4) and God's original intent (Genesis 1:27, 2:24). The 'exception clause' found in Matthew 19:9 is absent from Mark. The phrase 'for your hardness of heart' (pros tēn sklērokardian hymōn) is translated directly.*

Connections: *The divorce teaching connects to Genesis 1-2 (creation of male and female) and Deuteronomy 24 (certificate of divorce). The rich man episode echoes the Decalogue (Exodus 20:12-17). The third passion prediction fulfills Isaiah 50:6 (spitting and striking) and Isaiah 53 (the Suffering Servant). The 'ransom for many' saying (v. 45) is one of the clearest atonement statements in Mark, echoing Isaiah 53:10-12. Bartimaeus's cry 'Son of David' is the first public messianic acclamation in Mark.*

¹He got up and went from there to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered around him again, and as was his custom, he taught them again. ²Pharisees came up and, to test him, asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" ³He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" ⁴They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away." ⁵Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. ⁶But from the start of creation God created them as male and female. ⁷For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸Indeed, they twain will be one flesh — so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." ¹⁰In the house, the disciples asked him again about this. ¹¹He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. ¹²And if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery." ¹³People were bringing children to him so that he might touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴When Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me — do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." ¹⁶And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them. ¹⁷As he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. ¹⁹You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'" ²⁰He said to him, "Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth." ²¹Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, "You lack one thing: go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." ²²Disheartened by the word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions. ²³Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" ²⁴The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵Than for a rich man to enter into god's kingdom, and it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. ²⁶They were exceedingly astonished and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God." ²⁸Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." ²⁹Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the gospel's, ³⁰Yet he will accept an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brothers and sisters, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions. And in the world to come eternal life. ³¹But many who are first will be last, and the last first." ³²They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. They were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. Taking the twelve aside again, he began to tell them what was about to happen to him: ³³"Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the

Gentiles. ³⁴They will mock him, spit on him, flog him, and kill him. And after three days he will rise." ³⁵James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." ³⁶He said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³⁷They said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." ³⁸Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" ³⁹They said to him, "We are able." Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized. ⁴⁰But to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." ⁴¹When the ten heard this, they began to be indignant with James and John. ⁴²Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³But it is not so among you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴Indeed, whosoever of you will be the chiefest, will be servant of all. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." ⁴⁶They came to Jericho. As he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸Many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." They called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart! Get up, he is calling you." ⁵⁰Throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "Rabboni, let me recover my sight." ⁵²Jesus said to him, "Go, your faith has made you well." Immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The geographical notice marks the shift from Galilee to Judea — Jesus is now on the road to Jerusalem. The route 'beyond the Jordan' (peran tou Iordanou) describes the Transjordan route through Perea, avoiding Samaria. The phrase 'as was his custom' (hōs eiōthei) reminds the reader that teaching was Jesus's primary activity.
2. The participle *peirazontes* ('testing') signals hostile intent, not genuine inquiry. The question about the legality (*exestin*, 'is it permitted') of divorce was debated among the rabbis — the school of Shammai allowed it only for sexual immorality, the school of Hillel for almost any cause. The question was designed to trap Jesus in a controversial position.
3. Jesus redirects the question to Scripture itself. His use of 'command' (*eneteilato*) rather than 'permit' is significant — he will soon distinguish between what Moses commanded and what Moses merely permitted.
4. The Pharisees answer with Deuteronomy 24:1-4, which assumes the practice of divorce and regulates it. They use the word *epetrepsen* ('permitted, allowed'), acknowledging this was a concession rather than a positive command. The 'certificate of divorce' (*biblion apostasiou*) was a legal document protecting the woman's right to remarry.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 24:1-4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The compound noun *sklērokardian* ('hardness of heart') combines *sklēros* ('hard, stiff') and *kardia* ('heart'). The Mosaic divorce provision is characterized as an accommodation to human fallenness, not an expression of God's ideal. Jesus frames the Deuteronomy passage as a concession, not a norm.
6. Jesus goes behind Moses to Genesis 1:27, treating the creation narrative as the foundational expression of God's will for humanity. The appeal to 'the beginning of creation' (*archēs ktiseōs*) establishes creation order as the standard against which the Mosaic concession is measured.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 1:27. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Jesus continues quoting, now from Genesis 2:24. The verb *kataleipsei* ('will leave, will forsake') indicates a fundamental reorientation of primary loyalty — from birth family to marriage covenant. Some SBLGNT manuscripts include 'and be joined to his wife' (*kai proskollēthēsetai pros tēn gynaika autou*) while others do not.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 2:24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The quotation from Genesis 2:24 concludes, and Jesus draws the inference: if marriage creates a unity ('one flesh,' *mia sarx*), then divorce is not merely a legal action but a tearing apart of what has been joined. The phrase 'one flesh' encompasses the totality of the shared life — physical, emotional, economic, and spiritual.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 2:24 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The verb *synezeyxen* ('joined together, yoked together') comes from the world of harnessing animals — two made into a working pair. The prohibition 'let no one separate' (*anthrōpos mē chōrizetō*) uses the present imperative, forbidding an ongoing practice. The shift from 'Moses permitted' to 'God joined' reframes the entire discussion from legal permission to divine intention.
10. Mark's pattern of public teaching followed by private explanation continues (cf. 4:10, 7:17). The disciples need further clarification about the divorce teaching.
11. The phrase 'against her' (*ep' autēn*) is significant — in Jewish law, a man could commit adultery against another man (by violating his marriage) but not against his own wife. Jesus's statement grants the wife equal standing as the wronged party, a radical elevation of women's status in marriage.
12. This verse addresses a woman initiating divorce — possible under Roman and some Hellenistic Jewish law but not standard in Palestinian Judaism. Mark's inclusion reflects his Roman audience. The symmetry of the teaching (both husband and wife are held to the same standard) is remarkable for the ancient world.
13. The verb *epetimēsan* ('rebuked') is the strong word used for commanding demons — the disciples treat the children's approach as an intrusion. In a society where children had no social standing, the disciples' action reflects conventional values. Jesus will overturn those values.
14. The verb *ēganaktēsen* ('was indignant, was angry') is one of the few places Mark records Jesus's anger directed at his own disciples. The statement that the kingdom 'belongs to such as these' (*tōn toioutōn estin hē basileia tou theou*) does not idealize childhood innocence but identifies the child's position — dependent, without status, unable to earn — as the posture required for receiving the kingdom.
15. The double negative *ou mē* ('by no means, never') is the strongest negation in Greek. Receiving the kingdom 'like a child' (*hōs paidion*) means receiving it as a gift, without pretension, without credentials, in total dependence — the opposite of earning or deserving it.
16. The verb *kateulegei* ('blessed fervently, blessed abundantly') is an intensified form — Mark emphasizes the warmth of Jesus's response. The physical gesture of taking children in his arms (*enagkalisamenos*) repeats the action of 9:36. Jesus does not merely permit the children's approach; he embraces and blesses them.
17. The man's urgency (running, kneeling) and respectful address ('Good Teacher') suggest genuine sincerity. The question frames eternal life as something to be 'inherited' (*klēronomēsō*) — received as a family right — yet also asks 'what must I do,' revealing a works-based framework. Mark does not call him 'young' (that is Matthew's addition) or 'ruler' (that is Luke's).
18. Jesus's response is not a denial of his own goodness but a challenge to the man's casual use of the word. If 'good' belongs properly to God alone, then calling Jesus 'good' either means nothing or means everything. The statement forces the man to reckon with who Jesus is.
19. Jesus cites the second table of the Decalogue (commandments governing human relationships). Notably absent is 'You shall not covet' — replaced by 'Do not defraud' (*mē apostērēsēs*), which may be a practical application of the covetousness prohibition, particularly relevant to a wealthy person. The first table (love of God) is not mentioned but will be implied by the demand in verse 21.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 20:12-16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The verb *ephylaxamēn* ('I have guarded, kept, observed') indicates careful compliance. The claim is not dismissed by Jesus — he takes it at face value. 'From my youth' (*ek neotētos mou*) means from the age of accountability (approximately twelve or thirteen in Jewish practice).
21. The detail 'loved him' (*ēgapēsen auton*) is unique to Mark and is striking — Jesus's demand is motivated by love, not hostility. The verb *emblepsas* ('looking intently at') suggests a penetrating gaze. The 'one thing' (*hen*) is not merely divestiture but the total reorientation it represents: allegiance to Jesus over wealth. The SBLGNT does not include 'take up the cross' (*aras ton stauron*), found in some manuscripts.
22. The verb *stygnasas* ('became gloomy, was shocked, was appalled') describes a visible darkening of the face — the opposite of the eager approach in verse 17. The man's grief (*lypoumenos*) is genuine; he is not indifferent but cannot bring himself to act. He is the only person in the Gospels who comes to Jesus with a sincere question and leaves without following.
23. The adverb *dyskolōs* ('with difficulty, hardly') sets up the astonishment that follows. Jesus does not say it is impossible, but 'how difficult' (*pōs dyskolōs*) — the difficulty is stressed, not absolute impossibility.
24. The disciples' amazement (*ethambounto*) reveals their assumption that wealth was a sign of divine blessing. The address 'Children' (*Tekna*) is tender — Jesus softens his teaching with familial affection. The SBLGNT reads simply 'how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God' without the qualification 'for those who trust in riches' found in some manuscripts.
25. The image is deliberately impossible — a camel (*kamēlon*) through the eye of a sewing needle (*trymalia raphidos*). Attempts to soften this (a 'rope' instead of a camel, or a small gate called 'the Needle's Eye') have no textual or archaeological support. Jesus uses comic hyperbole to make a serious point: wealth creates an attachment that is humanly impossible to overcome.
26. The disciples' question reveals their logic: if even the wealthy (assumed to be divinely blessed) cannot enter the kingdom, then salvation is impossible for anyone. This is exactly the conclusion Jesus wants them to reach — so that verse 27 can redirect them to God's power.

27. The statement echoes Genesis 18:14 ('Is anything too hard for the LORD?') and Job 42:2 ('I know that you can do all things'). Salvation is not a human achievement but a divine gift. The word *adynaton* ('impossible') is unqualified — Jesus does not say 'difficult' but 'impossible' for humans, possible only for God.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 18:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Job 42:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. Peter's statement is both a contrast to the rich man (who would not leave his possessions) and an implicit question: 'What will we get?' The verb *aphēkamen* ('we have left, abandoned') is the same word used for the rich man's failure — the disciples did what he could not.
29. The list of what may be left covers the entire social world: home, family, and livelihood. The phrase 'for my sake and for the gospel's' (*heneken emou kai heneken tou euangeliou*) links personal loyalty to Jesus with commitment to the mission of proclamation.
30. The promise of a hundredfold return is remarkable, but the parenthetical 'with persecutions' (*meta diōgmōn*) prevents any prosperity-gospel reading. The new community of faith provides the extended family, but that community exists under the cross. Note that 'fathers' are absent from the return list — there is only one Father in the new community. The two-age framework ('this present age' and 'the age to come') reflects Jewish eschatology.
31. This reversal saying (cf. 9:35) provides the hermeneutical key: the kingdom of God inverts every human hierarchy. The rich man who seemed 'first' ends up unable to enter; the disciples who left everything are promised abundance.
32. The scene is vivid: Jesus strides ahead toward Jerusalem with grim determination while the disciples follow in a mixture of amazement and fear. The verb *proagōn* ('going before, leading the way') shows Jesus actively leading toward his death, not being swept along by events. 'Going up' (*anabainontes*) is both geographical (Jerusalem sits at elevation) and theological (ascending to the place of sacrifice).
33. The third passion prediction (cf. 8:31, 9:31) is the most detailed, adding the condemnation by the Sanhedrin and the delivery to the Gentiles (the Romans). The verb *paradothēsetai* ('will be delivered over, betrayed') is used twice — first of the Jewish leaders handing Jesus to the Romans, then of the betrayal itself. The passive may imply divine agency: God is delivering the Son of Man into human hands.
34. The specificity is remarkable: mocking, spitting, flogging — each fulfilled in the passion narrative (14:65, 15:15-20). The verb *mastigōsousin* ('they will flog') refers to the Roman flagellum, a whip with embedded bone or metal. The prediction ends, as always, with resurrection — the suffering is not the last word.
35. The brazenness of the request — a blank check ('whatever we ask') — is remarkable coming immediately after the most detailed passion prediction. In Matthew's account (20:20), their mother makes the request; Mark attributes it directly to James and John.
36. Jesus asks the same question he will ask blind Bartimaeus in verse 51. The contrast is telling: James and John ask for thrones; Bartimaeus asks for sight.
37. The right and left positions are seats of highest honor, sharing the ruler's authority. The phrase 'in your glory' (*en tē doxē sou*) shows they believe in Jesus's coming triumph — they simply want the best seats. The irony is that the positions at Jesus's right and left in his 'glory' will be occupied by two crucified criminals (15:27).
38. The 'cup' (*potērion*) is a biblical metaphor for one's allotted portion, often God's wrath (Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15). The 'baptism' (*baptisma*) metaphor extends the image — being submerged in suffering. Jesus uses the present tense ('I drink,' 'I am baptized'), indicating that his suffering is already underway.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 75:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 51:17 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 25:15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. Their confident 'We are able' (*Dynametha*) is brave but uninformed. Jesus affirms they will indeed share his suffering — James was the first apostle martyred (Acts 12:2), and John, according to tradition, endured exile. Sharing Jesus's suffering, however, does not guarantee sharing his throne.
40. Jesus distinguishes between what he can promise (shared suffering) and what belongs to the Father's sovereignty (positions of honor). The passive *hētoimastai* ('it has been prepared') is a divine passive — God is the unnamed agent who determines positions in the kingdom.
41. The indignation (*aganaktein*) of the other ten is not righteous — it stems from the same desire for status. They are angry not because the request was inappropriate but because James and John tried to get there first.
42. The verbs *katakuriēuousin* ('lord it over, dominate') and *katexousiazousin* ('exercise authority over, tyrannize') both have the prefix *kata-* ('down upon'), emphasizing the downward pressure of coercive power. The phrase 'those considered rulers' (*hoi dokountes archein*) is subtly ironic — they merely 'seem' to rule; true authority lies elsewhere.

43. The contrast is absolute: 'not so among you' (ouch houtōs en hymin). The kingdom community operates on an entirely different power structure. The word diakonos ('servant, attendant') describes one who serves others' needs.
44. Jesus escalates from diakonos ('servant') in verse 43 to doulos ('slave') here. A doulos had no rights, no status, no self-determination. This is the most radical statement of servant leadership in the Gospels — the one who would be 'first' (prōtos) must become a slave (doulos) to 'all' (pantōn).
45. This is Mark's clearest atonement statement. The word lytron ('ransom') is the price paid to liberate a slave or prisoner of war. The preposition anti ('in place of, instead of, in exchange for') indicates substitution. 'For many' (anti pollōn) echoes Isaiah 53:11-12, where the Servant bears the sins of 'the many.' Jesus grounds the call to service in his own example — the Son of Man's ultimate service is sacrificial death.
45. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 53:11-12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
46. Bartimaeus is one of the few people healed by Jesus whose name Mark preserves (cf. Jairus, 5:22), suggesting he was known to Mark's community. The name Bar-Timaïos is Aramaic for 'son of Timaeus.' His position — blind, begging, by the roadside — represents the lowest social status. Jericho was the last major stop before the ascent to Jerusalem.
47. Bartimaeus's cry 'Son of David' (Huie Daid) is the first public messianic acclamation in Mark. The blind man sees what the sighted crowd does not — that Jesus is the Davidic Messiah. The plea 'have mercy on me' (eleēson me) echoes the psalms of lament (Psalm 6:2, 9:13, 51:1).
47. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 6:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
48. The crowd tries to silence Bartimaeus, but like the Syrophenician woman (7:26-28), he refuses to be deterred. His persistence intensifies — 'all the more' (pollō mallon). Faith in Mark is characterized by persistence in the face of opposition.
49. Jesus stops the entire procession for a blind beggar — a dramatic reversal of social convention. The crowd that tried to silence Bartimaeus now encourages him. The three imperatives — 'Take heart' (tharsei), 'Get up' (egeire), 'he is calling you' (phōnei se) — convey excitement.
50. The cloak (himation) was a beggar's most valuable possession — his bedding, his shelter, his collection surface for coins. Bartimaeus throws it aside without hesitation, in stark contrast to the rich man who could not part with his possessions (v. 22). The verb anapēdēsas ('sprang up, jumped up') conveys explosive energy.
51. The question is identical to verse 36, asked of James and John. The contrast in answers is devastating: James and John wanted thrones; Bartimaeus wants sight. Rabbouni (an intensified form of 'Rabbi') appears only here and in John 20:16 (Mary Magdalene at the tomb).
52. The phrase 'your faith has saved you' (hē pistis sou sesōken se) uses the perfect tense of sōzō, which means both 'save' and 'heal.' Unlike the blind man at Bethsaida (8:22-26) who was sent home, Bartimaeus follows Jesus 'on the way' (en tē hodō) — the way to Jerusalem, the way of the cross. His story closes the journey section that began in 8:22 with another blind man, forming an inclusio of restored sight.

11

Summary: *Mark 11 narrates Jesus's entry into Jerusalem, the cursing of the fig tree, the cleansing of the temple, and a series of confrontations with the religious authorities. Jesus enters the city riding a colt in deliberate fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9, the crowds hailing him with messianic acclamations. The fig tree episode frames the temple action — the fruitless tree symbolizes the fruitless temple. Jesus drives out the merchants, accusing them of turning God's house of prayer into a den of robbers. The chapter concludes with a teaching on faith and prayer, and a challenge to Jesus's authority that he parries with a counter-question about John the Baptist.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The fig tree and temple cleansing form a Markan 'sandwich' (intercalation): fig tree cursed (vv. 12-14), temple cleansed (vv. 15-19), fig tree withered (vv. 20-21). This literary structure signals that the fig tree interprets the temple — both are judged for failing to bear fruit. The quotation combining Isaiah 56:7 ('house of prayer for all nations') and Jeremiah 7:11 ('den of robbers') encapsulates Jesus's critique: the temple has failed its intended purpose of drawing all peoples to God.*

Translation Friction: *The cursing of the fig tree (v. 13) — especially Mark's note that 'it was not the season for figs' — has puzzled commentators. If it was not fig season, why expect fruit? The action is best understood as a prophetic sign-act (like Jeremiah's broken jar or Ezekiel's siege) rather than a display of frustration. The tree represents Israel's religious establishment. The 'den of robbers' language does not mean the merchants were overcharging; it means the temple itself had become a hideout for those who exploit others while maintaining a religious facade.*

Connections: The entry fulfills Zechariah 9:9 (the king coming on a donkey) and echoes 2 Kings 9:13 (garments spread for a new king). The temple action connects to Malachi 3:1-3 (the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple). The fig tree echoes Hosea 9:10, Jeremiah 8:13, and Micah 7:1, where figs symbolize Israel's faithfulness. The authority question (vv. 27-33) continues the pattern of Jesus turning hostile questions back on his questioners.

¹When they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples ²Says to them, Go your way into the village over opposed to you — and as soon as you be entered into it, you will find a colt tied, whereon never man sat. Loose him, and bring him. ³If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'" ⁴They went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. ⁵Some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" ⁶They told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. ⁷They brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. ⁸Many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. ⁹Those who went before and those who followed were crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" ¹¹He entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. After looking around at everything, since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve. ¹²On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. ¹³Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it. ¹⁵They came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. ¹⁶And he would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple. ¹⁷He was teaching and saying to them, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." ¹⁸The chief priests and the scribes heard this and were looking for a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was astonished at his teaching. ¹⁹And when evening came, they went out of the city. ²⁰As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. ²¹Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." ²²Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. ²³Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. ²⁴Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses." ²⁷They came again to Jerusalem. As he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him ²⁸Say to him, By what authority doest you these things? and who offered you this authority to do these things? ²⁹Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. ³⁰Was the baptism of John from heaven or from man? Answer me." ³¹They discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' ³²But shall we say, 'From man'?" — they were afraid of the crowd, for they all held that John really was a prophet. ³³So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Bethphage ('house of unripe figs') and Bethany ('house of affliction' or 'house of dates') were villages on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives carried eschatological significance — Zechariah 14:4 places God's final intervention there.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Zechariah 14:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The colt (pōlon) that has never been ridden fulfills the requirement that animals used for sacred purposes be previously unused (cf. Numbers 19:2, Deuteronomy 21:3, 1 Samuel 6:7). Jesus's foreknowledge of the colt's location and circumstances suggests either prophetic insight or prior arrangement.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 19:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 21:3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Samuel 6:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The title 'the Lord' (ho kyrios) is ambiguous — it could mean 'the owner' or 'the Master.' If the latter, it would be one of the rare instances in Mark where Jesus applies the title kyrios to himself.
4. The Greek amphodou ('street, lane, the open road') indicates a public thoroughfare. The detail confirms Jesus's prediction exactly.
5. The challenge comes exactly as Jesus predicted, allowing the disciples to give the pre-arranged response.
6. The smooth exchange suggests either that the owners recognized Jesus's authority or that the arrangement had been made beforehand.
7. Spreading garments on the animal serves as an improvised saddle but also echoes the acclamation of Jehu as king in 2 Kings 9:13, where the people spread their garments under him.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 9:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Greek stibadas ('leafy branches, rushes, bedding of leaves') describes foliage cut from fields rather than palm branches specifically (that detail is in John 12:13). The gesture creates a processional carpet, a spontaneous royal welcome.
9. The crowd quotes Psalm 118:25-26, a Hallel psalm sung during Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles. 'Hosanna' (hōsanna) transliterates the Hebrew hoshia-na ('save, please!' or 'save now!'). Originally a prayer for deliverance, it had become an acclamation of praise. 'He who comes' (ho erchomenos) carried messianic overtones — the 'coming one' was an expected deliverer.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 118:26. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The reference to 'the kingdom of our father David' is explicitly messianic and political — the crowd expects the restoration of David's kingdom. 'Hosanna in the highest' (en tois hypsistois, 'in the highest [heavens]') directs the acclamation upward, asking heaven itself to join the praise.
11. Mark uniquely records this preliminary survey visit — Jesus inspects the temple before acting. The verb periblespamenos ('having looked around') suggests a deliberate assessment. The temple cleansing the next day is therefore premeditated, not spontaneous. Jesus returns to Bethany for the night, probably staying with Lazarus, Mary, and Martha (cf. John 11:1).
12. The note about hunger serves the narrative by motivating the approach to the fig tree, but the symbolic dimension is primary. The fig tree episode begins the Markan sandwich that frames the temple action.
13. Mark's explanatory note — 'for it was not the season for figs' (ho gar kairos ouk ēn sykōn) — seems to excuse the tree, making Jesus's response puzzling if taken as a literal quest for fruit. The action is best understood as a prophetic sign-act: the tree advertises fruitfulness (it has leaves) but produces nothing, just as the temple advertises God's presence but has become spiritually barren. Fig trees in the Old Testament regularly symbolize Israel (Hosea 9:10, Jeremiah 8:13, Micah 7:1).
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Hosea 9:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 8:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Micah 7:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The curse uses the optative mood (phagoi, 'may eat') — the strongest form of wish or prohibition. The note 'his disciples heard it' (ēkouon hoi mathētai autou) prepares for the discovery of the withered tree in verse 20 and the teaching that follows.
15. The action takes place in the Court of the Gentiles — the only area where non-Jews could pray. By filling this space with commerce, the temple authorities had effectively eliminated Gentile access to worship. The money changers (kollybistōn) converted foreign currency into the Tyrian shekels required for the temple tax. The pigeon sellers provided sacrificial animals for the poor (Leviticus 5:7, 12:8).
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 5:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The word skeuos ('vessel, object, goods') refers to commercial goods being transported as a shortcut through the temple courts. The Mishnah later prohibited this same practice (Berakhot 9:5), indicating that Jesus's concern was shared by later rabbinic authorities.
17. Jesus combines Isaiah 56:7 ('my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples') and Jeremiah 7:11 ('Has this house become a den of robbers?'). Mark alone includes 'for all the nations' (pasin tois ethnesin) — significant for his Gentile audience. The word lēstōn ('robbers, bandits, insurrectionists') is stronger than 'thieves' — Jeremiah used it for those who commit violence and then retreat to the temple for sanctuary.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 56:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 7:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The temple action seals Jesus's fate. The verb *apolesōsin* ('they might destroy') reveals murderous intent. The irony is layered: they fear Jesus because of his popularity, yet his popularity will not save him. The crowd is 'astonished' (*exēplēsseto*) but astonishment is not the same as faith.
19. Jesus continues the pattern of withdrawing from Jerusalem each evening, likely returning to Bethany. This may reflect both practical safety and the symbolic rejection of the city.
20. The phrase 'from the roots' (*ek rhizōn*) indicates total destruction — not merely wilted leaves but death from the foundation upward. The Markan sandwich is now complete: the withered tree interprets the temple cleansing. The temple, like the tree, advertises life but produces no fruit and faces judgment.
21. Peter's exclamation connects the cursing (v. 14) with the result (v. 20). Jesus will use the occasion to teach about faith and prayer, but the symbolic meaning — judgment on the barren temple — remains the primary narrative function.
22. The phrase *pistin theou* ('faith of God') could be translated 'faith in God' (objective genitive) or 'the kind of faith God has' (subjective genitive). Either way, the call is to radical trust in divine power.
23. 'This mountain' (*tō orei toutō*) may refer to the Mount of Olives or, more pointedly, to the Temple Mount visible from where they stood. The hyperbolic image of moving a mountain expresses the power of faith aligned with God's purposes. The verb *diakritherē* ('doubt, waver, be divided') literally means 'to be separated within oneself.'
24. The aorist tense *elabete* ('you received') is striking — Jesus says 'believe that you received,' using the past tense for a future reality. Faith treats the answer as already given. This does not describe a psychological technique but the confidence of prayer aligned with God's revealed will.
25. Standing (*stēkete*) was the normal Jewish posture for prayer. The connection between divine forgiveness and human forgiveness echoes the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:12, 14-15). The word *paraptōmata* ('trespasses, transgressions, false steps') literally means 'falling beside' — stepping off the path.
26. Verse 26 is absent from the earliest and best manuscripts of Mark and is not included in the SBLGNT critical text. It appears to be a later scribal addition, possibly drawn from Matthew 6:15. We follow the SBLGNT in omitting it while retaining the verse number for reference.
27. The three groups — chief priests, scribes, elders — constitute the Sanhedrin, the supreme Jewish council. Their approach is an official delegation, challenging Jesus's right to act as he did in cleansing the temple.
28. The question about authority (*exousia*) is legitimate from their perspective — they are the recognized authorities over the temple. 'These things' (*tauta*) refers to the temple cleansing, the teaching, and the implied messianic claims. The double question asks both the nature of the authority and its source.
29. Jesus's counter-question is not evasion but rabbinic method — answering a question with a question that, if answered honestly, would also answer the original. The connection between John's baptism and Jesus's authority will become clear in the next verses.
30. The binary question — 'from heaven' (divine origin) or 'from men' (human invention) — traps the authorities. If they say 'from heaven,' they must explain why they did not believe John, who testified about Jesus. If they say 'from men,' they risk the crowd's anger, since the people regarded John as a genuine prophet.
31. The leaders' internal deliberation reveals that their concern is political calculation, not truth. They are not asking 'What is the right answer?' but 'What answer will get us in the least trouble?'
32. The dash represents the breaking off of their deliberation — they cannot even finish the sentence because the consequences are too dangerous. The word *ontōs* ('really, actually, in truth') expresses the crowd's genuine conviction about John's prophetic status.
33. Their 'We do not know' (*Ouk oidamen*) is a lie — they have a strong opinion but are unwilling to state it publicly. Jesus's refusal to answer is not evasion but a response in kind: those who will not honestly answer a simple question have no right to demand answers from him. The contest of authority ends with Jesus in control.

12

Summary: *Mark 12 presents a series of confrontations in the temple courts during Jesus's final week in Jerusalem. Jesus tells the parable of the wicked tenants, exposing the religious leaders' rejection of God's messengers. The Pharisees and Herodians attempt to trap him with a question about taxes to Caesar, the Sadducees test him on the resurrection, and a scribe asks about the greatest commandment. Jesus then poses his own question about the Messiah's identity as David's son and Lord, warns against the scribes' hypocrisy, and commends a poor widow whose two small coins surpass every other offering.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The parable of the wicked tenants (vv. 1-12) draws directly on Isaiah 5's vineyard imagery and compresses Israel's prophetic history into a single narrative. The tribute question (v. 17) produces one of Jesus's most famous responses, which neither endorses nor condemns Roman taxation but reframes the entire question around what belongs to God. The exchange on the greatest commandment (vv. 28-34) is the only place in Mark where Jesus tells an interlocutor 'You are not far from the kingdom of God' — a striking affirmation within a chapter of conflict. The widow's offering (vv. 41-44) closes the temple teaching section with a devastating contrast between religious performance and genuine devotion.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'Render to Caesar' (v. 17) has been applied to justify everything from tax compliance to separation of church and state. The Greek apodote ('give back, return') implies returning what already belongs to someone, not simply paying a bill. The question about David's son (vv. 35-37) uses Psalm 110:1, which in Hebrew distinguishes YHWH (the LORD) from adoni ('my lord') — a distinction lost in Greek where kyrios covers both. We render the Greek as given while noting the Hebrew background.*

Connections: *The vineyard parable connects to Isaiah 5:1-7 and the rejected-stone quotation to Psalm 118:22-23. The Shema quotation (v. 29) anchors the chapter in Deuteronomy 6:4-5, while the love-of-neighbor command comes from Leviticus 19:18. Psalm 110:1 is the most-quoted Old Testament text in the New Testament, and Jesus's use of it here establishes a Christological argument that runs through early Christian preaching (Acts 2:34-35; Hebrews 1:13).*

¹And he began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a pit for the winepress and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenant farmers and went away. ²At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³But they seized him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ⁴Again he sent another servant to them, and they struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵He sent yet another, and that one they killed. And so with many others — some they beat, and some they killed. ⁶He had still one other — a beloved son. He sent him last of all to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ⁷But those tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' ⁸And they seized him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹What will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰Have you not read this Scripture: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.' ¹¹And is it marvellous in our eyes?, and this was the Lord's doing. ¹²They were seeking to arrest him but feared the crowd, for they knew he had told the parable against them. So they left him and went away. ¹³Then they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians to trap him in his words. ¹⁴They came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are truthful and do not defer to anyone, for you show no partiality but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" ¹⁵But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why are you testing me? Bring me a denarius so I can look at it." ¹⁶They brought one. And he said to them, "Whose image is this, and whose inscription?" They said to him, "Caesar's." ¹⁷Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they were utterly amazed at him. ¹⁸Then Sadducees came to him — those who say there is no resurrection — and they asked him a question: ¹⁹"Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no child, his brother must take the wife and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁰There were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and when he died he left no offspring. ²¹The second took her and died, leaving no offspring. And the third

likewise. ²²All seven left no offspring. Last of all, the woman also died. ²³In the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife." ²⁴Jesus said to them, "Is this not the reason you are wrong — that you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? ²⁵For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven. ²⁶But concerning the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? ²⁷He is not God of the dead but of the living. You are greatly mistaken." ²⁸One of the scribes came and heard them debating. Seeing that Jesus had answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" ²⁹Jesus answered, "The most important is: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' ³¹The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." ³²The scribe said to him, "Well said, Teacher. You have truly stated that he is one, and there is no other besides him. ³³And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is far more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." ³⁴When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions. ³⁵And as Jesus taught in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? ³⁶David himself said by the Holy Spirit, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet."' ³⁷David himself calls him Lord, so how is he his son?" And the large crowd was listening to him with delight. ³⁸And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and to receive greetings in the marketplaces ³⁹The prominent places in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts. ⁴⁰They devour widows' houses and for a pretense make lengthy prayers. They will receive greater condemnation." ⁴¹He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the crowd putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large amounts. ⁴²And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. ⁴³He called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those contributing to the treasury. ⁴⁴For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in everything she had — all she had to live on."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The vineyard description echoes Isaiah 5:1-2 almost verbatim, and Jesus's audience would have recognized the allusion immediately. The Greek *georgois* ('farmers, tenants') denotes those who work the land under lease — they are caretakers, not owners.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 5:1-2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The Greek *kairos* ('season, appointed time') carries more theological weight than *chronos* ('chronological time'). The servant represents the prophets sent to Israel to call for covenant faithfulness.
3. The escalating pattern of violence against the servants mirrors the biblical pattern of prophetic rejection throughout Israel's history (cf. 2 Chronicles 36:15-16; Nehemiah 9:26).
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Nehemiah 9:26 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The Greek *ekēphaliōsan* ('struck on the head') is a rare word. Some manuscripts and translations interpret it as stoning, but the verb derives from *kephalē* ('head') and most likely means they wounded his head.
5. The escalation from beating to killing compresses the history of prophetic martyrdom. The parable's audience — the chief priests, scribes, and elders (11:27) — would have recognized themselves in the tenants' role.
6. The phrase *huion agapēton* ('beloved son') echoes the voice from heaven at Jesus's baptism (1:11) and transfiguration (9:7), using identical language. Mark's audience would hear the parable as Jesus identifying himself as the beloved son who will be killed.
7. The Greek *klēronomos* ('heir') and *klēronomia* ('inheritance') carry covenantal weight — Israel's 'inheritance' is the land God promised. The tenants' reasoning exposes the logic of power: eliminate the rightful heir to seize what belongs to another.

8. In Mark's order, they kill first and cast out afterward — a detail that may foreshadow Jesus's death and burial outside the city walls. Matthew and Luke reverse the order to match the historical detail that Jesus was crucified outside Jerusalem (cf. Hebrews 13:12).
9. In Mark, Jesus answers his own question — unlike Matthew 21:41 where the audience answers. The phrase 'give the vineyard to others' points beyond the parable to the inclusion of Gentiles or to a new community of faith.
10. Jesus quotes Psalm 118:22-23, which was originally a psalm of thanksgiving for unexpected vindication. The 'stone' metaphor shifts from agriculture to construction but makes the same point: what the authorities reject, God exalts. The phrase *kephalēn gōnias* ('head of the corner') may refer to a cornerstone (foundation) or capstone (crowning stone).
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 118:22-23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The quotation continues from Psalm 118:23. The Greek *thaumastē* ('marvelous, wonderful') indicates something that provokes astonishment — God's reversal of human judgment is both surprising and awe-inspiring.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 118:22-23. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The leaders' recognition that the parable was directed 'against them' (*pros autous*) confirms its transparency. Their restraint is political, not moral — they fear the crowd's reaction, not God's judgment. This sets the stage for their clandestine plot in chapter 14.
13. The Pharisees and Herodians were natural enemies — the Pharisees resisted Roman cultural influence while the Herodians supported the Herodian dynasty and its Roman alliance. Their collaboration against Jesus reveals the depth of opposition. The Greek *agreuōsin* ('trap, catch, hunt') is a hunting term — they are stalking prey.
14. The flattery is calculated to prevent evasion. The Greek *kēnson* is a loanword from the Latin *census*, referring specifically to the Roman poll tax — a deeply resented symbol of subjugation. If Jesus says 'pay,' he alienates the populace; if he says 'don't pay,' he commits sedition against Rome. The phrase *ou blepeis eis prosōpon anthrōpōn* ('you do not look at the face of men') is a Semitic idiom meaning 'you show no partiality.'
15. The Greek *hypokrisin* ('hypocrisy') comes from the theater — a hypocrite is literally 'one who plays a role.' Jesus sees through the performance. The request for a coin is masterful: by producing a Roman denarius in the temple precincts, the questioners reveal that they already participate in Caesar's economy.
16. The Greek *eikōn* ('image') is theologically loaded — Genesis 1:26-27 declares that humans bear the image (*tselem*) of God. By asking whose image is on the coin, Jesus sets up a contrast: the coin bears Caesar's image, but human beings bear God's image. The inscription on a Tiberian denarius typically read 'Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus' — a claim that would have been offensive to Jewish monotheists.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 1:26-27. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The Greek *apodote* ('give back, return, render') is stronger than 'give' — it implies returning what already belongs to someone. The second clause reframes everything: if Caesar's coins bear Caesar's image, then human beings — who bear God's image — belong entirely to God. The response neither endorses nor condemns taxation but subordinates all political claims to God's total claim on human life.
18. Mark introduces the Sadducees with a parenthetical note about their denial of the resurrection. The Sadducees accepted only the Torah (the five books of Moses) as authoritative and found no explicit resurrection teaching there. Their question is designed to make resurrection belief look absurd.
19. The Sadducees invoke the levirate marriage law from Deuteronomy 25:5-6. The term 'levirate' comes from the Latin *levir* ('husband's brother'). The purpose of the law was to preserve the deceased brother's name and inheritance within Israel — a practice also illustrated in the story of Ruth and Boaz.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 25:5-6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The scenario is likely hypothetical, constructed for maximum rhetorical effect. The number seven — the number of completeness — ensures the problem has no easy resolution by simply choosing one husband.
21. The repetitive structure is deliberate — each death without offspring intensifies the absurdity the Sadducees are constructing.
22. The scenario concludes with universal death — the very reality the Sadducees believe is final. Ironically, their story about death becomes the occasion for Jesus to teach about life beyond death.
23. The Sadducees' question assumes that resurrection life would be a simple continuation of earthly existence. Jesus's answer will challenge this assumption entirely, reframing resurrection as transformation rather than restoration.
24. Jesus identifies two sources of error: ignorance of Scripture and ignorance of God's power. The Greek *planasthe* ('you are led astray, you wander') implies not just intellectual error but spiritual disorientation. The charge is sharp — the Sadducees prided themselves on scriptural expertise.
25. Jesus does not say the resurrected become angels but that they are 'like' (*hōs*) angels in this specific respect — the institution of marriage, which addresses mortality and procreation, is transcended. This addresses the power of God that the Sadducees have underestimated: resurrection is not mere resuscitation but a transformation of the conditions of existence.

26. Jesus strategically argues from the Torah — the only portion of Scripture the Sadducees accepted as authoritative. The citation is Exodus 3:6. The reference 'in the passage about the bush' (epi tou batou) uses a method of citing Scripture by location, since there were no chapter and verse numbers. Jesus's argument is that God's use of the present tense 'I am' implies an ongoing relationship with the patriarchs — which requires their continued existence.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 3:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The concluding statement is emphatic: poly planasthe ('you are greatly in error'). The argument rests on the covenant relationship — if God identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, then those patriarchs must still exist in some meaningful sense, because God's covenant faithfulness does not terminate at death.
28. Unlike the previous questioners, this scribe approaches with genuine interest — he has been impressed by Jesus's answers. The question about ranking commandments was a recognized topic in rabbinic discussion. Tradition counted 613 commandments in the Torah (248 positive, 365 negative), and rabbis debated which was the foundational principle.
29. Jesus begins with the Shema (Hebrew: 'Hear!'), from Deuteronomy 6:4, which every observant Jew recited twice daily. Only Mark includes this preamble; Matthew and Luke skip directly to the love command. By quoting the Shema, Jesus grounds the love command in monotheism — love for God is the proper response to the reality that there is only one God.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 6:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. The fourfold formula (heart, soul, mind, strength) expands the Hebrew original in Deuteronomy 6:5, which has three terms (heart, soul, strength). The addition of 'mind' (dianoia) may reflect the Septuagint tradition or an interpretive expansion. The cumulative effect is totality — every dimension of human existence is to be oriented toward loving God.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 6:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. The neighbor command comes from Leviticus 19:18. Jesus's pairing of these two commandments — love of God and love of neighbor — was not entirely unique in Jewish tradition (cf. Testament of Issachar 5:2; Testament of Dan 5:3), but his elevation of them as the supreme summary of the law was distinctive. The phrase 'as yourself' (hōs seauton) sets self-love as the measure, not the motive, of neighbor-love.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 19:18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The scribe's affirmation is remarkable — he validates Jesus's teaching as a peer might, using the adverb kalōs ('well, rightly'). His restatement of the Shema adds the phrase 'there is no other besides him,' echoing Deuteronomy 4:35 and Isaiah 45:21.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 4:35. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 45:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. The scribe goes beyond Jesus's statement by adding a prophetic insight: love surpasses the entire sacrificial system. This echoes 1 Samuel 15:22 ('to obey is better than sacrifice'), Hosea 6:6 ('I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice'), and Micah 6:6-8. The word holokautōmatōn ('whole burnt offerings') refers to sacrifices entirely consumed by fire — the most complete form of offering — yet even these are surpassed by love.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Samuel 15:22 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Hosea 6:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Micah 6:6-8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
34. The Greek nounechōs ('wisely, thoughtfully, with understanding') is a rare word in the New Testament. Jesus's response — 'not far from the kingdom of God' — is both commendation and invitation. The scribe is close but not yet there; understanding is the threshold, but entry requires something more. The note that no one dared ask further questions marks the end of the public debate sequence that began in 11:27.
35. Having silenced his questioners, Jesus now poses his own question. He does not deny that the Messiah is David's son — the genealogies in Matthew and Luke affirm this — but he challenges the assumption that Davidic descent is the whole picture. The question probes whether 'son of David' adequately captures the Messiah's identity.
36. Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1, attributing it to David and to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In the Hebrew, the first 'LORD' is YHWH and the second 'my lord' is adoni — a distinction lost in Greek where kyrios covers both. The psalm envisions a figure whom David calls 'my lord' being enthroned at God's right hand. Jesus's argument: if David calls the Messiah 'my lord,' the Messiah must be more than David's descendant.

36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 110:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. The question is not a denial of Davidic messiahship but an expansion of it — the Messiah is David's son and David's Lord simultaneously. The crowd's delight (hēdeōs, 'with pleasure, gladly') contrasts with the leaders' hostility. The common people enjoy seeing their leaders outmatched.
38. The Greek stolais ('long robes') refers to the flowing garments that marked a person of status and learning. The desire for public greetings (aspasmos) in the marketplace reflects a culture of honor — being recognized and addressed with titles in public spaces.
39. The prōtokathedrias ('chief seats') in the synagogue were benches facing the congregation, reserved for the most respected members. The prōtoklisias ('first couches') at banquets were the reclining positions closest to the host. Both represent the social currency of religious prestige.
40. The Greek katesthiontes ('devour, consume') is vivid — these scribes are predators. 'Widows' houses' likely refers to mismanaging estates entrusted to their care or extracting excessive fees for legal or religious services. The phrase proophasēi ('as a pretext, for show') exposes their prayers as performance. The 'greater condemnation' (perissoteron krima) implies degrees of judgment — those who exploit the vulnerable while performing piety bear heavier accountability. This warning about widows transitions directly into the widow's offering that follows.
41. The Greek gazophylakion ('treasury') refers to the temple collection receptacles, traditionally described as thirteen trumpet-shaped containers in the Court of Women. The verb etheōrei ('he was watching, observing') implies sustained, attentive observation — Jesus is not glancing but studying the scene.
42. The Greek lepta duo ('two lepta') represents the smallest denomination of currency in circulation — each lepton was worth half a quadrans (kodrantēs), the smallest Roman coin. Mark provides the Roman equivalent for his Gentile readers. The widow could have kept one coin for herself but gave both — a detail Jesus will emphasize.
43. The solemn introduction 'Truly I say to you' (amēn legō hymin) marks a pronouncement of special authority. The Greek pleion pantōn ('more than all') is absolute — not 'more than most' but more than the combined total of all other givers. Jesus measures generosity not by amount but by cost.
44. The contrast is between perisseuontos ('surplus, abundance') and husterēseōs ('lack, poverty, deficiency'). The final phrase holon ton bion autēs ('her whole livelihood') is devastating — bios here means not just 'life' but 'means of living.' She gave not from surplus but from substance. Coming after the warning about scribes who devour widows' houses (v. 40), this scene may also carry an ironic edge: the temple system that should protect widows instead receives their last resources.

13

Summary: *Mark 13, commonly called the Olivet Discourse, is Jesus's longest continuous teaching in Mark's Gospel. Prompted by a disciple's admiration of the temple, Jesus predicts its destruction and then delivers an extended prophetic address from the Mount of Olives to Peter, James, John, and Andrew. The discourse warns of false messiahs, wars, persecutions, cosmic upheaval, and the coming of the Son of Man. It concludes with the parable of the doorkeeper and repeated calls to watchfulness: 'Stay awake — for you do not know when the master of the house will come.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The discourse blends near-future and eschatological horizons in ways that have generated centuries of interpretive debate. The destruction of the temple (fulfilled in AD 70) and the coming of the Son of Man appear interwoven rather than chronologically separated. The phrase 'this generation will not pass away until all these things take place' (v. 30) alongside 'concerning that day or hour, no one knows' (v. 32) creates a deliberate tension between imminence and unknowability. Jesus's admission that even 'the Son' does not know the timing (v. 32) is one of the most theologically striking statements in the Gospels.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between the temple's destruction and the cosmic signs of vv. 24-27 is the central interpretive question. Preterist readers see the entire discourse fulfilled in AD 70; futurist readers see vv. 24-27 as still awaiting fulfillment; many scholars see a prophetic 'telescoping' where near and far events overlap. We render the Greek without imposing a particular eschatological framework. The 'abomination of desolation' (v. 14) alludes to Daniel 9:27, 11:31, and 12:11, originally referring to Antiochus IV's desecration of the temple in 167 BC — Jesus reapplies it to a future event.*

Connections: *The discourse draws heavily on Daniel 7:13-14 (Son of Man coming on clouds), Daniel 9:27 and 12:11 (abomination of desolation), Isaiah 13:10 and 34:4 (cosmic signs), and Zechariah 2:6 (gathering from the four winds). The call to watchfulness connects to the Gethsemane scene in 14:32-42, where the same disciples fail to stay awake. The fig tree parable (vv. 28-29) echoes the cursed fig tree of 11:12-14, 20-21.*

¹As he was going out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Teacher, look! What massive stones and what magnificent buildings!" ²Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another that will not be thrown down." ³As he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?" ⁵Jesus began to say to them, "Watch out that no one leads you astray. ⁶Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and they will lead many astray. ⁷When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁸For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are the beginning of birth pains. ⁹But watch out for yourselves. They will hand you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them. ¹⁰And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. ¹¹And when they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what to say. But say whatever is given to you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. ¹²Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise against parents and have them put to death. ¹³You will be hated by everyone because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴"But when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be" — let the reader understand — "then let those in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵Let the one on the housetop not go down or enter to take anything out of his house. ¹⁶And let the one in the field not turn back to get his cloak. ¹⁷How terrible it will be in those days for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing! ¹⁸Pray that it may not happen in winter. ¹⁹For in those days there will be tribulation such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, and never will be. ²⁰And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he cut short the days. ²¹And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. ²²For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. ²³But be on your guard. I have told you all things beforehand." ²⁴And the moon will not give her light, but at that time, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened. ²⁵The stars of heaven will fall, and the powers that are in heaven will be shaken. ²⁶And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. ²⁸"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³²"But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows — not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son — but only the Father. ³³Be on guard, stay awake — for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, who left his house and put his servants in charge, each with his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to stay awake. ³⁵Therefore stay awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come — in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning — ³⁶Indeed, lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. ³⁷What I say to you, I say to all: Stay awake."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *potapoi* ('what sort of, what impressive') expresses wonder. Josephus describes the temple stones as approximately 37 feet long, 12 feet high, and 18 feet wide (*Antiquities* 15.392). Herod's temple complex was one of the architectural wonders of the ancient world, and the disciple's awe was entirely appropriate — which makes Jesus's response all the more shocking.
2. The double negative *ou mē* ('absolutely not') is the strongest form of denial in Greek. The prediction was fulfilled in AD 70 when Roman forces under Titus destroyed the temple. The phrase 'stone upon stone' became proverbial for total destruction. For Jesus's Jewish audience, this prediction was not merely architectural but theological — the temple was God's dwelling place on earth.
3. The Mount of Olives overlooks the temple mount from the east, providing a panoramic view of the complex Jesus has just predicted will be destroyed. The private audience — Peter, James, John, plus Andrew (who is not usually in this inner circle) — gives the discourse an intimate, revelatory character. In Jewish tradition, the Mount of Olives was associated with eschatological events (cf. Zechariah 14:4).
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 14:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

4. The disciples ask two questions: when (pote) and what sign (ti to sēmeion). In Mark, both questions concern the temple's destruction — unlike Matthew 24:3, which adds 'and of your coming and of the end of the age.' The Greek synteleisthai ('to be completed, accomplished, brought to an end') carries eschatological weight.
5. Jesus's first response is not an answer but a warning. The verb planēsē ('leads astray, deceives') is the same root used in 12:24, 27. The discourse begins not with timetables but with the imperative to avoid deception — the primary danger is not suffering but being led away from truth.
6. The phrase egō eimi ('I am') could mean 'I am the Christ' (supplying the predicate) or could echo the divine self-identification of Exodus 3:14 and Isaiah 43:25. Mark does not add 'Christ' — the claim is left ambiguous and therefore more ominous. History records several messianic claimants in the decades before AD 70 (cf. Acts 5:36-37; Josephus, Antiquities 20.97-99, 169-172).
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 3:14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 43:25. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The Greek dei ('it is necessary, it must') introduces divine necessity — these events are within God's sovereign plan, not evidence of its failure. The distinction between wars and the end (telos) is crucial: Jesus explicitly warns against interpreting every crisis as the final event.
8. The phrase archē ōdinōn ('beginning of birth pains') draws on a well-established Jewish metaphor — the 'birth pains of the Messiah' (chevlei mashiach) referred to the period of intense suffering expected to precede the messianic age. Birth pains imply purpose: the suffering leads to new life, not meaningless destruction.
9. The shift from 'they' to 'you' personalizes the warning. The Greek paradōsoun ('they will hand over') uses the same verb used for Judas's betrayal (paradidōmi) — the disciples will be 'handed over' just as Jesus will be. Synedria ('councils') refers to local Jewish courts; synagogues were places of communal discipline including flogging; governors and kings represent Roman authority. The phrase eis martyron autois could mean 'as a testimony to them' or 'as evidence against them.'
10. This verse interrupts the persecution sequence with a mission imperative — before the end comes, the gospel must reach all nations (panta ta ethnē). The dei ('must') again signals divine necessity. The word kērychthenai ('be proclaimed, be heralded') comes from kēryx ('herald') — the gospel is a public announcement, not a private philosophy.
11. The Greek promerimnate ('worry beforehand, be anxious in advance') is a compound word unique to this passage — the prefix pro- ('before') intensifies the prohibition against pre-trial anxiety. The promise of the Holy Spirit's aid in persecution is one of Mark's clearest pneumatological statements.
12. The disintegration of family bonds under persecution echoes Micah 7:6, which Jesus also cites in Matthew 10:35-36. The Greek paradōsei ('will hand over, betray') again uses the paradidōmi language. The escalation is severe: even the most fundamental human bonds — sibling, parent-child — will fracture under the pressure of allegiance to Jesus.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Micah 7:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The promise is conditional on endurance (hypomeinas, 'having endured, having stood firm'). The Greek telos ('end') could refer to the end of the individual's life or the eschatological end. The verb sōthēsetai ('will be saved') encompasses both physical deliverance and ultimate salvation — the ambiguity may be intentional.
14. The phrase bdelygma tēs erēmōseōs ('abomination of desolation') comes from Daniel (9:27, 11:31, 12:11), where it refers to the pagan altar Antiochus IV Epiphanes erected in the temple in 167 BC. Jesus reapplies the phrase to a future desecration. The masculine participle hestēkota ('standing') with a neuter noun (bdelygma) may hint at a personal figure. The parenthetical 'let the reader understand' is Mark's editorial aside — addressing those who will later read the Gospel, urging them to discern the contemporary application.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 9:27. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. Flat-roofed houses in first-century Palestine had external staircases; one could descend directly to the street without entering the house. The urgency is total — there is no time to retrieve possessions. The imagery conveys the speed required when the crisis arrives.
16. Workers in the field would leave their outer garment (himation) at the edge of the field while working. Even this brief detour is too dangerous. The echo of Lot's flight from Sodom (Genesis 19:17, 'Do not look back') may be intentional.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 19:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The Greek ouai ('woe, alas') expresses grief rather than condemnation — Jesus is lamenting, not cursing. Pregnant and nursing women cannot flee quickly and are especially vulnerable during siege warfare. Josephus's account of the siege of Jerusalem in AD 70 confirms the horrifying reality of these words (War 5-6).
18. The Greek cheimōnos ('winter, stormy season') refers to the rainy season when wadis flood and mountain travel becomes treacherous. The instruction to pray implies that while the event is certain, its timing and circumstances may be influenced by prayer.

19. The language echoes Daniel 12:1. The Greek *thlipsis* ('tribulation, distress, affliction') is a key eschatological term. The phrase 'from the beginning of creation' (*ap' archēs ktiseōs*) sets the tribulation against the entire sweep of cosmic history. Whether this refers solely to the siege of Jerusalem or to a still-future tribulation has been debated since the early church.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 12:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The Greek *ekolobōsen* ('shortened, cut short, curtailed') implies divine intervention to limit the duration of suffering. The phrase *pasa sarx* ('all flesh') is a Hebraism meaning 'any human being.' The *eklektous* ('elect, chosen ones') refers to God's people — those chosen by grace, for whose preservation God restrains the full measure of tribulation.
21. The warning repeats the opening theme (v. 5-6). In times of crisis, messianic expectation intensifies and false claims proliferate. The imperative *mē pisteuete* ('do not believe') is categorical — no exception is allowed.
22. The Greek *pseudochristoi* ('false christs') and *pseudoprophētai* ('false prophets') are compound words indicating counterfeit versions of the real. The phrase *ei dynaton* ('if possible') implies that the elect will be severely tested but are ultimately guarded by God's sovereign choice. Signs and wonders alone do not validate a messenger — a principle established in Deuteronomy 13:1-3.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 13:1-3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The emphatic *hymeis* ('you yourselves') places responsibility squarely on the disciples. The verb *proeirēka* ('I have told beforehand') means that forewarning eliminates the excuse of surprise. Jesus's prophecy is not meant to satisfy curiosity but to equip for faithfulness.
24. The cosmic imagery draws on Isaiah 13:10 (judgment on Babylon) and Joel 2:10, 31. In Old Testament prophetic language, the darkening of sun and moon frequently symbolizes the collapse of political powers and the upheaval of the existing order. Whether this is literal astronomical phenomena or symbolic prophetic language (or both) is a central interpretive question.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 13:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joel 2:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The language continues from Isaiah 34:4. The 'powers in the heavens' (*dynameis hai en tois ouranois*) may refer to celestial bodies, angelic beings, or spiritual forces — the Greek is deliberately encompassing. The shaking of cosmic structures signals that the entire created order is being disrupted in anticipation of God's decisive intervention.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 34:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The primary allusion is Daniel 7:13-14, where 'one like a son of man' comes on the clouds of heaven to receive dominion, glory, and kingdom from the Ancient of Days. In Daniel, the figure comes to God (ascending), not from God (descending) — which complicates simplistic interpretations. Jesus identifies himself as this figure throughout Mark (2:10, 2:28, 8:31, 8:38, 9:9, 9:31, 10:33, 10:45, 14:21, 14:41, 14:62).
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 7:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The gathering of the elect echoes Deuteronomy 30:4 ('Even if your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you') and Zechariah 2:6 (the four winds). The phrase *ap' akrou gēs heōs akrou ouranou* ('from the end of earth to the end of heaven') is a merism expressing totality — no elect person will be left behind.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 30:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zechariah 2:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The fig tree parable uses observable nature to teach discernment. In Palestine, the fig tree is one of the last trees to leaf out in spring, making its budding an unmistakable sign of approaching summer. The connection to the cursed fig tree in 11:12-14, 20-21 may be intentional — the fig tree that symbolized Israel's failed fruitfulness now serves as a parable of eschatological awareness.
29. The Greek *epi thuris* ('at the doors/gates') implies imminent arrival. The subject of 'is near' is ambiguous — it could be 'it' (the end) or 'he' (the Son of Man). We render 'he' following the Danielic context of verse 26, but the ambiguity may be deliberate.
30. This is one of the most debated verses in the Gospels. The Greek *genea* ('generation') most naturally means the people alive at the time of speaking — approximately 40 years, which would reach to AD 70. Some interpreters take 'generation' to mean 'race' (i.e., the Jewish people) or 'type of people' (i.e., the faithless), but these readings strain the word's normal usage. If 'all these things' includes the temple's destruction, the prophecy was fulfilled within the generation. If it includes the cosmic signs of vv. 24-27, the interpretive puzzle remains.
31. The claim is extraordinary: Jesus places his own words on a level of permanence that surpasses the physical cosmos. The double negative *ou mē* ('absolutely will not') strengthens the guarantee. In the Old Testament, only God's word is described with such permanence (Isaiah 40:8; 55:11). Jesus implicitly claims divine authority for his teaching.

31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 40:8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. Jesus's admission that 'the Son' does not know the timing is one of the most theologically remarkable statements in the Gospels. It asserts a genuine limitation of knowledge within the incarnation. The ascending hierarchy of ignorance — humans, angels, the Son — makes the Father's exclusive knowledge emphatic. Some manuscripts omit 'nor the Son,' likely due to theological discomfort, but the harder reading is almost certainly original.
33. The twin imperatives *blepete* ('watch out, be alert') and *agrypneite* ('stay awake, be vigilant') establish the discourse's practical conclusion. The Greek *kairos* ('appointed time') is distinct from *chronos* — it is the decisive moment, not the passing of hours. Not knowing the time is not cause for anxiety but for constant readiness.
34. The parable of the absent master is unique to Mark in this form. Each servant receives *exousia* ('authority') and a specific *ergon* ('task, work'). The doorkeeper (*thyroōs*) receives the explicit command to watch — his role is vigilance itself. The parable implies that Jesus's departure places responsibility on his followers.
35. The four watches of the night correspond to the Roman division: evening (6-9 PM), midnight (9 PM-12 AM), rooster-crowing (12-3 AM), and morning (3-6 AM). The mention of *alektorophōnias* ('rooster-crowing') foreshadows Peter's denial in 14:30, 72, adding dramatic irony — Peter, who is hearing this warning, will fail to 'stay awake' in precisely this watch.
36. The Greek *katheudontas* ('sleeping') will recur in Gethsemane (14:37, 40, 41), where Jesus finds Peter, James, and John — the very audience of this discourse — sleeping when they should be watching. The literary connection between the Olivet Discourse and Gethsemane is deliberate.
37. The final word — *grēgoreite* ('stay awake, be watchful') — breaks the private frame of the discourse and addresses all of Mark's readers across time. The Greek *pasin* ('to all') universalizes the command beyond the four disciples on the Mount of Olives. The entire discourse concludes not with a timetable but with an imperative.

14

Summary: *Mark 14 narrates the final hours before Jesus's crucifixion in dense, rapid sequence. The chapter opens with the plot to kill Jesus and the anointing at Bethany, where a woman pours costly perfume over his head. Judas arranges to betray him. Jesus celebrates the Passover meal with his disciples, institutes the Lord's Supper, and predicts Peter's denial. In Gethsemane, Jesus prays in anguish while his disciples sleep. Judas arrives with an armed crowd, Jesus is arrested, and a young man flees naked. Jesus is tried before the Sanhedrin, where he declares himself the Christ and the Son of the Blessed One. Peter, waiting in the courtyard below, denies knowing Jesus three times — and the rooster crows.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The anointing woman (vv. 3-9) is the only person in Mark's Gospel whom Jesus says will be memorialized 'wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world' — yet Mark never gives her name. The Last Supper (vv. 22-25) reinterprets the Passover through Jesus's own body and blood, creating the central ritual of Christian worship. Jesus's Gethsemane prayer (v. 36) with its Aramaic 'Abba' is the most intimate window into his inner life. His confession before the high priest (v. 62) breaks the 'messianic secret' that has defined Mark's narrative — only now, when it will lead to his death, does Jesus openly claim his identity. Peter's denial fulfills the prediction of verse 30 with devastating precision.*

Translation Friction: *The trial scene raises historical questions about Jewish legal procedure — holding a capital trial at night during a festival appears to violate Mishnaic rules (Sanhedrin 4:1), though the Mishnah postdates this event. We render the text as Mark presents it without adjudicating historicity. The young man who flees naked (vv. 51-52) is unique to Mark and has generated extensive speculation — some identify him as Mark himself, others as a symbolic figure representing the disciples' total abandonment. The Greek is straightforward; we render it without speculation.*

Connections: *The anointing connects to burial customs and anticipates 16:1. The Passover setting connects to Exodus 12. The cup saying echoes Exodus 24:8 ('the blood of the covenant') and Jeremiah 31:31 ('new covenant'). The Gethsemane prayer echoes Psalm 42:5-6 ('My soul is deeply grieved'). Jesus's trial declaration combines Psalm 110:1 (sitting at the right hand) and Daniel 7:13 (coming on clouds). Peter's denial fulfills 14:30 and contrasts with the Olivet Discourse command to 'stay awake' (13:37).*

¹It was two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, ²Yet they stated, Not on the festival day, lest there be an uproar of the people. ³While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he reclined at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of very expensive ointment of pure nard. She broke the flask and poured it over his head. ⁴Some were indignant, saying to one another, "Why was this ointment wasted? ⁵For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her harshly. ⁶But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. ⁸She has done what she could. She has anointed my body beforehand for burial. ⁹Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her." ¹⁰To betray him to them, Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests. ¹¹When they heard this, they were glad and promised to give him money. And he began looking for an opportunity to betray him. ¹²On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" ¹³He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him, ¹⁴Wheresoever he will go in, say you to the goodman of the home, The Master says, Where is the guestchamber, where I will eat the passover with my followers? ¹⁵He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." ¹⁶The disciples set out and went to the city and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. ¹⁷When it was evening, he came with the twelve. ¹⁸As they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, one of you will betray me — one who is eating with me." ¹⁹They began to be grieved and to say to him one by one, "Surely not I?" ²⁰He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. ²¹For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born." ²²While they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it, he broke it and gave it to them and said, "Take; this is my body." ²³He gave it to them — and they all drank of it, he took the cup, and after he had given thanks. ²⁴And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵Truly I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." ²⁶They left into the mount of olives, and after they had sung an hymn. ²⁷Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' ²⁸But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." ²⁹Peter said to him, "Even if they all fall away, I will not." ³⁰Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, today — this very night — before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." ³¹But he kept saying emphatically, "Even if I must die with you, I will never deny you." And they all said the same. ³²They came to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." ³³He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ³⁴He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake." ³⁵Going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. ³⁶He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." ³⁷He came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not stay awake one hour? ³⁸Stay awake and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." ³⁹Again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. ⁴⁰And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. ⁴¹He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough. The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴²Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is near." ⁴³Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas came — one of the twelve — and with him a crowd armed with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. ⁴⁴Now his betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man. Arrest him and lead him away under guard." ⁴⁵When he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" And he kissed him. ⁴⁶Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. ⁴⁷But one of those standing by drew his sword and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his ear. ⁴⁸Jesus said to them, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a rebel? ⁴⁹Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled." ⁵⁰And they all left him and fled. ⁵¹A young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They seized him, ⁵²He departed

the linen cloth, and fled from them naked. ⁵³They led Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes assembled. ⁵⁴Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest, and he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. ⁵⁵Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they could not find any. ⁵⁶For many bore false witness against him, but their testimonies did not agree. ⁵⁷Some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, ⁵⁸"We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another not made with hands.'" ⁵⁹Yet even in this their testimony did not agree. ⁶⁰The high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer? What is it that these men testify against you?" ⁶¹But he remained silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" ⁶²Jesus said, "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven." ⁶³The high priest tore his garments and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? ⁶⁴You have heard his blasphemy! What is your judgment?" And they all condemned him as deserving death. ⁶⁵Some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophecy!" And the guards received him with slaps. ⁶⁶While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, ⁶⁷When she noticed Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and stated, And you also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. ⁶⁸But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." And he went out into the gateway, and a rooster crowed. ⁶⁹The servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." ⁷⁰But again he denied it. After a little while, the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean." ⁷¹But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about." ⁷²Immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek pascha is a transliteration of the Aramaic form of the Hebrew pesach ('Passover'). The Feast of Unleavened Bread (ta azyma) technically followed Passover but by the first century the terms were used interchangeably for the entire festival period. The phrase en dolō ('by stealth, by deceit') reveals the conspirators' awareness that a public arrest would provoke a riot.
2. The irony is that Jesus will be arrested and executed during the feast — the very timing they tried to avoid. The Greek thorybos ('uproar, riot, commotion') reflects the volatile political atmosphere. Jerusalem's population swelled enormously during Passover, and the festival's themes of liberation from slavery made Roman and priestly authorities especially nervous.
3. The Greek alabastron refers to a sealed flask with a long neck that had to be broken to release its contents — the breaking means the entire quantity was given at once, with nothing held back. Nard (nardos) is an aromatic plant from the Himalayas; the adjective pistikēs probably means 'pure, genuine' (from pistos, 'faithful, reliable'). The anointing of the head is a royal action — kings were anointed on the head (1 Samuel 10:1; 16:13). Mark does not name this woman.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Samuel 10:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The Greek aganaktoountes ('being indignant, being angry') is the same word used when the disciples were indignant about James and John's request (10:41). Mark says 'some' without specifying who — John 12:4 identifies Judas. The word apōleia ('waste, loss, destruction') frames the woman's gift as reckless extravagance.
5. Three hundred denarii represented roughly a year's wages for a common laborer (one denarius per day). The objection sounds morally serious — the poor are genuine. But Jesus will reframe the woman's act as itself a moral priority. The Greek enebrimōnto ('scolded harshly, rebuked, snorted at') is a strong word suggesting anger and contempt.
6. The Greek kalon ergon ('good/beautiful work') can mean either morally good or aesthetically beautiful. Jesus defends the woman against the group's hostility. The phrase 'in me' (en emoi) is striking — the act was performed on Jesus and finds its meaning in relation to him.
7. This echoes Deuteronomy 15:11 ('there will never cease to be poor in the land'), which is not a dismissal of poverty but a recognition that care for the poor is a permanent obligation. Jesus's point is not that the poor do not matter but that this moment — his imminent death — is unrepeatable. The opportunity to serve the poor is ongoing; the opportunity to anoint Jesus for burial is not.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 15:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

8. The phrase *proelaben myrisai* ('anointed beforehand') interprets the woman's act as prophetic preparation for Jesus's death. Whether she intended this meaning is unclear — Jesus assigns it regardless. The word *entaphiasmon* ('burial preparation') connects to 15:46 and 16:1, where the women who come to anoint Jesus after death find the tomb empty. This woman alone succeeded in anointing Jesus's body.
9. Jesus promises this unnamed woman a memorial (*mnēmosynon*) coextensive with the gospel's reach — wherever the good news goes, her story goes with it. The irony is pointed: the religious leaders will be remembered for plotting murder, the disciples for failing and fleeing, but this woman will be remembered for an act of extravagant devotion.
10. Mark places Judas's betrayal immediately after the anointing, creating a stark juxtaposition: a woman gives everything for Jesus; one of the twelve sells him out. The phrase *ho heis tōn dōdeka* ('the one of the twelve') emphasizes the scandal — this is not an outsider but a member of the inner circle. The Greek *paradoi* ('betray, hand over') uses the same *paradidōmi* language that runs throughout the passion narrative.
11. The chief priests' gladness (*echarēsan*) at finding an insider willing to betray Jesus contrasts with their earlier fear of public reaction (v. 2). The word *eukairōs* ('conveniently, at the right moment') suggests Judas was looking for a time when Jesus was away from the protective crowds.
12. The Passover lambs were sacrificed in the temple on the afternoon of Nisan 14. Mark's chronology places the Last Supper as a Passover meal — a point of tension with John's Gospel, which places the crucifixion on Nisan 14 when the lambs were being sacrificed. We render Mark's text as given.
13. A man carrying a water jar (*keramion hydatos*) would be unusual — water-carrying was typically women's work. This distinctive detail would make the man easy to identify. The prearranged sign suggests Jesus had made preparations, possibly secretly to prevent Judas from knowing the location in advance.
14. The Greek *katalyma* ('guest room, lodging') is the same word used in Luke 2:7 for the place where there was 'no room.' Here it refers to a room made available for Passover pilgrims. Jesus's use of 'my guest room' (to *katalyma mou*) suggests prior arrangement. The title 'the Teacher' (*ho didaskalos*) serves as an identifying code between Jesus and the homeowner.
15. The *anagaion* ('upper room') was a second-story room, often the largest space in a house. The word *estrōmenon* ('furnished, spread with carpets/cushions') indicates the room was already prepared for reclining at a meal. Passover preparations would include roasting the lamb, preparing unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and wine.
16. The phrase *kathōs eipen autois* ('just as he had told them') emphasizes Jesus's foreknowledge and control of events — even as his enemies plot against him, the details unfold according to his arrangements.
17. Evening (*opsias*) marked the beginning of Nisan 15 by Jewish reckoning, since the day began at sunset. Jesus arrives with 'the twelve' — including Judas, whose betrayal plan is already in motion.
18. The phrase *ho esthiōn met' emou* ('the one eating with me') echoes Psalm 41:9 ('Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me'). Sharing a meal in ancient Near Eastern culture established a bond of trust and obligation — betrayal by a table companion was the deepest violation of hospitality and fellowship.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 41:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The Greek *mēti egō* expects a negative answer ('It's not I, is it?') — but the fact that each disciple asks reveals their own uncertainty about their loyalty. The phrase *heis kata heis* ('one by one, one after another') emphasizes that every single disciple asks the question, including Judas.
20. The Greek *embaptomenos* ('dipping') refers to dipping bread or herbs into a common dish — a standard part of the Passover meal. Jesus does not name Judas directly but narrows the identification. The shared dish intensifies the intimacy of the betrayal.
21. The statement holds two truths in tension: divine necessity ('as it is written') and human responsibility ('woe to that man'). The Son of Man's death is part of God's plan revealed in Scripture, yet Judas bears full moral culpability. The phrase *kalon autō ei ouk egennēthē* ('better for him if he had not been born') is among the most severe judgments Jesus pronounces on any individual.
22. The four verbs — took (*labōn*), blessed (*eulogēsas*), broke (*eklasen*), gave (*edōken*) — became the foundational pattern of Christian eucharistic practice. The blessing would have been the standard Jewish bread blessing: 'Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.' The declaration *touto estin to sōma mou* ('this is my body') is without precedent in Jewish Passover practice and has generated centuries of theological debate about its meaning.
23. The Greek *eucharistēsas* ('having given thanks') is the root of 'Eucharist,' the term later used for the Lord's Supper. The Passover meal included four cups of wine; this is likely the third cup, called the 'cup of blessing' (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:16). Mark notes that all drank — including Judas, whose presence at this table of covenant renewal deepens the tragedy of his betrayal.
24. The phrase 'blood of the covenant' (*haima tēs diathēkēs*) echoes Exodus 24:8, where Moses sprinkled blood on the people saying, 'Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you.' Jesus identifies his own death as the sacrifice that seals a new covenant. The SBLGNT does not include the word 'new' (*kainēs*) before 'covenant,' though some manuscripts add it under the influence of Luke 22:20 and 1 Corinthians 11:25. The phrase *hyper pollōn* ('for many') echoes Isaiah 53:12 and Mark 10:45.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 24:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 53:12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. Jesus declares this cup his last until the eschatological banquet in the kingdom of God. The phrase *kainon* ('new') suggests not merely temporal newness but qualitative transformation — a new kind of celebration in a renewed creation. The vow of abstinence gives the Last Supper both finality and hope: the next shared cup will be in God's kingdom.
26. The hymn (*hymnēsantes*) was almost certainly the second half of the Hallel — Psalms 115-118 — which was sung at the conclusion of the Passover meal. Psalm 118 contains the rejected-stone quotation Jesus used in 12:10-11 and the words 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord' (118:26), sung at his entry into Jerusalem (11:9). The psalms Jesus sang on the way to his death contained his own story.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 115-118. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The Greek *skandalisthēsēste* ('you will be caused to stumble, you will fall away') is from *skandalon* ('stumbling block'). The quotation is from Zechariah 13:7, with a significant change: the Hebrew has 'Strike the shepherd' (imperative), but the Greek uses the first person 'I will strike' — God himself strikes the shepherd. Jesus's death is simultaneously human violence and divine action.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zechariah 13:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. This promise is recalled by the young man at the empty tomb (16:7). The verb *proaxō* ('I will go before you, I will lead you') is a shepherd's term — the scattered sheep will be regathered by their risen shepherd in Galilee, where the story began. The passive *egerthēnai* ('to be raised') implies that God raises Jesus, consistent with early Christian theology.
29. Peter's declaration exemplifies confident self-assurance that overestimates one's own strength. The emphatic *ouk egō* ('not I') sets Peter apart from the group — he claims an exceptional loyalty that he will fail to deliver. This overconfidence was anticipated in Jesus's Olivet Discourse warning to 'watch and be on guard' (13:33).
30. Mark specifies 'twice' (*dis*) for the rooster and 'three times' (*tris*) for the denial — more precise than Matthew and Luke. The temporal markers 'today' (*sēmeron*) and 'this night' (*tautē tē nykti*) compress the timeline — Peter's failure is not distant but imminent. The verb *aparnēsē* ('you will deny, disown') means more than simple contradiction; it is a public repudiation of relationship.
31. The Greek *ekperissōs* ('emphatically, exceedingly, vehemently') shows Peter doubling down on his claim. The conditional *ean deē me synapothanein soi* ('even if it is necessary for me to die with you') raises the stakes to the ultimate level — Peter pledges his life. The final note that 'they all said the same' (*hōsautōs de kai pantes elegon*) means every disciple made this pledge and every disciple will break it.
32. The name *Gethsēmani* comes from the Aramaic *gat shemane*, meaning 'oil press' — an olive oil production site on the Mount of Olives. John 18:1 identifies it as a garden across the Kidron Valley from the temple. The instruction to 'sit here' separates the larger group from the inner three.
33. The same three disciples who witnessed the transfiguration (9:2) now witness the agony. The Greek *ekthambeisthai* ('to be deeply distressed, terrified, alarmed') is a strong word unique to Mark — it suggests something beyond sorrow, closer to horror or dread. The verb *adēmonein* ('to be troubled, anxious, distressed') adds a dimension of anguished restlessness.
34. The language echoes Psalm 42:5-6, 11 and 43:5 ('Why are you cast down, O my soul?'). The phrase *heōs thanatou* ('to the point of death') means the grief itself is life-threatening — this is not mere sadness but existential anguish. The command *grēgoreite* ('stay awake, watch') directly recalls the Olivet Discourse (13:34-37) — the very thing Jesus commanded, the disciples will fail to do.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 42:5-6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. Falling on the ground (*epipten epi tēs gēs*) is the posture of extreme desperation — not kneeling but prostration. The Greek *hōra* ('hour') carries the weight of the entire passion — it is the divinely appointed moment toward which the entire Gospel has been moving (cf. John 12:27). Jesus's prayer 'if it is possible' acknowledges God's sovereignty while expressing genuine human desire to avoid the coming suffering.
36. Mark preserves the Aramaic *Abba* alongside the Greek *ho patēr* ('the Father'). *Abba* is an intimate family term — not the casual 'daddy' sometimes claimed, but a term of close, trusting relationship rarely used for God in Jewish prayer. The 'cup' (*potērion*) is a biblical metaphor for God's wrath and judgment (Isaiah 51:17, 22; Jeremiah 25:15-16). Jesus's final clause — 'not what I will, but what you will' — is the supreme expression of obedient submission.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 51:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 25:15-16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. Jesus addresses Peter by his original name 'Simon' — not 'Peter' (the Rock). The shift may signal disappointment: the man who pledged to die with Jesus cannot manage one hour of wakefulness. The Greek *mian hōran* ('one hour') is painfully minimal — the request was modest, and even that proved too much.
38. The Greek *peirasmon* ('temptation, trial, testing') encompasses both moral temptation and eschatological trial. The aphorism about spirit and flesh does not reflect later Greek dualism but a Semitic understanding: the human will (*pneuma*, 'spirit') desires faithfulness, but human limitation (*sarx*,

'flesh') makes failure possible. Jesus diagnoses the disciples' condition with compassion, not contempt.

39. The repetition — 'the same words' (ton auton logon) — is not formulaic but reflects the intensity of the struggle. Jesus's prayer does not evolve into acceptance through new arguments; he submits by returning to the same petition and the same surrender, again and again.
40. The Greek katabarynomenoi ('weighed down, very heavy') suggests a physical heaviness beyond mere tiredness — it may reflect the emotional exhaustion of grief and confusion. The clause ouk ēdeisan ti apokrithōsin autō ('they did not know what to answer him') echoes Peter's bewildered response at the transfiguration (9:6). When faced with divine moments beyond their comprehension, the disciples are speechless.
41. The Greek apechei is notoriously difficult — it can mean 'it is enough,' 'the account is settled,' or 'he (Judas) has received (his payment).' We follow the most common reading, 'It is enough.' The phrase ēlthen hē hōra ('the hour has come') marks the decisive turning point. The present tense paradidotai ('is being betrayed') captures the action in progress — Judas is already approaching.
42. The command egeisthe agōmen ('get up, let us go') is striking — Jesus does not flee but moves toward his betrayer. The verb ēggiken ('has drawn near, is at hand') is the same word used for the arrival of the kingdom of God (1:15). The hour of supreme evil and the hour of God's decisive action are one and the same moment.
43. Mark's characteristic euthys ('immediately') accelerates the narrative. The parenthetical 'one of the twelve' (heis tōn dōdeka) is repeated from verse 10, driving the scandal home again. The crowd comes armed with machairan ('swords') and xylōn ('clubs, wooden weapons') — the swords likely carried by temple police, the clubs by hired servants. The three groups — chief priests, scribes, elders — constitute the Sanhedrin.
44. The Greek syssēmon ('pre-arranged signal, sign') is a military term. The kiss (philēsō) was a standard greeting between a disciple and his rabbi — a sign of respect and affection. Judas weaponizes intimacy. The word asphalōs ('securely, safely, under guard') suggests they feared Jesus might escape or that the crowd might intervene.
45. The Greek katephilēsen is an intensified form of phileō — 'kissed warmly, kissed repeatedly, kissed fervently.' The intensified verb makes the betrayal more grotesque: Judas does not give a perfunctory peck but an effusive greeting. The title 'Rabbi' ('my great one, my teacher') adds another layer of bitter irony — the language of discipleship employed to betray the master.
46. The Greek epebalon tas cheiras ('laid hands on') and ektratēsan ('seized, arrested') are violent terms. The arrest is physical and forceful. Jesus offers no resistance — a detail that becomes explicit in the next verses.
47. Mark does not identify this swordsman — John 18:10 names him as Peter and the servant as Malchus. The Greek ōtarion ('ear,' diminutive) may refer to the earlobe. The act of violence is futile and immediately abandoned — no further resistance occurs. Jesus will address this act in the next verse.
48. The Greek lēstēs ('robber, bandit, insurrectionist') is the same word used for the two men crucified alongside Jesus (15:27) and for those who had turned the temple into a 'den of robbers' (11:17). The term carried revolutionary connotations — Josephus uses it for armed Jewish resistance fighters. Jesus's question exposes the absurdity of armed force against a teacher who has been publicly accessible in the temple.
49. Jesus points out the hypocrisy of a nighttime ambush by those who could have arrested him publicly. The phrase alla hina plērōthōsin hai graphai ('but let the Scriptures be fulfilled') is not resignation but recognition — Jesus interprets his arrest as the fulfillment of God's plan revealed in Scripture.
50. The Greek apheutes auton ('leaving him, abandoning him') and ephygon pantes ('all fled') fulfills the prediction of verse 27 — the sheep scatter when the shepherd is struck. The word pantes ('all') is absolute: not one disciple remained. The contrast with their collective pledge in verse 31 is devastating.
51. This episode is unique to Mark. The neaniskos ('young man') wearing only a sindona ('linen cloth') over his naked body has generated much speculation. Some identify him with Mark himself (an autobiographical detail), others with the young man at the tomb (16:5, same word neaniskos). The linen cloth (sindon) is the same word used for Jesus's burial shroud (15:46). The scene may symbolize the stripping away of everything — even a follower's last garment — in the hour of abandonment.
52. The flight into nakedness (gymnos ephygen) represents total loss — not merely of garments but of dignity and identity. The scene is the nadir of the disciples' failure: all have fled, and the last follower runs away with nothing. Some scholars see an echo of Amos 2:16 ('The bravest among warriors will flee naked on that day').
52. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Amos 2:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
53. Mark does not name the high priest — Matthew 26:57 identifies him as Caiaphas. The assembly of 'all' (pantes) the chief priests, elders, and scribes constitutes a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin, the supreme Jewish governing council of seventy-one members.
54. Mark sets up a literary intercalation (sandwich structure): the trial of Jesus (vv. 55-65) is nested between the introduction (v. 54) and conclusion (vv. 66-72) of Peter's denial. While Jesus confesses his identity above, Peter denies his below. The phrase apo makrothen ('from a distance') captures Peter's compromised position — following, but not close enough to be identified as a disciple. The fire (phōs, literally 'light') will illuminate him in the darkness.

55. The Greek synedrion ('council, Sanhedrin') refers to the supreme judicial body. The imperfect tense *ezētoun* ('were seeking') and *ouch hēuriskon* ('were not finding') describe repeated, frustrated attempts. The outcome — execution (*thanatōsai*) — was predetermined; they needed only the legal basis. Mark presents the trial as a miscarriage of justice.
56. Jewish law required the testimony of at least two witnesses to agree (Deuteronomy 19:15). The Greek *pseudoemarturoun* ('bore false testimony') and the note that their testimony was not *isai* ('equal, consistent') means the legal standard was not met — even by the prosecution's own rules.
56. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 19:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
57. Mark again labels this testimony as false (*epseudomarturoun*), even though the substance of the claim (the next verse) contains a distorted version of something Jesus may actually have said (cf. John 2:19). The distortion, not the fabrication, makes it false witness.
58. The contrast between *cheiropoiēton* ('made with hands') and *acheiropoiēton* ('not made with hands') is theologically loaded. In the Septuagint, 'made with hands' often describes idols (Isaiah 2:18; 10:11). The charge distorts Jesus's words but ironically states a deep truth: through his death and resurrection ('three days'), a new temple — his risen body and the community of faith — will indeed replace the physical temple.
58. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 2:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
59. The repeated failure of witnesses to agree underscores the illegitimacy of the proceedings. By the Sanhedrin's own legal standards, there was no valid basis for conviction.
60. The high priest's frustration is evident — the witnesses have failed, so he intervenes directly. Standing 'in the midst' (*eis meson*) is an authoritative posture. His questions pressure Jesus to incriminate himself, since the external testimony has collapsed.
61. Jesus's silence fulfills Isaiah 53:7 ('He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth'). The high priest's question combines two titles: 'the Christ' (*ho Christos*) and 'the Son of the Blessed One' (*ho huios tou eulogētou*). 'The Blessed One' (*tou eulogētou*) is a Jewish circumlocution for God, avoiding direct use of the divine name. This is the central question of Mark's entire Gospel.
61. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 53:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
62. This is the climactic moment of Mark's Gospel. The 'messianic secret' — Jesus's persistent command to silence about his identity — is broken at the moment it will cost him his life. The response *Egō eimi* ('I am') is an unambiguous affirmation that also echoes the divine self-identification (Exodus 3:14; Isaiah 43:10). Jesus then combines Psalm 110:1 ('seated at the right hand') with Daniel 7:13 ('coming with the clouds'), fusing messianic kingship with the divine Son of Man. 'Power' (*tēs dynamēs*) is another circumlocution for God.
62. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 110:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
62. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 3:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
62. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 43:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
62. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
63. Tearing garments (*diarrēxas tous chitōnas*) was the prescribed response to hearing blasphemy (cf. Mishnah Sanhedrin 7:5). The high priest's action declares that Jesus's words constitute blasphemy — a capital offense. The irony is that the garment-tearing may itself violate priestly regulations (Leviticus 21:10), though this point is debated.
63. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 21:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
64. The Greek *blasphēmias* ('blasphemy') technically refers to speech that dishonors God. The high priest interprets Jesus's messianic claim as blasphemous — either because claiming to be the Messiah was not itself blasphemous (it was not), or because the additional claim to sit at God's right hand was seen as equating himself with God. The unanimous verdict — *pantes katekrinan* ('all condemned') — means no dissenting voice is recorded (though Luke 23:51 notes Joseph of Arimathea's dissent).
65. The abuse fulfills Isaiah 50:6 ('I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from disgrace and spitting'). The blindfolding and demand to 'prophesy' ('tell us who hit you') mocks his prophetic claims. The cruel irony: at this very moment, Jesus's prophecy about Peter (v. 30) is being fulfilled in the courtyard below.
65. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 50:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
66. The word *katō* ('below') places Peter spatially beneath the room where Jesus is being tried — a physical detail with symbolic force. While Jesus stands before the council and speaks truth, Peter crouches below and lies. The challenger is a *paidiskē* ('servant girl') — the lowest-ranking person in the household, yet enough to break Peter's resolve.

67. The firelight that warms Peter also exposes him. The verb *emblepsasa* ('looked intently, fixed her gaze') suggests a careful, recognizing look. 'The Nazarene' (*tou Nazarēnou*) identifies Jesus by his hometown, which was considered insignificant (cf. John 1:46). The girl's statement is factual, not hostile — which makes Peter's reaction all the more revealing.
68. Peter's denial uses two verbs of non-knowledge: *oida* ('know') and *epistamai* ('understand'). The double denial is emphatic — he claims complete ignorance. Moving to the *proaulion* ('gateway, forecourt') is an attempt to distance himself from recognition. The rooster's first crow is the first warning, corresponding to Jesus's prediction of 'before the rooster crows twice' (v. 30). Some manuscripts omit the bracketed rooster crow here.
69. The Greek *hē paidiskē* ('the servant girl') with the article may indicate the same girl from verse 66, now broadening her accusation to the bystanders. The phrase *ex autōn* ('one of them') identifies Peter as part of Jesus's group — precisely the association he is trying to escape.
70. The imperfect *ērneito* ('he was denying, he kept denying') suggests ongoing, repeated denial. The bystanders identify Peter by his Galilean origin — Galilean Aramaic had a distinctive accent that was recognizable to Judeans (cf. Matthew 26:73). Peter's identity is written on his very speech, and no amount of denial can erase it.
71. The Greek *anathematizein* ('to invoke a curse, to place under anathema') means Peter calls down God's curse upon himself if he is lying — the strongest possible form of denial. The verb *omnynai* ('to swear an oath') adds a solemn oath to the curse. Peter refers to Jesus as 'this man' (*ton anthrōpon touton*) — refusing even to use his name. The escalation from simple denial (v. 68) to cursing and swearing (v. 71) traces Peter's descent.
72. The Greek *epibalōn eklaien* is difficult — *epibalōn* could mean 'having thrown himself down' (physical collapse), 'having set his mind on it' (reflection), or 'having begun' (bursting into tears). We render it 'broke down and wept,' which captures the emotional collapse. The imperfect *eklaien* ('he was weeping, he kept weeping') indicates sustained, ongoing grief — not a single outburst but a continuing flood of tears. Peter's story in Mark ends here in complete brokenness, with restoration implied only by the angel's specific mention of his name at the empty tomb (16:7).

15

Summary: *Mark 15 narrates the Roman trial, crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus. The chapter opens early in the morning as the Sanhedrin hands Jesus over to Pilate. After a brief interrogation, Pilate offers the crowd a choice between Jesus and Barabbas; they choose Barabbas and demand crucifixion. Roman soldiers mock Jesus with a purple robe and crown of thorns. Simon of Cyrene is pressed into carrying the cross. Jesus is crucified at Golgotha between two rebels, mocked by passersby and religious leaders, and cries out in Aramaic, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' He dies with a loud cry, the temple curtain tears from top to bottom, and a Roman centurion declares, 'Truly this man was the Son of God.' Women who followed Jesus from Galilee watch from a distance. Joseph of Arimathea buries Jesus in a rock-hewn tomb.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The cry of dereliction (v. 34) — Jesus quoting Psalm 22:1 in Aramaic — is the most theologically disturbing utterance in the Gospels. Mark does not soften or explain it. The tearing of the temple curtain (v. 38) from top to bottom signals divine action opening access to God's presence. The centurion's confession (v. 39) is the first time in Mark that any human being calls Jesus 'Son of God' without being corrected or silenced — and it comes from a pagan executioner standing at the foot of the cross. The women named in verses 40–41 become the crucial witnesses who will connect the crucifixion to the empty tomb.*

Translation Friction: *The choice between Jesus and Barabbas involves a Passover release custom for which no extra-biblical evidence exists. Mark presents it as established practice; we render his account as given. The cry 'Eloi, Eloi' (v. 34) is Aramaic (Hebrew would be 'Eli, Eli' as in Matthew); the bystanders' confusion with Elijah may reflect genuine mishearing or may be Markan irony. The centurion's declaration can be translated 'the Son of God' or 'a son of God' — Greek lacks the indefinite article, and a Roman soldier might have meant 'a divine man' rather than making a Christian confession. The ambiguity may be intentional.*

Connections: *Psalm 22 pervades the chapter: the casting of lots for garments (v. 24; Ps 22:18), the mocking (vv. 29–32; Ps 22:7–8), and the cry of abandonment (v. 34; Ps 22:1). Isaiah 53 is present in Jesus's silence before accusers and his burial with the rich. The darkness at noon (v. 33) echoes Amos 8:9–10 ('I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight'). The torn curtain connects to the temple theme running through Mark 11–13.*

¹As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. ²Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." ³The chief priests accused him of many things. ⁴Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer? See how

many charges they bring against you." ⁵But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed. ⁶Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner whom they requested. ⁷A man called Barabbas was imprisoned with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. ⁸The crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them. ⁹Pilate answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" ¹⁰For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed him over. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. ¹²Pilate again said to them, "Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" ¹³They shouted back, "Crucify him!" ¹⁴Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" ¹⁵So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them and, after having Jesus flogged, handed him over to be crucified. ¹⁶The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the praetorium, and they called together the whole battalion. ¹⁷They put a purple cloak on him and, twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. ¹⁸And they began to salute him: "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹They struck his head with a reed and spit on him and knelt down in mock worship before him. ²⁰When they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. ²¹They compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country — the father of Alexander and Rufus — to carry his cross. ²²They brought him to the place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull. ²³They offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. ²⁴And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them to decide what each should take. ²⁵It was the third hour when they crucified him. ²⁶The inscription of the charge against him read: "The King of the Jews." ²⁷And with him they crucified two rebels, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁸Those who passed by mocked him, shaking their heads and saying, "Ha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, ²⁹Indeed, save thyself, and come down from the cross. ³⁰In the same way the chief priests also mocked him among themselves with the scribes, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³¹Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, so that we may see and believe!" Those who were crucified with him also reviled him. ³²When the sixth hour came, darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³³At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" — which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ³⁴Some of the bystanders hearing it said, "Look, he is calling Elijah." ³⁵Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and held it up to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." ³⁶Then Jesus let out a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁷And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁸When the centurion who stood facing him saw that he breathed his last in this way, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." ³⁹There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. ⁴⁰When he was in Galilee, they followed him and served him, and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem. ⁴¹When evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, ⁴²Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴³Pilate was surprised that he was already dead. He summoned the centurion and asked him whether Jesus had already died. ⁴⁴When he learned from the centurion that Jesus was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁵He bought a linen shroud and, taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. ⁴⁶Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *prōi* ('early morning') likely refers to the fourth watch (3-6 AM). The verb *paredōkan* ('handed over') is again the *paradidōmi* chain: God hands over the Son, Judas hands over Jesus to the authorities, and now the authorities hand him over to Rome. Each use of this verb links divine purpose to human action. Pontius Pilate served as prefect of Judea from AD 26-36.
2. The charge has been reformulated for Roman ears: the Sanhedrin's religious charge ('Christ, Son of the Blessed One,' 14:61) becomes a political charge ('King of the Jews'). Jesus's response *sy legeis* ('you say so') is ambiguous — it can be read as affirmation, deflection, or ironic agreement. It neither confirms nor denies in a way Pilate can use.
3. The imperfect *katēgoroun* ('were accusing, kept accusing') indicates a sustained barrage of charges. Mark does not specify the content, focusing instead on volume — 'many things' (*polla*). The chief priests function as prosecutors before the Roman governor.

4. Pilate's surprise reveals that silence before a Roman tribunal was highly unusual — defendants typically mounted vigorous defenses. The word *posa* ('how many, how great') emphasizes the volume of accusations. Pilate seems to be giving Jesus an opportunity to defend himself.
5. The Greek *thaumazein* ('to be amazed, to marvel') indicates that Jesus's silence is extraordinary. Isaiah 53:7 provides the theological background: 'He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter.' Jesus's silence is not passive but deliberate — a refusal to participate in a process whose outcome is already determined.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 53:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The imperfect *apelyen* ('he used to release') describes a recurring custom. No extra-biblical source confirms this practice, though Roman magistrates did sometimes grant amnesty. Mark presents it as an established Passover tradition — a feast celebrating liberation from bondage includes the liberation of a prisoner.
7. The name *Barabbas* (*bar-abba*) means 'son of the father' in Aramaic — an ironic contrast with Jesus, who is the Son of the Father. The *stasiastōn* ('rebels, insurrectionists') and *stasis* ('uprising, revolt') indicate that Barabbas was involved in armed political resistance against Rome. The crowd will choose the violent revolutionary over the peaceful messiah.
8. The crowd initiates the request — they come to Pilate expecting the customary release. The verb *anabas* ('having come up') suggests movement upward toward the praetorium. The crowd has not yet been prompted to choose between Jesus and Barabbas.
9. Pilate's use of the title 'King of the Jews' (*ton basilea tōn Ioudaiōn*) may be sarcastic, politically provocative, or an attempt to use popular support for Jesus to free him. The title will appear on the cross (v. 26), making the Roman charge visible to all.
10. The Greek *phthonon* ('envy, jealousy') is Pilate's assessment of the chief priests' motivation. Even a Roman governor could see that this was not about justice or theology but about threatened power. The verb *eginōsken* ('he knew, he perceived') implies ongoing awareness, not sudden insight.
11. The Greek *aneseisan* ('stirred up, incited, shook up') suggests active agitation. The chief priests work the crowd to ensure their preferred outcome. The people who shouted 'Hosanna' days earlier (11:9-10) are now manipulated into demanding the release of a murderer.
12. Pilate's question — 'What shall I do with...' — is extraordinary for a Roman governor. He defers the sentence to the mob, abdicating judicial responsibility. The phrase *hon legete* ('whom you call') distances Pilate from the title; he attributes it to the crowd rather than adopting it himself.
13. The Greek *staurōson* ('crucify!') is an aorist imperative — sharp, urgent, decisive. Crucifixion was Rome's penalty for slaves, rebels, and non-citizens. It was designed to be maximally painful and publicly humiliating. The crowd demands the most degrading form of execution available.
14. Pilate's question *ti gar epoiēsen kakon* ('what evil has he done?') implies he has found no basis for the death penalty. The adverb *perissōs* ('exceedingly, all the more') shows the crowd's intensity escalating beyond reason. The repetition of 'Crucify him!' without any stated crime reveals that this is a mob, not a judicial proceeding.
15. The Greek *to hikanon poiēsai* ('to do what was sufficient, to satisfy') reveals Pilate's motivation as political expediency, not justice. The verb *phragellōsas* ('having flogged') refers to the Roman *flagellum* — a whip with leather thongs embedded with bone or metal fragments. Roman flogging was so severe it sometimes killed the victim. The *paradidōmi* chain reaches its final human link: Pilate hands Jesus over to execution.
16. The *praitōrion* was the governor's official residence — likely either Herod's palace on the western hill or the Antonia Fortress adjacent to the temple. The *speira* ('cohort, battalion') was normally 600 soldiers, though the word could be used loosely for a smaller detachment. Mark explains the term for his non-Palestinian readers.
17. The purple cloak (*porphyran*) mocks royal attire — purple was the color of kings and emperors, and the soldiers drape Jesus in a parody of royal investiture. The *akanthinon stephanon* ('crown of thorns') is fashioned from a thorny plant common in Palestine. Whether intended primarily to cause pain or to mock a radiant crown (like those on Roman coins) is debated; both functions were likely served.
18. The greeting *Chaire basileu tōn Ioudaiōn* ('Hail, King of the Jews!') parodies the salute to the emperor: 'Ave, Caesar!' (*Chaire, Kaisar*). The soldiers mock Jesus by performing a coronation ritual in reverse — clothing, crowning, and acclaiming him as king, but in contempt rather than honor.
19. The reed (*kalamō*) may have served as a mock scepter before being used to strike. The triad of actions — striking, spitting, kneeling — is a grotesque inversion of royal honor. The verb *prosekynoun* ('worshiped, bowed down to') is the word used for genuine worship throughout the New Testament. Mark's readers would see the irony: the soldiers' mockery accidentally performs the truth.
20. The return of Jesus's own garments means the crowd watching the crucifixion procession would not have seen the mockery. The shift from indoor abuse to outdoor execution transitions the narrative from the private world of soldiers' cruelty to the public spectacle of crucifixion.
21. The Greek *angareuousin* ('they compel, conscript, press into service') is a Persian loanword for forced labor under military authority. Simon was from Cyrene, a city in modern Libya with a large Jewish community. Mark identifies him as 'the father of Alexander and Rufus' — a detail that only makes sense if these men were known to Mark's audience, suggesting they became part of the early Christian community (cf. Romans 16:13, which mentions a Rufus). The cross (*stauros*) that Simon carried was the horizontal beam (*patibulum*); the vertical post remained fixed at the execution site.
22. *Golgotha* is the Aramaic *gulgulta* ('skull'). The Latin equivalent is *calvaria*, from which 'Calvary' derives. The name may describe the skull-like shape of the rocky outcrop or may refer to its use as an execution site. Mark translates the Aramaic for his Greek-speaking audience. The site was outside the city walls (cf. Hebrews 13:12).

- 23.** Wine mixed with myrrh (esmyrnismenon oionon) may have been offered as a mild narcotic to dull pain — a charitable practice attributed to Jerusalem's women in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 43a). Jesus's refusal to take it suggests a determination to face death with full consciousness. This may also fulfill his vow not to drink 'of the fruit of the vine' until the kingdom comes (14:25).
- 24.** Mark narrates the crucifixion itself with stark brevity — three words in Greek: kai staurousin auton ('and they crucify him'). No description of the physical process is given. The division of garments fulfills Psalm 22:18 ('They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots'), though Mark does not explicitly cite the psalm. A crucified person's possessions became the executioners' perquisite.
- 24.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 22:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 25.** The 'third hour' (hōra tritē) is approximately 9 AM by Jewish time-reckoning (counting from sunrise at approximately 6 AM). This creates a tension with John 19:14, which places Jesus still before Pilate at 'the sixth hour.' Various harmonization proposals exist; we render Mark's chronology as given.
- 26.** Roman practice required a titulus — a placard stating the condemned person's crime — to be carried before or attached to the cross. The charge ho basileus tōn Ioudaiōn ('The King of the Jews') is political rather than religious. From Pilate's perspective, Jesus was executed for sedition — claiming kingship in Caesar's domain. From Mark's perspective, the inscription is ironically true.
- 27.** The Greek lēstas ('rebels, bandits, insurrectionists') is the same word used in verse 48 and in 11:17. These were likely associates of Barabbas's insurrection (v. 7). The positioning — one on the right, one on the left — recalls James and John's request to sit at Jesus's right and left in his glory (10:37). Jesus told them they did not know what they were asking; the positions of honor in his 'glory' are occupied by criminals on crosses.
- 28.** Verse 28 is not included in the SBLGNT critical text. It appears in later manuscripts and quotes Isaiah 53:12 ('he was numbered with the transgressors'). While the quotation is theologically apt, the verse is almost certainly a later scribal addition influenced by Luke 22:37. We note its absence from the earliest and best manuscripts.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** The head-shaking (kinountes tas kephalas) fulfills Psalm 22:7 ('All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads'). The Greek eblasphēmoun ('reviled, blasphemed') is the same word used for the charge against Jesus — those who accused him of blasphemy now commit it themselves. The temple accusation from 14:58 has become street mockery.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 22:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 30.** The imperative sōson seauton ('save yourself!') is deeply ironic in light of 8:35 ('whoever wants to save their life will lose it'). The demand to 'come down from the cross' assumes that divine power should manifest as self-preservation. The entire Gospel has been arguing the opposite: divine power is revealed through self-giving suffering.
- 31.** The phrase allous esōsen ('he saved others') is an unintended confession of Jesus's healing ministry. The taunt heauton ou dynatai sōsai ('he cannot save himself') states the theological truth Mark's Gospel has been building: the Messiah saves precisely by not saving himself. The paradox of the cross — power through powerlessness — is articulated by Jesus's enemies without their understanding it.
- 32.** The demand 'that we may see and believe' (hina idōmen kai pisteusōmen) inverts the order Jesus requires: believing in order to see, not seeing in order to believe (cf. John 20:29). The title 'King of Israel' (basileus Israēl) is the Jewish form of the Roman charge 'King of the Jews.' Even the two co-crucified men join the mockery (synestaurōmenoi, 'those crucified with him') — in Mark, there is no penitent thief. Jesus is entirely alone.
- 33.** The sixth to ninth hours are approximately noon to 3 PM. Darkness at midday echoes Amos 8:9 ('I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight'). The phrase eph' holēn tēn gēn could mean 'over the whole land' (of Israel) or 'over the whole earth.' The darkness is cosmic and theological — creation itself responds to the death of its creator.
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Amos 8:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 34.** This is Psalm 22:1 in Aramaic (Eloi is Aramaic; Matthew's Eli is Hebrew). The cry is the only saying from the cross that Mark records. Whether Jesus is expressing genuine experience of divine abandonment, praying the entire psalm (which moves from lament to trust and praise by its end), or both, has been debated throughout Christian history. Mark does not soften the cry or explain it. The theological reality is presented without commentary: the Son of God experiences forsakenness.
- 34.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 22:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 35.** The confusion between 'Eloi' (My God) and 'Elijah' (Ēlian) may be genuine mishearing — especially by non-Aramaic speakers — or may be deliberate Markan irony. Jewish tradition held that Elijah would appear before the messianic age (Malachi 4:5). The bystanders' interpretation reduces the most profound theological cry in the narrative to a misidentified name.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Malachi 4:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** The sour wine (oxous, 'vinegar') was the cheap wine (posca) commonly drunk by soldiers and laborers — not a cruelty but possibly an act of rough compassion. The sponge on a reed echoes Psalm 69:21 ('for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink'). The words 'let us see whether Elijah will come' may be mockery or genuine curiosity.

36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 69:21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. The loud cry (phōnēn megalēn) before death is medically unusual — crucifixion typically ended in gradual asphyxiation, and the dying person would not have the strength for a loud shout. Mark may intend the cry to suggest that Jesus's death, though real, was not merely the result of physical exhaustion but a deliberate release. The Greek *exepneusen* ('breathed out, expired') is clinical and final.
38. The *katapetasma* ('curtain, veil') could refer to either the inner curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (the Holy of Holies), or the outer curtain visible from outside the temple. If the inner curtain, the tearing symbolizes direct access to God's presence; if the outer, it is a public sign visible to all. The direction 'from top to bottom' (ap' anōthen heōs katō) indicates divine action — God tears the curtain from heaven. The verb *eschisthē* ('was torn') uses the same root as the tearing of the heavens at Jesus's baptism (1:10, *schizomenous*), framing Jesus's ministry between two divine tearings.
39. The centurion (*kentyriōn*, a Latin loanword) is the first human being in Mark to call Jesus 'Son of God' (*huios theou*) without being rebuked or silenced. The messianic secret is finally broken — but by a pagan soldier at the foot of a cross, not by a disciple in a moment of glory. The Greek lacks the definite article: *huios theou* could mean 'the Son of God' or 'a son of God' ('a divine man'). Mark almost certainly intends the full Christian meaning, while acknowledging the centurion's limited understanding. What prompted this confession? Mark says it was seeing 'that he breathed his last in this way' (*hoti houtōs exepneusen*) — the manner of Jesus's death, not miracles or signs, revealed his identity.
40. The women are introduced for the first time in the narrative, yet they have been present all along (v. 41). Mark names three: Mary Magdalene (from Magdala, a town on the Sea of Galilee), Mary the mother of James and Joses (possibly Jesus's mother; cf. 6:3), and Salome (possibly the mother of James and John; cf. Matthew 27:56). These women become the crucial link between the crucifixion (they see where he dies), the burial (they see where he is laid, v. 47), and the empty tomb (they go to anoint him, 16:1).
41. The verbs *ēkolouthoun* ('they were following') and *diēkonoun* ('they were serving, ministering') are the same words used for discipleship throughout Mark. These women were disciples — following and serving Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem. The imperfect tense indicates sustained, ongoing service. Mark reveals that Jesus's movement included a significant number of women disciples whose presence he had not previously mentioned.
42. The Greek *paraskeuē* ('Preparation') was the technical term for Friday, the day before the Sabbath, when work had to be completed before sunset. Mark explains the term for non-Jewish readers: 'the day before the Sabbath' (*prosabbaton*). The urgency is clear — burial must happen before sunset when Sabbath begins, and Jewish law prohibited leaving a body on a cross overnight (Deuteronomy 21:22-23).
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 21:22-23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. Joseph is described as *euschēmōn bouleutēs* ('a respected/prominent council member') — meaning he was a member of the Sanhedrin that had just condemned Jesus. The phrase *prosdēchomenos tēn basileian tou theou* ('waiting for the kingdom of God') identifies him as sympathetic to Jesus's message. The Greek *tolmēsas* ('having taken courage, having dared') reveals that his request required bravery — he was risking his social position and political standing by publicly associating with a condemned criminal.
44. Crucifixion victims typically survived for days. That Jesus died in approximately six hours surprised even Pilate, who verified the death through the centurion — an official confirmation. The Greek *ethaumasen* ('was surprised, wondered') and the word *palai* ('already, some time ago') indicate that rapid death was unusual.
45. The Greek *ptōma* ('corpse, fallen body') is a harsher word than *sōma* ('body'), emphasizing the physical reality of death. The verb *edōrēsato* ('granted, gave as a gift') indicates an official release — Roman practice sometimes denied burial to the executed, so Pilate's permission was not automatic.
46. The *sindōn* ('linen cloth, shroud') is the same word used for the young man's garment in 14:51-52 — a possible literary connection. Rock-hewn tombs with rolling stones were typical of wealthy families in first-century Jerusalem. Joseph's tomb fulfills Isaiah 53:9 ('his grave was with the rich in his death'). The stone (*lithon*) was a large disk-shaped rock rolled along a groove to seal the entrance — it would require significant effort to move.
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 53:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
47. The imperfect *etheōroun* ('they were watching, they were observing') indicates sustained attention — these women carefully noted the tomb's location. This detail is essential to the narrative: when they return on Sunday morning (16:1-2), they know exactly where to go. Their witness provides continuity between the crucifixion, burial, and empty tomb.

16

Summary: *Mark 16 narrates the discovery of the empty tomb and, in the longer ending, the appearances of the risen Jesus and his commission to the disciples. Early on the first day of the week, three women come to anoint Jesus's body. They find the stone rolled away, a young man in a white robe who announces that Jesus has risen, and the command to tell the disciples — especially Peter — that Jesus is going ahead of them to Galilee. The original ending of Mark at verse 8 leaves the women fleeing in trembling and astonishment, saying nothing to anyone because they were afraid. The longer ending (verses 9-20) records appearances to Mary Magdalene, two disciples, and the eleven, followed by the Great Commission with signs accompanying believers, and Jesus's ascension.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *If Mark's Gospel originally ended at verse 8, it is one of the most daring conclusions in all literature — a story of good news that ends in silence and fear. The emptiness of the tomb is presented as evidence not through appearances or proofs but through absence. The young man's message (v. 7) specifically names Peter, the disciple who denied Jesus most shamefully — an implicit promise of restoration. The longer ending (vv. 9-20), though not from Mark's hand, became deeply influential in Christian practice and theology, particularly the commission to 'go into all the world' and the signs that accompany believers.*

Translation Friction: *The textual evidence is clear: Mark 16:9-20 does not appear in the two earliest and most reliable Greek manuscripts (Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus), and early church fathers (Clement of Alexandria, Origen) show no knowledge of it. Eusebius and Jerome both note its absence from the best manuscripts available to them. The vocabulary, style, and theology of vv. 9-20 differ markedly from the rest of Mark. However, the passage was widely known by the second century and became part of the received text. We include it with a textual note, as it has shaped Christian reading for centuries regardless of its origin.*

Connections: *The women's visit connects to 15:40, 47 (the same women who witnessed crucifixion and burial). The young man in white (v. 5) may connect to the young man who fled naked in 14:51-52 (now clothed). The message to 'go to Galilee' (v. 7) fulfills Jesus's promise in 14:28. The fear and silence of v. 8 contrasts with the Olivet Discourse command to 'stay awake' (13:37). The longer ending draws on traditions preserved in Luke 24, John 20, and early preaching summaries in Acts.*

¹When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint him. ²Very early on the first day of the week, they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back — for it was very large. ⁵Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. ⁶He said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." ⁸They went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. ⁹Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. ¹⁰She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. ¹¹But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it. ¹²After this he appeared in another form to two of them as they were walking into the country. ¹³They went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them either. ¹⁴Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. ¹⁵And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to all creation. ¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸They will take up serpents. And if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick, then they will recover. ¹⁹So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The women waited until the Sabbath ended (Saturday evening) to purchase *arōmata* ('aromatic spices') for anointing the body — a task the anointing woman of 14:3-9 had already performed, though these women apparently did not know. The same three women from 15:40 maintain the chain of witness. Their intention to anoint presupposes they expect to find a dead body, not an empty tomb.
2. The Greek *lian prōi* ('very early') combined with *anateilantos tou hēliou* ('the sun having risen') places the visit at dawn on Sunday morning. The phrase *tē mia tōn sabbatōn* ('on the first of the sabbaths/week') uses the Semitic way of naming weekdays by counting from the Sabbath. This is the day Christians will later call 'the Lord's Day.'
3. The imperfect *elegon* ('they were saying') suggests an ongoing conversation during the walk. The stone (*lithos*) described in 15:46 was substantial — the women recognize they cannot move it themselves. Their practical concern reveals that they have no expectation of resurrection; they anticipate a sealed tomb containing a dead body.
4. The Greek *anablepsasai* ('having looked up') suggests the tomb was above them on a hillside, or that they lifted their eyes from the path. The passive *apokeklystai* ('had been rolled back') implies an agent without naming one — the passive of divine action. Mark adds the explanatory note 'for it was very large' (*ēn gar megas sphodra*), underscoring that human effort alone could not account for its removal.
5. The *neaniskon* ('young man') is the same word used in 14:51 for the man who fled naked at Jesus's arrest. If the connection is intentional, the one who fled in shame is now clothed in glory (*stolēn leukēn*, 'white robe') — a symbol of transformation. White robes are associated with heavenly beings throughout Jewish and Christian literature. The verb *exethambēthēsan* ('they were utterly alarmed, astonished') is the same strong word used for Jesus's distress in Gethsemane (14:33) — it denotes overwhelming emotion in the face of the numinous.
6. The announcement is structured in three parts: identification ('Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified'), proclamation ('he has been raised'), and evidence ('he is not here — see the place'). The passive *ēgerthē* ('he has been raised') attributes the resurrection to God's action — Jesus did not raise himself but was raised by the Father. The perfect participle *ton estaurōmenon* ('the crucified one') is significant: even risen, Jesus remains 'the crucified one.' The resurrection does not erase the crucifixion but vindicates the one who was crucified.
7. The specific mention of Peter — 'his disciples and Peter' (*tois mathētais autou kai tō Petrō*) — is unique to Mark and deeply significant. Peter, who denied Jesus three times, is singled out not for condemnation but for inclusion. The message assures him that his denial has not disqualified him from discipleship. The verb *proagei* ('he goes before you') fulfills 14:28 exactly. The phrase *kathōs eipen hymin* ('just as he told you') confirms that Jesus's predictions have been reliable throughout — his word is trustworthy.
8. If Mark's Gospel originally ended here, this is its final line. The Greek *tromos* ('trembling') and *ekstasis* ('astonishment, ecstasy, being beside oneself') describe the overwhelming response to a divine encounter. The double negative *oudenī ouden* ('nothing to no one, not a word to anyone') is emphatic. The final word — *ephobounto gar* ('for they were afraid') — is grammatically unusual (ending a book with the conjunction *gar*, 'for'), leading some to argue that the original ending was lost. Others argue that this abrupt, open ending is intentionally provocative: it leaves the reader to decide whether to be like the women (silent and afraid) or to proclaim what they have heard. The fear is not cowardice but numinous awe — the appropriate human response to the inbreaking of God.
9. **TEXTUAL NOTE:** Mark 16:9-20 (the 'Longer Ending') does not appear in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts, including Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus (4th century). Eusebius and Jerome attest that it was absent from most Greek copies known to them. The vocabulary, style, and content differ notably from Mark 1:1-16:8. Most scholars conclude that these verses were added by a later hand to provide resurrection appearances and a commission that Mark's abrupt ending at verse 8 seemed to lack. The passage was widely known by the mid-second century and became part of the received text tradition. We include it as a significant part of the manuscript tradition while noting its secondary status.
9. The introduction of Mary Magdalene with the explanatory note about seven demons (*hepta daimonia*) reads as though she has not been mentioned before — a sign of a different author. The tradition of her encounter with the risen Jesus is also preserved in John 20:11-18.
10. The phrase *tois met' autou genomenois* ('those who had been with him') is an unusual circumlocution for the disciples, not characteristic of Mark's style. Their mourning (*penthousei*) and weeping (*klaiousin*) reflect their grief at Jesus's death and their ignorance of the resurrection.
11. The Greek *ēpistēsan* ('they disbelieved, they refused to believe') introduces a theme of disbelief that runs through the longer ending (cf. vv. 13, 14). This stands in some tension with Mark's earlier narrative, where the disciples' problem was more often misunderstanding than outright refusal to believe.
12. This is a compressed summary of the Emmaus road narrative found in Luke 24:13-35. The phrase *en hetera morphē* ('in another form') explains why the two did not recognize Jesus — a detail Luke develops at greater length. The Greek *agron* ('country, countryside, field') corresponds to Luke's village of Emmaus.
13. The pattern of testimony met with disbelief continues. The Greek *tois loipois* ('the rest, the remaining ones') refers to the other disciples. The repeated refusal to believe builds toward the rebuke in verse 14.
14. The appearance to 'the eleven' (*tois hendeka*) reflects Judas's absence. The Greek *ōneidisen* ('rebuked, reproached') is a strong word. The compound *sklērokardian* ('hardness of heart') echoes Mark 3:5, 6:52, 8:17, and 10:5 — a major Markan theme applied here with particular force. Even after multiple testimonies, the disciples refused to believe until confronted directly by the risen Jesus.

15. The commission is universal in scope: *ton kosmon hapanta* ('the whole world') and *pasē tē ktisei* ('all creation'). The verb *kēryxate* ('proclaim, herald') is an aorist imperative — urgent and decisive. This parallels the commission in Matthew 28:19-20 and extends the gospel's reach beyond ethnic Israel to all humanity, and indeed to the created order itself.
16. The pairing of faith (*pisteusas*) and baptism (*baptistheis*) reflects early Christian practice where conversion was expressed through baptism. Note that the second clause mentions only disbelief — not the absence of baptism — as the basis for condemnation (*katakristhēsetai*). The passage attributes salvation to faith expressed in baptism, and condemnation to the refusal of faith.
17. The signs (*sēmeia*) listed here correspond to activities recorded in Acts: casting out demons (Acts 16:18), speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6). The phrase *en tō onomati mou* ('in my name') indicates that these signs derive their power from Jesus's authority, not from the practitioners themselves. The Greek *glōssais kainais* ('new tongues') has been interpreted as both foreign languages and ecstatic speech.
18. The handling of serpents corresponds to Paul's experience on Malta (Acts 28:3-6). Protection from poison has no direct parallel in Acts but reflects the broader theme of divine protection in the mission. Healing by laying on hands (*cheiras epithēsousin*) continues Jesus's own practice (Mark 5:23; 6:5; 8:23, 25). These signs are presented as accompaniments to mission, not as ends in themselves.
19. The title *ho kyrios Iesous* ('the Lord Jesus') is not characteristic of Mark (who typically uses 'Jesus' alone) and reflects later Christian usage. The ascension (*anēlēmphthē*, 'was taken up') is described more fully in Luke 24:51 and Acts 1:9-11. The phrase *ekathisen ek dexiōn tou theou* ('sat down at the right hand of God') fulfills Psalm 110:1, which Jesus quoted in 12:36 and 14:62. The 'right hand' denotes the position of supreme honor and co-regency.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 110:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The final verse provides a summary of the apostolic mission. The Greek *synergountos* ('working together with') describes the Lord's ongoing partnership with the disciples in mission — he is not absent after the ascension but actively cooperating through signs. The verb *bebaiontos* ('confirming, establishing') indicates that the signs serve the word, not vice versa. The longer ending thus transforms Mark's story from an open, unsettling conclusion (v. 8) into a triumphant summary of the church's mission — a resolution that later generations clearly felt the Gospel needed.

Luke

1

Summary: *Luke 1 opens with a formal literary prologue addressed to Theophilus, establishing Luke's method as careful, orderly investigation. The chapter then narrates two angelic birth announcements: Gabriel appears first to the priest Zechariah in the temple, declaring that his elderly wife Elizabeth will bear a son named John who will prepare the way of the Lord; then Gabriel appears to the virgin Mary in Nazareth, announcing that she will conceive by the Holy Spirit and bear a son named Jesus who will reign over David's throne forever. Mary visits Elizabeth, and the unborn John leaps in the womb. The chapter contains four major poetic passages: the Magnificat (Mary's song, vv. 46-55), the Benedictus (Zechariah's prophecy, vv. 68-79), and shorter hymnic passages in the angelic announcements.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Luke's birth narratives are saturated with Old Testament echoes. Zechariah and Elizabeth recall Abraham and Sarah (aged, barren, promised a child). Gabriel's appearance in the temple connects to Daniel 8-9, where Gabriel also delivers prophetic messages about God's timing. Mary's Magnificat draws heavily on Hannah's prayer (1 Samuel 2:1-10), and Zechariah's Benedictus weaves together Davidic, Abrahamic, and prophetic covenant themes. The Greek in these hymnic sections is heavily Septuagintal — Luke appears to be deliberately imitating the style of the Greek Old Testament to signal that God's ancient promises are being fulfilled.*

Translation Friction: *The Greek of the prologue (vv. 1-4) is polished literary Koine, while the birth narratives shift to a markedly Semitic style, possibly reflecting Hebrew or Aramaic sources. We render both registers in natural modern English without flattening the distinction entirely. The Magnificat and Benedictus are rendered as poetry, preserving their hymnic structure. The phrase 'highly favored one' (kecharitomene, v. 28) has significant theological weight in different Christian traditions; we render the Greek transparently and note the range of meaning.*

Connections: *The Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12, 15, 17) is explicitly invoked in both the Magnificat (v. 55) and Benedictus (vv. 72-73). The Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7) underlies Gabriel's promise to Mary (vv. 32-33). John's role as forerunner connects to Malachi 3:1 and 4:5-6 (Elijah's return). The priestly setting of Zechariah's vision connects to the temple theology of the Old Testament.*

¹Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events that have been fulfilled among us, ²Indeed as they handed down them to us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word. ³Indeed, it was decided by me

also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you in order, most excellent Theophilus,. 4 Indeed, that you mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein you have been instructed. 5In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. His wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6They were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. 7But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years. 8Now while Zechariah was serving as priest before God during his division's turn of duty, 9In keeping with to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he traveled into the temple of the Lord. 10And the whole assembly of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense offering. 11Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12Zechariah was shaken when he saw him, and fear overwhelmed him. 13But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to name him John. 14He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15For he will be great before the Lord, and he must never drink wine or strong drink. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, 16Numerous of the children of Israel will he turn to the Lord their God. 17He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers toward their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous — to prepare a people made ready for the Lord." 18Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." 19The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God. I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. 20Now listen: you will be silent and unable to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time." 21Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the sanctuary. 22When he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak. 23When the days of his priestly service were completed, he went home. 24After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, 25"This is what the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my disgrace among people." 26Named nazareth,, and in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee. 27To a young woman pledged in marriage to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28The angel came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29But she was deeply troubled by his words and was wondering what kind of greeting this could be. 30The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31Listen: you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus. 32He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. 33He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not been intimate with a man?" 35The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36And listen — your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age. This is the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37For nothing will be impossible with God." 38Mary said, "Here I am, the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. 39In those days Mary set out and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judah, 40Went into into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. 41When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42She exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43And why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44For the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped for joy in my womb. 45Blessed is she who believed that what was spoken to her from the Lord would be fulfilled."

46And Mary said:

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

47My spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour. 48Since he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden — for, take notice, from henceforth all generations will call me blessed. 49Since he that is mighty has done to me remarkable things. And holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵²He has brought down rulers from their thrones
and lifted up the humble.

⁵³He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his descendants for ever. ⁵⁶Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned to her home. ⁵⁷Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. ⁶⁰But his mother answered, "No! He is to be called John." ⁶¹They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name." ⁶²Then they made signs to his father, asking what he wanted the child to be named. ⁶³He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And everyone was amazed. ⁶⁴Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was freed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵Fear came upon all their neighbors, and throughout the entire hill country of Judea, all these events were being discussed. ⁶⁶All who heard these things stored them in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child become?" For the hand of the Lord was with him. ⁶⁷Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

⁶⁸"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
for he has visited and redeemed his people.

⁶⁹He has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David,

⁷⁰As he spoke by the lips of his sacred God's spokespersons, which have been since the world began:. ⁷¹That we should be saved from our opponents, and from the hand of all that despise us. ⁷²To perform the compassion promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant. ⁷³Indeed, the oath which he swore to our Father Abraham,. ⁷⁴That he would grant to us, that we while delivered out of the possession of our enemies may serve him without be afraid,. ⁷⁵In holiness and righteousness prior to him, every one of the days of our life.

⁷⁶And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

⁷⁷To give knowledge of salvation to his those present by the remission of their sins,. ⁷⁸By way of the tender mercy of our God. Whereby the dayspring from on high has visited us,. ⁷⁹To provide radiance to them that take a seat in the dark and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. ⁸⁰The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *epecheiresan* ('have undertaken, have attempted') carries no negative connotation — Luke is not criticizing earlier efforts but acknowledging them. The verb *peplerophoremenon* ('fulfilled, accomplished, brought to completion') is stronger than the KJV's 'believed.' Luke views these events not merely as things believed but as things God has brought to fulfillment.

2. The Greek *autoptai* ('eyewitnesses') is a technical term — the root gives us the English 'autopsy' (seeing for oneself). Luke distinguishes himself from these original witnesses; he is a second-generation recipient. The phrase *hyperetai tou logou* ('servants of the word') may refer to a recognized role in the early church — those who faithfully transmitted the tradition.
3. The Greek *parekolouthēkoti* ('having followed closely, having investigated') implies active research, not passive reception — Luke has traced the tradition back to its sources. The adverb *akribos* ('accurately, carefully') emphasizes methodological rigor. *Kratiste* ('most excellent') is an honorific used for Roman officials (cf. Acts 23:26, 24:3, 26:25), suggesting Theophilus held some social status, though whether this is a real person or a symbolic name ('lover of God') is debated.
4. The Greek *asphaleia* ('certainty, security, reliability') suggests Theophilus has already received oral instruction (*katechetes*, 'been catechized, been taught') and Luke writes to provide a firm foundation. The verb *katecheo* is the root of 'catechism' — formal instruction in the faith.
5. The shift from polished literary Greek (vv. 1-4) to Septuagintal narrative style is immediate — *egeneto* ('it came about') echoes the Hebrew *vayyehi*. Zechariah's priestly division of Abijah was the eighth of twenty-four divisions (1 Chronicles 24:10). That Elizabeth is also of Aaronic descent means John will be of fully priestly lineage on both sides. Herod the Great reigned 37-4 BC, anchoring the narrative historically.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Chronicles 24:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The Greek *dikaioi* ('righteous') and *amemptoi* ('blameless') together describe covenant faithfulness — not sinless perfection but faithful observance of the Torah. The distinction between *entolais* ('commandments') and *dikaiomasin* ('regulations, ordinances') may reflect the Torah's own distinction between different categories of law. This description echoes the characterization of Noah (Genesis 6:9) and Job (Job 1:1).
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 6:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Job 1:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The barren-wife motif is one of the most significant patterns in the Old Testament: Sarah (Genesis 11:30), Rebekah (Genesis 25:21), Rachel (Genesis 29:31), the mother of Samson (Judges 13:2), and Hannah (1 Samuel 1:2). Luke signals that God is about to act in the same pattern — impossible circumstances overcome by divine intervention. The phrase *probebekotes en tais hemerais* ('advanced in their days') echoes the Septuagint description of Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18:11).
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 11:30. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 25:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 29:31. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Judges 13:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Samuel 1:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 18:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Each priestly division served in the temple for one week, twice per year (plus the three pilgrimage festivals). The Greek *hierateuein* ('to serve as priest') is a technical term for performing temple duties. Luke places the divine encounter in the context of ordinary, faithful service.
9. The incense offering was performed on the golden altar in the Holy Place (Exodus 30:1-8), not in the Holy of Holies. The Greek *naon* ('sanctuary, inner temple') is distinguished from *hieron* ('temple complex'). Being chosen by lot for this duty was a once-in-a-lifetime honor for most priests, given the large number of priests and the twice-daily offering.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 30:1-8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The incense offering coincided with the time of prayer (cf. Psalm 141:2, 'Let my prayer rise as incense before you'). The people waited outside in the Court of Israel while the priest performed the rite inside. This public context heightens the significance of what Zechariah is about to experience privately.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 141:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The right side is the position of favor and honor in biblical symbolism (cf. Psalm 110:1). The Greek *ophthe* ('appeared') is a divine passive — the angel was made visible by God's will. The altar of incense stood before the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Exodus 30:6).

11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 110:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 30:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The verb *etarachthe* ('was troubled, was disturbed') indicates deep agitation, not mild surprise. The phrase *phobos epepesen* ('fear fell upon') is a Septuagintal expression for the terrifying impact of divine encounter (cf. Genesis 15:12, where 'a deep dread fell upon Abram'). Fear in the presence of the divine is a consistent biblical response.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 15:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The phrase *me phobou* ('do not be afraid') is the standard divine reassurance formula (cf. Genesis 15:1, Isaiah 41:10). The name *Ioannes* (John) is the Greek form of Hebrew *Yochanan*, meaning 'the LORD is gracious.' The passive *eisekousthe* ('has been heard') implies God is the one who has heard — divine response to persistent prayer.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 15:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 41:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The Greek *chara* ('joy') and *agalliasis* ('exultation, great gladness') form an intensifying pair. *Agalliasis* is a stronger term used frequently in the Septuagint Psalms for worship-level joy. The promise that 'many will rejoice' extends beyond the family to a national scope — John's birth is not just personal good news but Israel-wide good news.
15. The prohibition against wine and strong drink (*sikera*, from the Hebrew *shekar*) echoes the Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:3) and the instructions for Samson's mother (Judges 13:4-5). John is set apart for God's service from before birth. The phrase 'filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb' is extraordinary — prophetic endowment before birth, which will be demonstrated when Elizabeth's womb leaps at Mary's greeting (v. 41).
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 6:3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Judges 13:4-5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The verb *epistrepsei* ('will turn') is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *shuv* — the central verb of repentance and return. John's mission is one of turning Israel back to their covenant God. The phrase 'children of Israel' (*huion Israel*) is deliberately archaic, evoking the Old Testament covenant identity.
17. This is a direct allusion to Malachi 4:5-6, the final prophecy of the Old Testament: 'I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the LORD, and he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children.' Gabriel identifies John as the fulfillment of this four-hundred-year-old promise. The phrase 'spirit and power of Elijah' does not mean John is Elijah reincarnated but that he operates in the same prophetic tradition and with the same empowerment.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Malachi 4:5-6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. Zechariah's question *kata ti gnosomai touto* ('by what will I know this?') closely echoes Abraham's question in Genesis 15:8 (LXX: *kata ti gnosomai*). Yet Abraham's question was met with a covenant ceremony, while Zechariah's is met with rebuke — perhaps because Zechariah asks after receiving angelic revelation inside the temple, a context that should have compelled faith rather than doubt.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 15:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. Gabriel's self-identification is both a rebuke and a credential: 'I stand in the presence of God' — the one doubting is speaking to someone who has come directly from God's throne room. Gabriel appears in the Old Testament only in Daniel 8:16 and 9:21, both times delivering prophetic revelation about God's eschatological timing. The verb *euangelisasthai* ('to bring good news') is the root of 'gospel' — this birth announcement is gospel proclamation.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 8:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The Greek *idou* ('look, listen') introduces the consequence of disbelief. Zechariah's muteness is both sign and discipline — he asked for a sign and received one, though not the kind he wanted. The phrase *eis ton kairon auton* ('at their proper time') uses *kairos*, the Greek word for an appointed or decisive moment, not merely chronological time (*chronos*). God's timing is purposeful.
21. The incense ritual was brief; prolonged absence would cause concern. The verb *ethaumazon* ('were wondering, were amazed') carries a note of unease — the congregation senses something unusual has occurred. The imperfect tense suggests ongoing, growing wonder.

- 22.** The Greek *kophos* can mean 'deaf' or 'mute' or both. The context (v. 62 suggests he is also deaf, since they make signs to him) indicates both senses may be intended. The verb *dianeuein* ('making signs, gesturing') paints a vivid scene of the frustrated priest trying to communicate what has happened. The people immediately recognize the signs of a prophetic vision — this was part of Israel's religious memory even after centuries without prophets.
- 23.** The Greek *leitourgias* ('service, ministry') is a technical term for priestly duty — it gives us the English 'liturgy.' Zechariah faithfully completes his week of temple service despite his muteness before returning home, presumably to the hill country of Judea (cf. v. 39).
- 24.** Elizabeth's five months of seclusion is unique to Luke and its purpose is debated. Possible reasons include: pious devotion and prayer during the miraculous pregnancy, avoidance of public scrutiny until the pregnancy was unmistakable, or simply a narrative device that allows the sixth month to align with Gabriel's visit to Mary (v. 26). The verb *periekryben* ('hid herself, kept in seclusion') is intensive.
- 25.** Elizabeth's words echo Rachel's response to the birth of Joseph: 'God has taken away my reproach' (Genesis 30:23). Barrenness in the ancient world was a social stigma and was often interpreted as a sign of divine disfavor. The Greek *oneidos* ('reproach, disgrace') carries the weight of public shame. God's intervention removes not just the biological condition but the social stigma.
- 25.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 30:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 26.** The sixth month refers to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, linking the two birth narratives. The scene shifts dramatically from the Jerusalem temple (center of Israel's worship) to Nazareth (an obscure village in Galilee, never mentioned in the Old Testament). This contrast is theologically significant — God's decisive act comes not in the religious capital but in an insignificant town.
- 27.** Luke repeats *parthenos* ('virgin') twice in one verse, emphasizing Mary's virginal status. The phrase *ex oikou Dauid* ('of the house of David') most naturally modifies Joseph, establishing the Davidic lineage through which Jesus will be the legal heir to David's throne. The name *Mariam* is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Miriam*.
- 28.** The Greek *kecharitomene* ('favored one, graced one') is a perfect passive participle of *charitoō* ('to bestow grace upon'). It indicates Mary has been and continues to be the recipient of God's grace. The Latin Vulgate rendered this *gratia plena* ('full of grace'), which shaped Catholic theology of Mary. The Greek itself simply indicates that God has graciously chosen her for this role. The KJV addition 'blessed art thou among women' is not in the earliest manuscripts of this verse (it appears in v. 42 from Elizabeth's mouth) and is omitted in the SBLGNT.
- 29.** The verb *dietarachte* ('was deeply troubled, was thoroughly perplexed') is an intensified form — stronger than Zechariah's *tarachte* in v. 12. Notably, Mary is troubled not by the angel's appearance but by his words (*epi to logo*). She is pondering the theological significance of the greeting, not merely frightened. The imperfect *dielozeto* ('was considering, kept wondering') suggests extended reflection.
- 30.** The phrase 'found favor with God' (*heures charin para to theo*) echoes the Old Testament idiom used of Noah (Genesis 6:8), Moses (Exodus 33:12-17), and others whom God chose for significant roles. The word *charis* ('favor, grace') connects to *kecharitomene* in v. 28 — the same grace-root appears in both the angel's greeting and his reassurance.
- 30.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 6:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 30.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 33:12-17 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 31.** The announcement follows the pattern of Old Testament birth oracles: conception, birth, naming (cf. Genesis 16:11, Isaiah 7:14, Judges 13:3-5). The name *Iesous* (Jesus) is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Yeshua* ('the LORD saves'). The verb *kaleseis* ('you will call') — the naming is given to Mary, not to Joseph as in Matthew 1:21, though both parents are involved in the naming.
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 16:11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 7:14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Judges 13:3-5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 32.** The title 'Son of the Most High' (*huios hypsistou*) draws on the divine sonship language of the Davidic covenant: 'I will be his father, and he shall be my son' (2 Samuel 7:14). 'Most High' (*hypsistos*) is a title for God used frequently in the Psalms (Psalm 7:17, 9:2, 21:7, 46:4, 47:2, 50:14). The promise of 'the throne of David his father' directly invokes the Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel 7:12-16 — an eternal dynasty that many believed had been interrupted by the exile.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Samuel 7:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 7:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

33. The phrase *eis tous aionas* ('into the ages, forever') echoes the 'forever' (*olam*) language of the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7:13, 16). 'The house of Jacob' uses the patriarch's name for Israel, emphasizing covenant continuity. The declaration 'of his kingdom there will be no end' echoes Daniel 7:14, where the Son of Man receives 'an everlasting dominion that will not pass away.' Gabriel's language weaves together Davidic and Danielic messianic expectations.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Samuel 7:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
34. Mary's question differs crucially from Zechariah's (v. 18). Zechariah asked 'How can I be sure?' (requesting proof); Mary asks 'How will this happen?' (requesting understanding of the mechanism). The phrase *andra ou ginosko* ('I do not know a man') uses *ginosko* in its sexual sense, corresponding to the Hebrew *yada*. Unlike Zechariah, Mary is not rebuked — her question is met with explanation rather than punishment.
35. The verb *episkiasei* ('will overshadow') recalls the cloud of God's presence overshadowing the tabernacle (Exodus 40:35, LXX uses the same verb). The language is theophanic, not sexual — God's creative, sheltering presence will bring about the conception. The parallel structure ('Holy Spirit / power of the Most High') is synonymous parallelism, a Hebrew poetic device. 'Son of God' (*huios theou*) here moves beyond the Davidic covenant title of v. 32 to a more direct claim about divine origin.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 40:35 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The Greek *syggenis* ('relative, kinswoman') does not specify the exact relationship — the KJV's 'cousin' is too specific. This kinship between Mary and Elizabeth creates a connection between the priestly family (Elizabeth, descendant of Aaron) and the Davidic family (Mary, through Joseph's lineage). Elizabeth's pregnancy serves as a confirmatory sign for Mary, though Mary did not ask for one.
37. This echoes Genesis 18:14 (LXX), where God says to Abraham regarding Sarah's promised pregnancy: 'Is anything impossible with God?' The Greek *rhema* ('word, thing, matter') carries the double sense of both 'word' and 'deed' — God's word and God's act are one. What God speaks, he accomplishes.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 18:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. Mary's response *doule kyriou* ('servant/slave of the Lord') is a title of honor in the Old Testament — Moses, David, and the prophets are called 'servants of the LORD.' The optative *genoito* ('let it be, may it happen') expresses willing consent, not passive resignation. Mary actively submits to God's plan. Her response contrasts sharply with Zechariah's doubt — she accepts the impossible on the basis of God's word alone.
39. The Greek *meta spoudes* ('with haste, with urgency') suggests eagerness rather than anxiety — Mary rushes to see the sign Gabriel mentioned. The hill country of Judah is south of Jerusalem, a journey of roughly 80-100 miles from Nazareth in Galilee, requiring several days of travel. The traditional identification is Ein Karem, west of Jerusalem.
40. The verb *espasato* ('greeted') is a standard greeting verb, but in context it triggers the extraordinary response of vv. 41-45. Mary's greeting becomes the catalyst for prophetic revelation — the sound of her voice causes the Spirit-filled response in both the unborn John and his mother.
41. The verb *eskirtesen* ('leaped, jumped for joy') is used in the Septuagint for joyful leaping (cf. Malachi 4:2, Genesis 25:22). This fulfills the angel's promise that John would be 'filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb' (v. 15). The unborn John's response to the presence of the unborn Jesus is Luke's first indication of Jesus's significance — recognized even before birth.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Malachi 4:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 25:22. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
42. The verb *anephonesen* ('cried out, exclaimed') with *krauge megale* ('a great shout') indicates Spirit-empowered prophetic speech, not casual conversation. 'Blessed among women' (*eulogemene su en gynaixin*) echoes the praise given to Jael in Judges 5:24 — a woman who played a decisive role in God's deliverance of Israel. 'Fruit of the womb' is a Semitic idiom for a child (cf. Deuteronomy 7:13, 28:4).
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Judges 5:24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 7:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. Elizabeth's question *pothen moi touto* ('from where is this to me?') echoes David's response when the ark of the covenant was brought to him: 'How can the ark of the Lord come to me?' (2 Samuel 6:9). The parallel suggests that Mary, carrying Jesus, is analogous to the ark carrying God's presence. The title 'my Lord' (*tou kyriou mou*) applied to the unborn Jesus is a remarkable christological confession — Elizabeth recognizes the child Mary carries as her Lord.

43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Samuel 6:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
44. Elizabeth interprets her baby's movement as joyful recognition — *eskirtesen en agalliasai* ('leaped with exultation'). The word *agalliasis* ('exultation, great joy') is the same term used in v. 14 for the joy John would bring. John's prophetic role — pointing to Jesus — begins in the womb.
45. The Greek *makaria* ('blessed, happy, fortunate') pronounces a blessing on Mary's faith. The contrast with Zechariah's unbelief (v. 20) is implicit — Mary believed and is blessed; Zechariah doubted and was struck mute. The noun *teleiosis* ('fulfillment, completion, accomplishment') emphasizes that God's words will reach their intended completion.
46. The Magnificat (vv. 46–55) is traditionally named from the Latin translation of *megalynei* ('magnifies'). This hymn draws extensively on Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1–10, which also celebrated God's reversal of the powerful and the lowly. 'My soul magnifies' means 'my whole being declares the greatness of' — the verb *megalyno* means to make great, to enlarge, to declare the greatness of someone.
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Samuel 2:1–10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
47. The parallel 'my soul / my spirit' is synonymous parallelism — Hebrew poetic form in Greek garb. The aorist *egalliasen* ('rejoiced') alongside the present *megalynei* ('magnifies') may express a past moment of joy that continues into the present. 'God my Savior' (to *theo* to *soteri mou*) echoes Habakkuk 3:18 and Psalm 24:5 (LXX). Mary identifies God specifically as her Savior.
47. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Samuel 2:1–10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
47. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Habakkuk 3:18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
47. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 24:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
48. The Greek *tapeinosin* ('humble state, low position') echoes Hannah's prayer — God attends to the lowly. Mary's self-designation as *doile* ('servant, slave') repeats her response in v. 38. The prophecy 'all generations will call me blessed' (*makariousin me pasai hai geneai*) has been remarkably fulfilled across two millennia of Christian tradition.
48. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Samuel 2:1–10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
49. The title *ho dynatos* ('the Mighty One, the Powerful One') echoes Zephaniah 3:17 and Psalm 24:8. 'Holy is his name' (*hagion to onoma autou*) echoes Psalm 111:9 (LXX). The structure shifts from personal testimony (what God has done for me) to universal declaration (God's character and actions in history).
49. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Samuel 2:1–10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
49. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Zephaniah 3:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
49. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 24:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
49. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 111:9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
50. The Greek *eleos* ('mercy') here corresponds to the Hebrew *chesed* in the Septuagint tradition, though the Magnificat uses the simpler term rather than the full covenantal weight of *chesed*. 'Those who fear him' (*tois phoboumenois auton*) refers to reverent awe and covenant faithfulness, not terror. 'From generation to generation' (*eis geneas kai geneas*) echoes Psalm 103:17.
50. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Samuel 2:1–10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
50. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 103:17 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
51. The 'arm of the LORD' is a consistent Old Testament metaphor for divine power in action, especially in the Exodus (Exodus 6:6, Deuteronomy 4:34, Isaiah 51:9). The aorist tense *epoiesen* ('he has done') may be a 'prophetic aorist' — speaking of future divine acts as though already accomplished. 'Scattered the proud' (*dieskorpisen hyperephanous*) draws on the theme of God humbling the arrogant (cf. Psalm 89:10, Isaiah 2:12–17).
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Samuel 2:1–10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 6:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 4:34. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 51:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 89:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 2:12-17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
52. This is the central reversal theme of the Magnificat, directly paralleling Hannah's song: 'The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts' (1 Samuel 2:7). The Greek dynastas ('rulers, those in power') and tapeinous ('the lowly, the humble') form a deliberate contrast. Mary, a peasant girl from Nazareth, embodies the humble whom God exalts.
52. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Samuel 2:1-10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
53. The reversal continues: hungry filled, rich emptied. This echoes 1 Samuel 2:5 ('those who were full hire themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry cease to hunger'). Luke's Gospel will develop this theme extensively — the Beatitudes (6:20-26), the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31), and Jesus's teaching on wealth throughout.
53. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Samuel 2:1-10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
54. The verb antelabeto ('has helped, has come to the aid of') implies taking someone by the hand to support them. Israel is called God's pais ('servant, child'), echoing Isaiah's servant language (Isaiah 41:8-9, 'you, Israel, my servant'). 'In remembrance of his mercy' (mnesthenai eleous) means God is acting because he remembers his covenant commitment — divine memory in the Old Testament is always linked to covenant action.
54. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Samuel 2:1-10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
54. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 41:8-9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
55. The Magnificat concludes with explicit reference to the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12:1-3, 17:7-8, 22:17-18). The Greek sperma ('seed, offspring') is the same term used in the Septuagint for the covenant promises to Abraham. Mary understands the child she carries as the fulfillment of promises made to Abraham — a covenant arc spanning two thousand years. The phrase eis ton aiona ('forever, into the age') corresponds to the Hebrew olam.
55. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Samuel 2:1-10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
55. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 12:1-3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
56. Three months would bring Elizabeth to full term (she was in her sixth month when Mary arrived, v. 26). Luke does not explicitly state whether Mary was present for John's birth — the narrative leaves this ambiguous. The phrase hos menas treis ('about three months') with the approximating hos suggests Luke is reporting a round number rather than an exact duration.
57. The phrase eplesthe ho chronos ('the time was fulfilled') echoes Genesis 25:24 (Rebekah) and uses the language of fullness and completion — God's timing has reached its appointed moment. The narrative moves swiftly and simply, as is typical of biblical birth accounts.
57. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 25:24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
58. The verb emegalynen ('had made great, had magnified') echoes Mary's megalynai ('magnifies') in v. 46 — the same root appears in the community's recognition of God's mercy toward Elizabeth. The Greek eleos ('mercy') again corresponds to the Hebrew chesed. The communal rejoicing fulfills the angel's promise in v. 14 that 'many will rejoice at his birth.'
59. Circumcision on the eighth day follows the command of Genesis 17:12 and Leviticus 12:3. The naming at circumcision was customary practice. The imperfect ekalon ('they were calling, they were going to name') indicates an attempt that will be interrupted — the community assumed the child would follow the common pattern of being named after his father.
59. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 17:12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
59. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 12:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
60. Elizabeth's emphatic ouchi ('No!') and her knowledge of the divinely appointed name is striking — Zechariah has been mute and presumably unable to communicate the angel's instructions in detail. Whether she learned the name from Zechariah through written communication or through her own Spirit-filled insight (v. 41) is not stated. Her insistence overrides social convention.
61. The community's objection reveals the social expectation that names should stay within the family. The Greek syggeneia ('kindred, family, relatives') emphasizes the clan identity system. Naming a child outside the family's traditional names was unusual and would require explanation.
62. That they make signs (enenuon, 'were gesturing') to Zechariah rather than simply speaking to him suggests he was deaf as well as mute — the Greek kophos in v. 22 can mean both. This detail confirms that the affliction was comprehensive, making Zechariah's restoration all the more dramatic.

63. The Greek *pinakidion* ('writing tablet') was a small wax-coated board used for notes. Zechariah's written confirmation of Elizabeth's declaration — without any prior consultation possible given his deafness — demonstrates divine orchestration. His phrasing 'his name is John' (*Ioannes estin onoma autou*) uses the present tense 'is' rather than 'shall be,' indicating the name has already been divinely assigned.
64. The passive *aneoichthe* ('was opened') indicates divine action — God removes the discipline at the moment of obedient faith. Zechariah's first words after months of silence are praise (*eulogon ton theon*, 'blessing God'). The verb *elalei* (imperfect, 'he was speaking, he began to speak') suggests continuous speech — the dam breaks and words pour out.
65. The 'fear' (*phobos*) that comes upon the community is reverential awe in the presence of the divine — the same response as Zechariah's in v. 12. The imperfect passive *dialaetto* ('were being discussed, were being talked about') indicates ongoing, widespread conversation. The phrase *panta ta remata tauta* ('all these words/events') uses *rhema* in its Semitic sense of both 'word' and 'event.'
66. The phrase *ethento en te kardia auton* ('placed in their hearts') echoes Mary's response in 2:19 and 2:51 — treasuring events in the heart is Luke's motif for those who are pondering God's actions. 'The hand of the Lord was with him' (*cheir kyriou en met autou*) is an Old Testament expression for divine empowerment and protection (cf. 1 Samuel 5:6, 2 Kings 3:15, Ezra 7:9).
66. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Samuel 5:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
66. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Kings 3:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
66. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezra 7:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
67. Like Elizabeth (v. 41), Zechariah is filled with the Holy Spirit for prophetic speech. The verb *epropheteusen* ('prophesied') identifies the *Benedictus* (vv. 68-79) as Spirit-inspired prophecy, not merely personal praise. After months of enforced silence, Zechariah's first extended speech is prophetic proclamation.
68. The *Benedictus* (vv. 68-79) opens with a traditional Jewish blessing formula: *eulogetos kyrios* ('blessed be the Lord'), corresponding to the Hebrew *baruk YHWH*. The verb *epeskepsato* ('has visited') carries the sense of God paying attention, inspecting, and acting on behalf of his people (cf. Exodus 4:31, Ruth 1:6). The noun *lytrosis* ('redemption') is liberation through the payment of a ransom — language rooted in the Exodus and in the *go'el* (kinsman-redeemer) tradition.
68. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 41:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
68. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 4:31 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
68. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ruth 1:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
69. The 'horn of salvation' (*keras soterias*) is a metaphor drawn from the powerful horns of animals — it signifies strength and power to save (cf. Psalm 18:2, 2 Samuel 22:3). 'In the house of David his servant' identifies this salvation as fulfillment of the Davidic covenant (2 Samuel 7). Zechariah, a priest, celebrates God's act through the royal line — priestly and royal streams converge in this moment.
69. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 18:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
69. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Samuel 22:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
69. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Samuel 7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
70. The phrase *ap aionos* ('from of old, from the age, since ancient times') emphasizes the long-standing nature of God's prophetic promises. The prophets are described as God's mouthpiece — 'through the mouth of' (*dia stomatos*) indicates that the words were God's, spoken through human agents. This is Luke's articulation of prophetic inspiration.
71. The language of salvation from enemies (*soterian ex echthron*) echoes the Psalms of deliverance (Psalm 18:3, 17; 106:10). In Zechariah's immediate context, the 'enemies' would include Roman occupation and Herodian oppression, but the *Benedictus* will soon reveal a deeper spiritual dimension to this salvation (v. 77). The phrase is deliberately broad enough to encompass both political and spiritual deliverance.
71. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 18:3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
72. The Greek *eleos* ('mercy') here carries the force of the Hebrew *chesed* — covenantal mercy shown to the fathers. The Greek *diathekes* ('covenant') translates the Hebrew *berit*. The phrase 'remember his holy covenant' does not mean God had forgotten but that he is now acting on what he has always remembered — divine remembering is covenant activation (cf. Genesis 8:1, Exodus 2:24).
72. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 8:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

72. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 2:24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
73. The reference to God's oath (horkon) to Abraham points to Genesis 22:16-18, where God swears by himself (since there is no one greater to swear by) after the near-sacrifice of Isaac. This is the most solemn form of divine commitment in the Old Testament — an oath-bound covenant. The author of Hebrews will later develop this same point (Hebrews 6:13-18).
73. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 22:16-18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
74. The verb *latreuein* ('to serve, to worship') is the Septuagint's standard term for priestly or liturgical service to God. The purpose of deliverance is not mere freedom but worship — Israel is rescued from enemies so that they can serve God. This echoes the Exodus pattern: 'Let my people go so that they may serve me' (Exodus 7:16, 8:1, 9:1). Rescue is the means; worship is the goal.
74. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 7:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
75. The pair *hosioteiti kai dikaiosyne* ('holiness and righteousness') describes the complete character of covenant faithfulness — devotion toward God (holiness) and right conduct toward others (righteousness). The phrase 'all our days' (*pasais tais hemerai hemon*) envisions a lifelong pattern, not momentary piety.
76. Zechariah now turns from God's covenant faithfulness (vv. 68-75) to his own son's role. 'Prophet of the Most High' (*prophetes hypsistou*) parallels the title 'Son of the Most High' given to Jesus in v. 32. John's role is defined by the phrase from Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 — the forerunner who prepares the way. The ambiguity of *kyrios* ('Lord') is significant — it could refer to God or to the Messiah. In context, it likely refers to Jesus, making Zechariah's prophecy a remarkable theological claim.
76. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Malachi 3:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
76. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 40:3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
77. Here Zechariah redefines the 'salvation' he has been celebrating. After the martial language of vv. 71 and 74 (enemies, deliverance), the climactic definition is: salvation through forgiveness of sins (*en aphesei hamartion*). The Greek *aphesis* ('release, forgiveness, pardon') is the Septuagint word for the liberation of the Jubilee year (Leviticus 25:10) — forgiveness is portrayed as release from bondage.
77. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 25:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
78. The Greek *splanchna eleous* ('bowels/depths of mercy') is intensely physical — *splanchna* refers to the internal organs, the seat of deepest emotion in ancient thought. The word *anatole* ('rising, dawn, dayspring') can mean either 'sunrise' or 'branch/shoot' (cf. Jeremiah 23:5, Zechariah 3:8, where the Hebrew *tsemach*, 'branch,' is rendered *anatole* in the Septuagint). The ambiguity may be intentional — the coming one is both the Messianic Branch and the dawning light.
78. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 23:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
78. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 3:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
79. This verse echoes Isaiah 9:2 ('the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light') and Psalm 107:10 ('those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death'). The Greek *skia thanatou* ('shadow of death') translates the Hebrew *tsalmaveth*, the deep darkness of Sheol and despair. The Benedictus concludes with *eirene* ('peace'), corresponding to the Hebrew *shalom* — not merely absence of conflict but the fullness of well-being that comes when God's covenant purposes are fulfilled.
79. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 9:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
79. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 107:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
80. This summary verse parallels the growth notices for Samuel (1 Samuel 2:26) and will be echoed for Jesus (2:40, 52). The phrase *en tais eremois* ('in the wilderness areas') suggests John lived in the Judean desert, perhaps near the Dead Sea, before beginning his public ministry. The noun *anadeixeos* ('public appearance, showing forth, commissioning') occurs only here in the New Testament and suggests a formal appointment or public presentation — John's ministry did not begin gradually but with a definitive public emergence.
80. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Samuel 2:26 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

2

Summary: *Luke 2 narrates the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem during a Roman census under Augustus, the angelic announcement to shepherds, the presentation of the infant Jesus at the Jerusalem temple where Simeon and Anna recognize him as the promised Messiah, and a childhood episode where the twelve-year-old Jesus is found teaching in the temple. The chapter contains the Gloria in Excelsis (the angels' song, v. 14) and the Nunc Dimittis (Simeon's prayer, vv. 29-32), both rendered as poetry.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Luke alone sets the birth of Jesus within the framework of Roman imperial history — the census of Augustus becomes the mechanism by which Davidic prophecy is fulfilled (Micah 5:2). The announcement comes to shepherds, the lowest rung of society, not to priests or rulers. Simeon's Nunc Dimittis introduces the universal scope of salvation ('a light for revelation to the Gentiles') alongside its Jewish fulfillment ('glory for your people Israel'). Anna, one of only a few named female prophets in the Bible, confirms Simeon's testimony. The chapter ends with the only canonical account of Jesus's childhood.*

Translation Friction: *The census under Quirinius (v. 2) presents a well-known historical difficulty — Quirinius's known census occurred in AD 6, after Herod's death (4 BC). Scholars have proposed various solutions; we render the Greek as given without harmonizing. The phrase 'firstborn son' (v. 7) describes birth order, not a claim about subsequent children. The 'manger' (phatne) could refer to a feeding trough or an animal stall. We render transparently and note the range.*

Connections: *The Bethlehem birth fulfills Micah 5:2. The shepherds connect to David's own origins as a Bethlehem shepherd (1 Samuel 16). Simeon's language draws on Isaiah 42:6, 49:6 (light to the nations), and Isaiah 52:10 (salvation before all peoples). The temple presentation follows Exodus 13:2, 12 and Leviticus 12:1-8. Jesus in the temple at age twelve anticipates his adult ministry and echoes Samuel's temple childhood (1 Samuel 2-3).*

¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole empire should be registered. ²This was the first registration, taken when Quirinius was governing Syria. ³So everyone went to be registered, each to his own city. ⁴Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, ⁵Indeed, to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being remarkable with child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷She gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapped him in strips of cloth, and laid him in a feeding trough, because there was no room for them in the guest quarters. ⁸In that same region there were shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹An angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For today in the city of David a Savior has been born for you, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be the sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a feeding trough." ¹³And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those on whom his favor rests."

¹⁵When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the feeding trough. ¹⁷When they had seen this, they made known what had been told them about this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them. ²¹When eight days had passed and it was time for his circumcision, he was named Jesus — the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. ²²When the time required for her purification as the law of Moses required was completed, they brought him to Jerusalem, to dedicate him to the Lord;. ²³(As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb will be known as holy to the Lord;). ²⁴Or two young pigeons, to offer a sacrifice

according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves. ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, he came into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and blessed God, saying,

²⁹"Now, Master, you are releasing your servant in peace,
according to your word,

³⁰Because mine eyes have seen your salvation,. ³¹Which you have prepared before the face of all people. ³²A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of your those present Israel. ³³His father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed — ³⁵(Yea, a sword will pierce by way of your own soul also,) that the thoughts of numerous hearts may be revealed. ³⁶There was also a prophetess named Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very advanced in years, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, ³⁷She was a widow of concerning fourscore and four years, which departed not from the sanctuary, but served God with fastings and prayers after dark and time. ³⁸Coming up at that very hour, she began to give thanks to God and to speak about him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹When they had completed everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, being filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. ⁴¹His parents went to Jerusalem every year for the Festival of Passover. ⁴²When he was twelve years old, they went up according to the custom of the festival. ⁴³After the days of the festival were completed, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Assuming he was in the caravan, they traveled a day's journey and then began looking for him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷All who heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him, they were overwhelmed. His mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." ⁴⁹He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. And his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and people.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *oikoumene* ('the inhabited world') refers in practice to the Roman Empire. The verb *apographesthai* ('to be registered, to be enrolled') refers to a census for taxation purposes, not taxation itself — the KJV's 'taxed' is misleading. Luke frames the birth of the true King within the imperial machinery of a false one — Augustus claimed divine titles (son of god, savior, bringer of peace) that Luke will attribute to Jesus.
2. The Greek *haute apographe prote* ('this registration was the first') could also be rendered 'this registration took place before Quirinius was governing Syria' (taking *prote* as 'before' with a genitive absolute, as in John 15:18). The standard reading identifies this as the first of its kind under Quirinius. The historical difficulty — Quirinius's documented census was in AD 6-7, after Herod's death — remains unresolved among scholars. Luke may be referring to an earlier administrative role of Quirinius not otherwise attested.
3. Registration at one's ancestral city (rather than place of residence) reflects either a Jewish or Egyptian census practice — Roman censuses typically registered people where they lived. Luke presents this as the mechanism by which Joseph, a Galilean resident, must travel to Bethlehem, fulfilling the Davidic birthplace prophecy.
4. The verb *anebe* ('went up') is geographically literal — Bethlehem is at a higher elevation than Nazareth, and one always 'goes up' to Judea from Galilee. 'City of David' (*polin Daudid*) identifies Bethlehem as David's birthplace (1 Samuel 16:1, 17:12), distinct from Jerusalem, which is also called 'the city of David' (2 Samuel 5:7). Luke establishes Davidic lineage through Joseph, the legal father.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Samuel 16:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Samuel 5:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

5. The Greek *emnesteuomene* ('pledged in marriage, betrothed') is the same term used in 1:27. Luke does not say 'his wife' here (some manuscripts add *gynaiki*, 'wife,' but the SBLGNT does not include it). The phrase *ouse enkuo* ('being pregnant') states the fact directly. The journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem — approximately 80-90 miles — would have been arduous for a woman near full term.
6. The phrase *eplesthesan hai hemera* ('the days were fulfilled') uses the same fullness-of-time language seen in 1:57 for Elizabeth. The narrative is compressed — Luke does not specify how long they had been in Bethlehem before the birth. God's timing moves through the machinery of Roman bureaucracy to fulfill ancient prophecy.
7. The Greek *prototokos* ('firstborn') is a legal and cultural designation indicating rights and status, not necessarily implying subsequent children. The verb *esparganosen* ('wrapped in swaddling bands') describes the ancient practice of tightly wrapping a newborn in strips of cloth. The Greek *phatne* ('manger, feeding trough') is where animals eat — the word itself emphasizes the humble circumstances. The Greek *katalyma* ('guest room, lodging') is not the word for a commercial inn (*pandocheion*, which Luke uses in 10:34); it likely refers to the guest room of a private home, which was already occupied.
8. The Greek *agraoulountes* ('living in the fields, camping out') indicates these shepherds were sleeping outdoors with their flocks, not merely working during the day. Shepherds occupied one of the lowest social positions — they were considered unreliable as legal witnesses and were often suspected of grazing their flocks on others' land. That God's announcement comes to them first is theologically significant for Luke's Gospel, which consistently elevates the lowly.
9. The verb *epeste* ('stood before, appeared suddenly') indicates a sudden, startling appearance. The 'glory of the Lord' (*doxa kyriou*) is the visible manifestation of God's presence — the same term used for the cloud that filled the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34) and Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:11). The phrase *ephobethesav phobon megan* (literally 'they feared a great fear') is a Semitic intensifying construction indicating extreme terror.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 40:34. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Kings 8:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The verb *euangelizomai* ('I bring good news, I announce gospel') is the same verb used of Gabriel's announcement to Zechariah (1:19). The 'great joy' (*charan megalen*) echoes the joy theme from chapter 1 (1:14, 44, 47). 'All the people' (*panti to lao*) in context refers primarily to Israel, though Luke's Gospel will extend this joy to all nations.
11. Three titles are stacked: *soter* ('Savior'), *christos* ('Christ/Messiah'), and *kyrios* ('Lord'). Each would have carried enormous weight. 'Savior' was a title used for Augustus Caesar; 'Christ' is the Greek form of Hebrew *mashiach*; 'Lord' (*kyrios*) is the Septuagint's standard rendering of YHWH. The combination 'Christ the Lord' (*christos kyrios*) is unique in the New Testament and may echo the Psalms of Solomon 17:32, a Jewish messianic text. The announcement to shepherds in the city of David is richly ironic — David was himself a shepherd from Bethlehem.
12. The 'sign' (*semeion*) is deliberately humble — not a cosmic portent but a baby in a feeding trough. The sign confirms the message by its very ordinariness combined with its specificity. The juxtaposition of the exalted titles (Savior, Christ, Lord) with the humble sign (a wrapped infant in an animal's feeding trough) is one of the most powerful contrasts in the New Testament.
13. The Greek *stratias ouraniou* ('heavenly army, heavenly host') is a military term — these are not gentle cherubs but the army of heaven. The same phrase is used in the Septuagint for the 'host of heaven' (*tseva hashamayim*) that surrounds God's throne. Their appearance 'suddenly' (*exaiphnes*) emphasizes the supernatural character of the event.
14. The Gloria in Excelsis is structured in two parallel lines: heaven/earth, God/humanity. The Greek *en anthropois eudokias* ('among people of [his] favor/good pleasure') follows the SBLGNT reading with the genitive *eudokias* rather than the nominative *eudokia*. This means 'among those whom God favors' rather than 'good will toward people.' The Dead Sea Scrolls use similar language — 'sons of his good pleasure' (*benei retsono*). 'Peace' (*eirene*) corresponds to the Hebrew *shalom* — the full vision of wholeness and flourishing that the Messiah brings.
15. The Greek *rhema* ('word, thing, event') again carries the dual meaning of word and event — what God has spoken has become an event they can go and see. The shepherds' immediate response echoes the pattern of faith-in-action seen in Mary (1:38) and Joseph (Matthew 1:24). The verb *egnorisen* ('has made known, has revealed') emphasizes that this is divine disclosure, not human discovery.
16. The verb *speusantes* ('having hurried') shows the urgency of their response — like Mary's haste to visit Elizabeth (1:39). The verb *aneuran* ('found, discovered after searching') suggests some effort was required to locate them. The order 'Mary and Joseph' places Mary first, consistent with Luke's emphasis on her role throughout the birth narrative.
17. The shepherds become the first evangelists — they 'made known' (*egnorisan*) the message, using the same verb used of God's disclosure to them (v. 15). The pattern is clear: God reveals, recipients believe, and believers proclaim. The shepherds are transformed from passive recipients of a message to active proclaimers of it.
18. The verb *ethaumasas* ('were amazed, were astonished') describes the natural response to extraordinary news. Luke frequently notes the amazement of crowds (cf. 1:63, 4:22, 8:25, 9:43, 11:14). The response is wonder but not yet faith — amazement is a starting point, not an endpoint.
19. The verb *syneterei* ('was keeping safe, was treasuring') implies careful preservation. The verb *syballousa* ('pondering, putting together, comparing') suggests active reflection — Mary is connecting the dots between Gabriel's announcement, Elizabeth's prophecy, and now the shepherds' report. This verse (and its parallel in v. 51) has been seen as a possible indication that Luke's source for the birth narrative was Mary herself.

- 20.** The phrase 'just as it had been told them' (kathos elalethe pros autois) confirms the exact fulfillment of the angelic sign — they found everything precisely as described. The shepherds' response of glorifying and praising God becomes a model for the proper response to encountering God's salvation in Luke's Gospel.
- 21.** As with John (1:59), circumcision and naming occur on the eighth day (Genesis 17:12, Leviticus 12:3). Luke emphasizes that the name was divinely given (through the angel, 1:31) before conception — the child's identity and mission were established before his existence. The name Iesous (Jesus/Yeshua, 'the LORD saves') is now formally conferred.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 17:12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 12:3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 22.** The SBLGNT reads auton ('their') rather than autes ('her'), though the purification ritual in Leviticus 12 applies specifically to the mother. Luke may use 'their' to include the family's broader obligation or to connect the purification with the presentation of the firstborn. The purification period for a male child was forty days (Leviticus 12:2-4). 'Present him to the Lord' reflects Exodus 13:2, 12 — every firstborn male belongs to God.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 13:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** This quotation draws on Exodus 13:2, 12, 15. The phrase 'opens the womb' (dianoigon metran) is the standard biblical idiom for a firstborn child. The consecration of the firstborn to God commemorates the Passover, when God spared Israel's firstborn in Egypt. The irony for Luke's reader is rich — this child who is 'called holy to the Lord' is in fact the Lord's own Son.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 13:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 24.** The offering of birds rather than a lamb (Leviticus 12:8) is the provision for families too poor to afford the standard offering of a lamb plus a pigeon. This detail quietly establishes the family's economic status — Jesus is born into poverty. The same law that allows the poor person's offering is the one Mary and Joseph follow, and Luke notes it without comment.
- 24.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 12:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 25.** Simeon is described with four characteristics: dikaios ('righteous' — covenant faithfulness), eulabes ('devout, reverent' — careful in religious observance), prosdechomenos paraklesis tou Israel ('waiting for the consolation of Israel' — messianic expectation), and Spirit-empowered. 'The consolation of Israel' (paraklesis tou Israel) draws on Isaiah 40:1 ('Comfort, comfort my people') — the promised end of exile and restoration of God's people.
- 25.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 40:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 26.** The Greek kechrematismenon ('had been divinely warned, had received an oracle') is a technical term for divine communication, often through dreams or oracles. 'The Lord's Christ' (ton christon kyriou) corresponds to the Hebrew mashiach YHWH ('the LORD's anointed'), the specific title for the Davidic king chosen by God (cf. 1 Samuel 24:6, 26:9, 2 Samuel 1:14). Simeon has received a personal promise that he will live to see the Messiah.
- 26.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Samuel 24:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 26.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Samuel 1:14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 27.** The phrase en to pneumati ('in the Spirit, by the Spirit') indicates Spirit-directed action — Simeon did not come to the temple by coincidence but by divine leading. Luke calls Joseph and Mary 'the parents' (tous goneis), a natural designation that does not contradict the virgin birth but reflects the social and legal reality. The meeting appears coincidental but is orchestrated by the Spirit.
- 28.** The verb edexato ('received, took, welcomed') combined with 'into his arms' (eis tas ankalas) creates a tender image — an elderly man cradling a newborn. His first response is to bless God (eulogesen ton theon), not to bless the child, acknowledging that this moment is God's gift to him.
- 29.** The Nunc Dimittis (vv. 29-32), named from the Latin 'now you dismiss,' is Simeon's prayer of departure. The address despota ('Master, Sovereign') is stronger than kyrios — it implies absolute authority, as of a master over a slave. The verb apolyeis ('you are releasing, you are dismissing') uses language of freeing a slave or sentinel from duty. Simeon views his life as a watch that is now fulfilled — he can die in peace because he has seen what God promised.
- 30.** The Greek soterion ('salvation, saving act') is not abstract — Simeon has seen it embodied in a six-week-old infant. The phrase echoes Isaiah 52:10, 'All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.' What Simeon holds in his arms is what Isaiah prophesied the nations would witness.

- 30.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 52:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 31.** The phrase *kata prosopon panton ton laon* ('before the face of all peoples') is crucial — the plural 'peoples' (*laon*) extends salvation beyond Israel to all nations. This universalism echoes Isaiah 52:10 and prepares for the explicit statement in the next verse. Simeon's horizon is not merely Jewish but global.
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 52:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 32.** The two parallel lines define salvation's dual scope: 'light for revelation to the Gentiles' (drawing on Isaiah 42:6 and 49:6, the Servant Songs) and 'glory to your people Israel.' The Greek *ethnon* ('nations, Gentiles') is placed first — a striking priority in a Jewish prayer. The 'light' imagery echoes Isaiah 9:2 and the Benedictus (1:78-79). Luke's Gospel will develop both dimensions — salvation for Israel and salvation for all nations.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 42:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 9:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 33.** The SBLGNT reads *ho pater autou* ('his father') rather than 'Joseph,' which some manuscripts substitute to protect the doctrine of the virgin birth. Luke uses 'father' naturally to describe Joseph's social and legal role. The imperfect *thaumazontes* ('were amazed, kept marveling') suggests ongoing astonishment — each new revelation about their child adds to their wonder.
- 34.** After the joyful *Nunc Dimittis*, Simeon's tone darkens. The Greek *ptosin kai anastasin* ('falling and rising') indicates that this child will be a dividing figure — some will stumble and fall because of him, others will be raised up. The order (falling before rising) may be deliberate. 'A sign opposed' (*semeion antilegomenon*) foreshadows the rejection Jesus will face. Simeon addresses Mary specifically, not Joseph — the next verse will explain why.
- 35.** The Greek *rhomphaia* ('sword, large sword') is not the common *machaira* but a large, broad sword — the imagery is of devastating penetration. This is traditionally understood as a prophecy of Mary's suffering at the cross (John 19:25-27). The purpose clause 'so that thoughts of many hearts may be revealed' indicates that Jesus's ministry and its opposition will force people to reveal their true loyalties — he will expose what is hidden in human hearts.
- 36.** Anna (Greek form of the Hebrew Hannah) is one of the few women in the Bible explicitly called a 'prophetess' (*prophetis*), joining Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), and Isaiah's wife (Isaiah 8:3). Her tribe, Asher, was one of the ten 'lost' northern tribes — her presence in Jerusalem shows that not all Israelites of the northern tribes were lost. Luke provides remarkably detailed biographical information, emphasizing her as a credible witness.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 15:20. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Judges 4:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Kings 22:14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 8:3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 37.** The phrase *heos eton ogdoekonta tessaron* could mean 'a widow for eighty-four years' (making her about 105 years old) or 'a widow until the age of eighty-four.' Either reading depicts extraordinary longevity and devotion. 'Never left the temple' (*ouk aphistato tou hierou*) is likely a hyperbole for constant attendance rather than literal residence. Her worship of fasting and prayer 'night and day' identifies her as a living embodiment of the faithful remnant who waited for God's redemption.
- 38.** The phrase *aute te hora* ('at that very hour') emphasizes the providential timing — Anna arrives at precisely the right moment. The verb *anthomologeito* ('was giving thanks, was praising') is a compound form intensifying the thanksgiving. Those 'waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem' (*prosdchomenois lutrosin Ierousalem*) parallels those 'waiting for the consolation of Israel' (v. 25) — a circle of faithful Jews who held to the messianic hope. The noun *lutrosin* ('redemption') echoes Zechariah's Benedictus (1:68).
- 39.** Luke compresses the narrative significantly — Matthew's account includes the visit of the magi and the flight to Egypt between the temple presentation and the return to Nazareth. Luke does not mention these events, nor does he explicitly contradict them; he simply moves from one episode to the next. The emphasis on completing 'everything required by the law' (*panta ta kata ton nomon*) underscores the family's faithful Torah observance.
- 40.** This growth summary parallels the one for John (1:80) and echoes Samuel's growth (1 Samuel 2:26). The SBLGNT does not include 'in spirit' (*pneumati*), which appears in some manuscripts, likely imported from 1:80. The phrase 'filled with wisdom' (*pleroumenon sophia*) is distinctive — where John grew strong 'in spirit,' Jesus grows in 'wisdom.' The grace of God (*charis theou*) covering the child echoes the favored-one language of Mary's own calling (1:28).

40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Samuel 2:26 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The Torah required all Israelite males to appear before the Lord three times a year: at Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Exodus 23:14-17, Deuteronomy 16:16). That Mary also went reflects pious devotion beyond the legal minimum. The imperfect *eporeuonto* ('used to go, went regularly') indicates habitual practice.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 23:14-17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 16:16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
42. Age twelve was significant in Jewish tradition — it was the year before a boy assumed full responsibility for Torah observance (later formalized as *bar mitzvah* at thirteen). Luke may include this specific age to mark the transition from childhood to religious maturity, setting the stage for Jesus's remarkable interaction in the temple.
43. The Passover festival lasted seven days (Exodus 12:15). The verb *hupemeinen* ('stayed behind, remained') suggests a deliberate act on Jesus's part, not an accident. Large pilgrim caravans traveled together, and children could easily be assumed to be with other family members — the parents' ignorance is plausible and not negligent.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 12:15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
44. The Greek *synodia* ('caravan, traveling company') was the standard mode of pilgrimage travel — large groups from the same region would travel together for safety. A day's journey was roughly 20-25 miles. The search among relatives and acquaintances (*syggenesin kai tois gnostois*) reflects the extended family and community network that traveled together.
45. The return trip adds another day, meaning at least two full days pass before they find Jesus (a day's travel out, a day's travel back, then the search in Jerusalem on the third day, v. 46). The verb *anazetountes* ('searching for, seeking diligently') is intensive — this is an anxious, determined search.
46. The 'three days' (*meta hemeras treis*) may foreshadow the three days between crucifixion and resurrection — a pattern Luke's reader might notice retrospectively. The scene of a twelve-year-old 'sitting among the teachers' (*kathemenon en meso ton didaskalon*) in the temple depicts the posture of a student in a rabbinical discussion. Jesus is both listening and asking — the ancient pedagogical method of learning through dialogue. The 'teachers' (*didaskalon*) were likely scribes and scholars who gathered in the temple courts.
47. The verb *existanto* ('were amazed, were astounded') is stronger than the earlier *ethaumasas* (v. 18) — it implies being beside oneself with astonishment. The combination of *synesis* ('understanding, comprehension, insight') and *apokriseis* ('answers, responses') shows Jesus was not merely asking precocious questions but demonstrating a depth of comprehension that stunned the scholars.
48. Mary's address *teknon* ('child') expresses both tenderness and maternal authority. The verb *odynomenoi* ('in distress, in anguish') is a strong word — the same root is used for the agony of the rich man in Hades (16:24-25). Mary's reference to 'your father' (*ho pater sou*) sets up Jesus's response, which will redefine the word 'father.'
49. These are the first recorded words of Jesus in Luke's Gospel. The phrase *en tois tou patros mou* ('in the things/house of my Father') is ambiguous — it can mean 'in my Father's house' (referring to the temple) or 'about my Father's affairs' (referring to his mission). Both meanings may be intended. The key theological move is the implicit correction of Mary's 'your father': Jesus distinguishes between Joseph ('your father,' v. 48) and God ('my Father'). The verb *dei* ('it is necessary, must') introduces Luke's theme of divine necessity — Jesus's life follows a divinely determined path.
50. The verb *synekan* ('understood, comprehended') indicates that even Mary and Joseph — who had received angelic revelations, heard Simeon's prophecy, and witnessed the shepherds' visit — did not fully grasp the implications of Jesus's words. Luke is honest about the gap between revelation received and revelation understood. Full understanding will come only later, in light of the resurrection.
51. The verb *hypotassomenos* ('being subject, being obedient') emphasizes that Jesus's extraordinary temple dialogue did not lead to rebellion against parental authority. The one who called God 'my Father' nevertheless submits to his earthly parents — a profound theological juxtaposition. Mary's treasuring (*dieterai*, 'was carefully keeping') echoes v. 19 and reinforces the sense that Luke's source may have been Mary's own recollections.
52. This closing summary echoes 1 Samuel 2:26 ('The boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with people'). The Greek *proekopten* ('was advancing, was progressing') implies steady development. The fourfold growth — wisdom (*sophia*), stature/age (*helikia*), favor with God (*chariti para theo*), favor with people (*anthropois*) — presents a fully human development. Luke's Gospel affirms both the divine identity and the genuine humanity of Jesus.
52. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Samuel 2:26. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

3

Summary: *Luke 3 opens with an elaborate sixfold dating formula placing John the Baptist's ministry in precise historical context. John preaches a baptism of repentance in the wilderness, quoting Isaiah 40:3-5 at length. He delivers practical ethical teaching to crowds, tax collectors, and soldiers, and announces the coming of one greater than himself who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. After Herod Antipas imprisons John, Luke narrates Jesus's baptism — the heavens open, the Spirit descends as a dove, and the Father's voice declares Jesus to be his beloved Son. The chapter concludes with Jesus's genealogy, traced backward from Joseph all the way to Adam and to God.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Luke's dating formula (vv. 1-2) is the most precise chronological anchor in the Gospels, naming the Roman emperor, the regional governor, three tetrarchs, and two high priests. The Isaiah quotation (vv. 4-6) extends beyond Matthew and Mark to include 'all flesh shall see the salvation of God' — characteristically Lukan universalism. John's practical ethics (vv. 10-14) are unique to Luke and reveal a prophet concerned not just with repentance but with social justice. Luke's genealogy runs backward (from Jesus to Adam to God), contrasting with Matthew's forward genealogy (from Abraham to Jesus), and extends to all humanity through Adam rather than stopping at Abraham.*

Translation Friction: *Luke's genealogy differs significantly from Matthew's from David onward — Matthew traces through Solomon, Luke through Nathan. Various harmonization theories exist; we render the Greek as given without harmonizing. The phrase 'as was supposed' (hos enomizeto, v. 23) guards the virgin birth while presenting Joseph's legal lineage. The genealogy counts roughly seventy-seven generations, possibly echoing the Enoch traditions or the seventy nations of Genesis 10.*

Connections: *Isaiah 40:3-5 (the voice in the wilderness) connects to the Exodus tradition of God preparing a way through the desert. John's call to repentance connects to the prophetic tradition of Elijah, Amos, and Micah. The baptism scene echoes Israel's crossing of the Jordan and the anointing of kings. The genealogy through Adam connects Jesus to all humanity and to the creation narrative of Genesis 1-5.*

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, ²Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the message of God arrived to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. ³He went into the entire region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴Indeed, as it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet of old and stated, The voice of one crying in the desert, Prepare you the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

⁵Every valley will be filled in,
and every mountain and hill will be made low.
The crooked will become straight,
and the rough paths will be made smooth.

⁶All flesh will see the salvation of God. ⁷He said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Therefore produce fruit consistent with repentance. And do not begin saying to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. ⁹Even now the axe is laid at the root of the trees. Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." ¹⁰The crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹He answered them, "Whoever has two tunics should share with the one who has none, and whoever has food should do the same." ¹²Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³He said to them, "Collect no more than what you have been authorized to collect." ¹⁴So soldiers also asked him, "What should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusations, and be satisfied with your pay." ¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation and everyone was questioning in their hearts whether John might be the Christ, ¹⁶John answered them all, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more

powerful than I is coming. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." ¹⁸So with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people. ¹⁹But Herod the tetrarch, who had been rebuked by John concerning Herodias, his brother's wife, and concerning all the evil things Herod had done, ²⁰Indeed, added yet this above all, that he locked away John in prison. ²¹Now when all the people had been baptized and Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, ²²The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice arrived from heaven, which stated, you are my Son, whom I love deeply. In you I am well pleased. ²³Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, ²⁴Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph,. ²⁵Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge,. ²⁶Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda,. ²⁷Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri,. ²⁸Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er,. ²⁹Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi,. ³⁰Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim,. ³¹Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David,. ³²Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson,. ³³Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda,. ³⁴Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor,. ³⁵Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalec, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala,. ³⁶Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech,. ³⁷Which was the son of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan,. ³⁸Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Luke's sixfold dating formula imitates the style of Old Testament prophetic introductions (cf. Isaiah 1:1, Jeremiah 1:1-3, Hosea 1:1) and Hellenistic historical writing. The fifteenth year of Tiberius would be approximately AD 28-29. The scope expands outward from the emperor to the local rulers, placing God's prophetic word within the structures of worldly power. 'Tetrarch' (tetraarchountos) literally means 'ruler of a quarter' — these were subordinate rulers under Roman authority.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 1:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 1:1-3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Hosea 1:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. Technically only one high priest served at a time; Caiaphas held the office officially (AD 18-36), but Annas, his father-in-law who had served earlier (AD 6-15), retained enormous influence (cf. John 18:13, Acts 4:6). Luke names both to reflect the political reality. The phrase *egeneto rhema theou epi Ioannen* ('the word of God came upon John') is a classic prophetic call formula — the same language used for Elijah (1 Kings 17:2), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:4), and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:3). After centuries of prophetic silence, God speaks again.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 17:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 1:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 1:3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The phrase *baptisma metanoias* ('baptism of repentance') combines a ritual act (immersion in water) with its purpose (turning back to God). The Greek *metanoia* ('repentance, change of mind') corresponds to the Hebrew *teshuvah* — a turning, a return. 'For the forgiveness of sins' (*eis aphesisin hamarton*) indicates the goal or result of this repentance-baptism. John's baptism is preparatory, pointing forward to the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit (v. 16).
4. The quotation is from Isaiah 40:3-5 (LXX). Luke quotes more of Isaiah than Matthew or Mark, extending to the universal climax in v. 6. In its original context, Isaiah 40 announced the end of Babylonian exile — God would make a highway through the desert to lead his people home. Luke sees John as the fulfillment of this prophetic voice. The 'way of the Lord' (*ten hodon kyriou*) in Isaiah refers to YHWH; Luke's application to Jesus carries a high christological claim.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 40:3-5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The imagery is of ancient road-building for a royal procession — filling valleys, leveling hills, straightening curves, and smoothing surfaces. The language operates on both literal and metaphorical levels: God is coming, and the landscape (both physical and spiritual) must be prepared. The reversal theme (valleys raised, mountains lowered) echoes the Magnificat's theme of the proud brought low and the humble lifted up (1:52).
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 40:3-5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. This final line of the Isaiah quotation is included only by Luke among the Synoptic Gospels. It is characteristically Lukan — 'all flesh' (*pasa sarx*) means all humanity, not just Israel. This universal vision connects to Simeon's prophecy (2:30-32) and anticipates the Gentile mission in Acts. The phrase *to soterion tou theou* ('the salvation of God') echoes Isaiah 52:10 and the Nunc Dimittis.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 40:3-5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 52:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. In Matthew 3:7, this denunciation is directed specifically at Pharisees and Sadducees; Luke directs it to 'the crowds' — a broader audience consistent with Luke's portrayal of John as a public preacher. 'Brood of vipers' (*gennemata echidnon*) is a devastating image — vipers fleeing a brush fire, scattering before the flames. The 'coming wrath' (*mellouses orges*) refers to eschatological judgment, which John sees as imminent.
8. The plural *karpous* ('fruits') in Luke (Matthew has the singular 'fruit') may emphasize the variety of righteous deeds expected. John attacks the presumption that ethnic descent from Abraham guarantees standing before God — a revolutionary claim that dismantles ethnic privilege. The wordplay between 'stones' (*lithon*) and 'children' (*tekna*) may reflect an Aramaic pun between *avanim* ('stones') and *banim* ('sons'), though the pun does not work in Greek.
9. The axe 'at the root' (*pros ten rhizan*) — not at the branches — indicates total destruction, not pruning. The present tenses *ekkoptetai* ('is being cut down') and *balletai* ('is being thrown') convey urgency: judgment is not merely future but already in process. The tree-and-fruit metaphor will recur throughout Luke's Gospel (6:43-44, 13:6-9).
10. This question — *ti oun poiesomen* ('what then should we do?') — will be asked three times (vv. 10, 12, 14), with each group receiving specific, practical instruction. This threefold dialogue is unique to Luke and reflects his characteristic interest in the practical outworking of repentance in daily life and social relationships.
11. The *chiton* ('tunic, inner garment') was a basic necessity, not a luxury. John is not asking for extraordinary sacrifice but for the sharing of essentials. The ethic is simple: if you have more than you need and your neighbor has less, share. This practical social ethic anticipates the economic themes that pervade Luke's Gospel (the rich fool, Lazarus and the rich man, Zacchaeus).
12. Tax collectors (*telonai*) were Jews who contracted with the Roman authorities to collect taxes, often extracting more than required and keeping the surplus. They were despised as collaborators and sinners. That they come to John for baptism is remarkable — Luke consistently shows tax collectors responding positively to God's message (5:27-32, 7:29, 15:1, 18:10-14, 19:1-10). Their address 'Teacher' (*didaskale*) shows respect for John's authority.
13. John does not tell the tax collectors to quit their profession — a surprising moderation. He calls them to practice their trade honestly. The Greek *diatetagmenon* ('what has been ordered, what has been appointed') refers to the official tax rate. The systemic corruption was not the tax itself but the overcharging. John's ethic addresses the specific temptation of each group.
14. The Greek *strateuomenoi* ('soldiers, those on military service') likely refers to Jewish soldiers serving under Herod Antipas rather than Roman legionaries. The verb *diaseiete* ('shake down, extort by intimidation') describes the common practice of soldiers using their power to extract money from civilians. The verb *sykophantesete* ('accuse falsely, blackmail') originally meant 'to inform on fig-smugglers' and came to mean malicious prosecution for personal gain. John again addresses the specific temptation of the group: abuse of power.
15. The verb *prosdokontos* ('were expecting, were in anticipation') indicates that messianic expectation was running high. The verb *dialogizomenon* ('were debating, were reasoning, were questioning') suggests internal deliberation. John's powerful preaching and moral authority raised the question that would require an explicit denial — was he the promised Messiah?

16. John's contrast is stark: water versus Holy Spirit and fire. The sandal-strap image places John below even the lowest slave — untying a master's sandals was considered too degrading for a Jewish slave. The phrase *en pneumatī hagio kai pyri* ('with the Holy Spirit and fire') is debated: does 'fire' refer to purifying judgment (v. 17), to the fire of Pentecost (Acts 2:3), or to both? The context of v. 17 suggests judgment, but Luke's later Pentecost narrative shows fulfillment in both senses.
17. The winnowing fork (*ptyov*) was used to toss harvested grain into the air; the heavier grain fell back to the threshing floor while the lighter chaff blew away. The metaphor depicts thorough separation — the coming one will distinguish genuine repentance from superficial compliance. 'Unquenchable fire' (*pyri asbesto*) intensifies the judgment theme. This agricultural image would have been immediately vivid to John's rural audience.
18. Luke's summary note is striking: even John's stern warnings about judgment constitute 'good news' (*euangelizeto*, 'he was gospeling'). The verb is the same one used for Gabriel's announcement to Zechariah (1:19) and the angel's announcement to the shepherds (2:10). Warning of judgment is gospel when it calls people to repentance and points them to the coming Savior.
19. Luke narrates Herod's imprisonment of John before Jesus's baptism, which is a literary rather than strictly chronological arrangement — Luke wants to conclude John's ministry before beginning Jesus's. Herod Antipas had married Herodias, the wife of his half-brother (Herod Philip). John's rebuke (*elegchomenos*, 'being reprov'd, being exposed') was a prophetic confrontation of royal sin in the tradition of Nathan confronting David (2 Samuel 12) and Elijah confronting Ahab (1 Kings 21).
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Samuel 12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Kings 21. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The verb *prosetheken* ('added') with *epi pasin* ('to all the rest, on top of everything') presents the imprisonment as the crowning act of Herod's wickedness. The verb *katekleisen* ('shut up, locked away') is emphatic. According to Josephus (*Antiquities* 18.5.2), John was imprisoned at the fortress of Machaerus east of the Dead Sea. Luke leaves the story here and does not narrate John's execution until it is reported later.
21. Luke's account of Jesus's baptism is notably brief and places it after John's imprisonment narrative (vv. 19-20), so John is not explicitly present. Luke uniquely adds that Jesus was 'praying' (*proseuchomenou*) at the moment of the heavenly revelation — prayer at key moments is a distinctive Lukan theme (5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 9:28-29, 11:1, 22:41-44). The opening of the heavens (*aneochtenai ton ouranon*) signals divine communication breaking through the barrier between heaven and earth (cf. Ezekiel 1:1, Isaiah 64:1).
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 1:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 64:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. Luke uniquely specifies *somatiko eidei* ('in bodily form') — the Spirit's descent was not merely a vision but a visible, physical manifestation. The heavenly voice combines Psalm 2:7 ('You are my Son') with Isaiah 42:1 ('my chosen, in whom my soul delights'), merging the royal Davidic identity with the Servant of the LORD. The second-person address 'You are' (*su ei*) makes this a personal declaration to Jesus, not merely an announcement to bystanders.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 2:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 42:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The age of thirty echoes David's age when he began to reign (2 Samuel 5:4), Joseph's age when he entered Pharaoh's service (Genesis 41:46), and the age at which Levites began temple service (Numbers 4:3). The parenthetical *hos enomizeto* ('as was supposed, as was thought') guards the virgin birth — Joseph was the legal but not biological father. Luke's genealogy differs from Matthew's from David onward. Heli may be Mary's father, with the genealogy traced through her line, though this is debated.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Samuel 5:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 41:46 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 4:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. The genealogy from this point to David (v. 31) is largely unattested in Old Testament records, representing either a lesser-known branch of the Davidic family or sources no longer extant. The names are rendered in their standard English forms where recognizable.
25. The names Amos and Nahum are shared with Old Testament prophets, though these are different individuals. Luke's genealogy contains several names with theophoric elements — names that incorporate references to God.
26. The repetition of names like Mattathias and Joseph within the genealogy is common in Jewish naming practice — families frequently reused ancestral names across generations.

27. Zerubbabel and Shealtiel appear in both Matthew's and Luke's genealogies, though the surrounding names differ. In 1 Chronicles 3:17-19, Shealtiel is the son of Jeconiah, while Luke makes him the son of Neri. This is one of the key points where the two genealogies diverge. Zerubbabel led the return from exile and rebuilt the temple (Ezra 3-6).
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Chronicles 3:17-19. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezra 3-6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. These names span the exilic and post-exilic period. The name Er ('watchful') appears in Genesis 38:3 as Judah's firstborn, though this is obviously a different individual. Many of these names are otherwise unattested in surviving records.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 38:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. The Greek Iesou here is the same name as Jesus (Yeshua/Joshua). This ancestor shares the name that means 'the LORD saves.' The name Eliezer ('my God is help') is prominent in the Old Testament as Abraham's servant (Genesis 15:2) and Moses's son (Exodus 18:4).
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 15:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 18:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. The names Simeon, Judah, and Joseph echo the great patriarchal names. Their recurrence in the genealogy reflects the enduring practice of naming children after the ancestral heroes of Israel.
31. Here is the decisive divergence from Matthew's genealogy: Luke traces the line through Nathan, a son of David (2 Samuel 5:14, 1 Chronicles 3:5), while Matthew traces through Solomon. Nathan was David's son by Bathsheba (1 Chronicles 3:5) but not a king. If Luke traces Mary's lineage, both parents descend from David but through different sons — Joseph through Solomon (the royal line) and Mary through Nathan (a non-royal branch).
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Samuel 5:14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Chronicles 3:5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. From David back to Nahshon, Luke's genealogy matches Matthew's and the Old Testament records (Ruth 4:18-22, 1 Chronicles 2:10-15). These are the ancestors familiar from the book of Ruth: Boaz the kinsman-redeemer, Obed the son of Ruth and Boaz, Jesse the father of David. The genealogy passes through the key figures of God's covenant faithfulness.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ruth 4:18-22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Chronicles 2:10-15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. The SBLGNT includes Admin and Arni between Amminadab and Hezron, where Matthew has only Ram/Aram. This reflects a textual tradition with additional generations. Perez was the son of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38), the beginning of the line that leads to David. The genealogy anchors in the patriarchal period with Judah, son of Jacob.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 38 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
34. The patriarchal triad — Jacob, Isaac, Abraham — forms the backbone of Israel's covenant identity. Where Matthew's genealogy begins with Abraham, Luke passes through Abraham and continues backward. Abraham's father Terah and grandfather Nahor take the line into the pre-Abrahamic period (Genesis 11:24-26). Luke's genealogy is about to move beyond the covenant people into universal human ancestry.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 11:24-26. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. These names follow the genealogy of Genesis 11:10-26. Eber is traditionally considered the ancestor from whom the name 'Hebrew' derives. Peleg's name means 'division' — 'for in his days the earth was divided' (Genesis 10:25), traditionally associated with the Tower of Babel event.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 11:10-26 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. Luke includes Cainan between Arphaxad and Shelah, following the Septuagint text of Genesis 10:24 and 11:12-13. The Hebrew Masoretic Text does not include this generation. Shem ('name') is the ancestor of the Semitic peoples. Noah, the survivor of the flood, marks the genealogy's passage through the great judgment-and-renewal event of Genesis 6-9.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 10:24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 6-9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. These names follow the genealogy of Genesis 5. Enoch is singled out in Genesis 5:24: 'Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.' Methuselah is traditionally the longest-lived person in the Bible (969 years, Genesis 5:27). These antediluvian figures connect Jesus to the earliest epochs of human history.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. The genealogy reaches its theological climax: Adam, the son of God (*tou theou*). Where Matthew begins with Abraham (father of Israel), Luke ends with God (father of all humanity). This universal scope is characteristic of Luke's theology — Jesus is not only Israel's Messiah but the Savior of all humanity, descended from the first human whom God created. The phrase 'son of God' applied to Adam echoes Genesis 1:27 (created in God's image) and sets up a parallel with Jesus as 'Son of God' in a unique and ultimate sense. The genealogy thus frames Jesus's identity: he is both son of Adam (fully human, connected to all people) and Son of God (divinely begotten, announced by heaven).
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 1:27 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

4

Summary: *Luke 4 narrates the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, his programmatic sermon at the Nazareth synagogue (reading from Isaiah 61), his rejection and near-execution by his hometown, and the beginning of his Galilean ministry with healings and exorcisms in Capernaum. The Nazareth sermon functions as Luke's thesis statement for Jesus's entire ministry — good news to the poor, freedom for captives, sight for the blind, liberty for the oppressed.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Luke reorders the temptations (compared to Matthew), placing the temple temptation last and ending in Jerusalem — the city where Jesus's ministry will climax. The Nazareth sermon is placed at the very beginning of Jesus's public ministry in Luke (though Mark and Matthew place similar events later), functioning as a programmatic declaration. Jesus's reference to Elijah's ministry to a Sidonian widow and Elisha's healing of a Syrian leper (vv. 25-27) provokes murderous rage by implying God's favor extends to Gentiles — a preview of the central tension in Luke-Acts.*

Translation Friction: *The chronological placement of the Nazareth episode differs across the Synoptics. Luke appears to have moved it forward for theological-literary purposes. The phrase 'Today this scripture is fulfilled' (v. 21) makes an extraordinary claim. The demons' recognition of Jesus (vv. 34, 41) and Jesus's silencing of them raises questions about the 'messianic secret' motif.*

Connections: *The temptation narrative recapitulates Israel's wilderness testing (Deuteronomy 6-8), with Jesus succeeding where Israel failed. The Isaiah 61 quotation connects to the Jubilee tradition (Leviticus 25) — the 'year of the Lord's favor' is a Jubilee proclamation. The Elijah and Elisha references (vv. 25-27) connect to 1 Kings 17 and 2 Kings 5 and anticipate Luke's Gentile mission theme.*

¹Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness ²Being forty days tempted of the devil. And at that time he did eat nothing — and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. ³The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." ⁴Jesus answered him, "It is written: 'A person shall not live by bread alone.'" ⁵Then the devil led him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in an instant of time. ⁶The devil said to him, "I will give you all this authority and their glory, for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to anyone I wish. ⁷So if you worship before me, it will all be yours." ⁸Jesus answered him, "It is written: 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'" ⁹Then he led him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰Since it is written, He will give his angels charge over you, to keep you: ¹¹In their hands they will bear you up, lest at any time you dash your foot opposed to a stone. ¹²Jesus answered him, "It is said: 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ¹³When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. ¹⁴Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him spread through the entire surrounding region. ¹⁵He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. ¹⁶He came to

Nazareth, where he had been raised. As was his custom, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. ¹⁷The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free the oppressed,

¹⁹Indeed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. ²⁰He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." ²²All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words coming from his mouth. They said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" ²³He said to them, "No doubt you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself.' 'What we heard you did in Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.'" ²⁴Then he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown. ²⁵But in truth I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut for three years and six months and a severe famine came over all the land, ²⁶However, to none of them was Elias dispatched, save to Sarepta, a city of Sidon, to a woman that was a widow. ²⁷And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, yet none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." ²⁸Everyone in the synagogue was filled with rage when they heard this. ²⁹They rose up, drove him out of the city, and led him to the edge of the hill on which their city was built, so that they could throw him off the cliff. ³⁰But he passed through the middle of them and went on his way. ³¹He went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbath. ³²They were astonished at his teaching, because his word carried authority. ³³In the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴"Ha! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are — the Holy One of God!" ³⁵Jesus rebuked him: "Be silent and come out of him!" The demon threw the man down in the middle of them and came out of him without injuring him. ³⁶Amazement came over all of them, and they said to one another, "What is this word? He commands the unclean spirits with authority and power, and they come out!" ³⁷And reports about him went out to every place in the surrounding region. ³⁸He left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked him about her. ³⁹He stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately she got up and began serving them. ⁴⁰As the sun was setting, all who had anyone sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on each one of them and healed them. ⁴¹Demons also came out of many people, crying out, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ. ⁴²At daybreak he went out to a deserted place. The crowds were searching for him, and when they came to him, they tried to keep him from leaving them. ⁴³But he said to them, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because that is why I was sent." ⁴⁴And he continued preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Luke emphasizes the Spirit's role with two references in one verse: Jesus is 'full of' (pleres) the Spirit and 'led by' (egeto en) the Spirit. The wilderness (eremos) connects to Israel's forty years of testing and to John's wilderness ministry. The passive voice 'was led' indicates divine initiative — the Spirit directs Jesus into the place of testing.
2. The forty days echo Moses's forty days on Sinai (Exodus 34:28), Elijah's forty days to Horeb (1 Kings 19:8), and Israel's forty years in the wilderness. The Greek peirazomenos ('being tempted, being tested') uses the present participle, suggesting ongoing testing throughout the entire period, not just the three specific temptations. The Greek diabolos ('devil, slanderer, accuser') translates the Hebrew satan.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 34:28. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 19:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

3. The conditional *ei* ('if') is a first-class condition in Greek, not expressing doubt but assuming the premise: 'Since you are the Son of God...' The temptation is not about proving identity but about using divine power for personal comfort outside the Father's will. Luke has the singular 'stone' and 'bread' where Matthew has the plural — a minor variation. The temptation echoes Israel's demand for bread in the wilderness (Exodus 16).
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3. The SBLGNT text ends the quotation at 'bread alone' without including the second half ('but by every word that comes from the mouth of God'), which appears in some manuscripts imported from Matthew 4:4. Jesus responds to each temptation exclusively with Scripture from Deuteronomy 6-8 — the very chapters about Israel's wilderness testing. Where Israel failed, Jesus succeeds by holding to God's word.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 8:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 6-8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Luke's order places this temptation second (Matthew places it third). The SBLGNT does not include 'to a high mountain' (which appears in Matthew and in some Luke manuscripts). The phrase *en stigme chronou* ('in a point/instant of time') is unique to Luke and suggests a supernatural vision rather than a physical vantage point. The Greek *oikoumenes* ('of the inhabited world') is the same term used for the Roman Empire in 2:1.
6. The devil's claim — that worldly authority 'has been handed over' (*paradedotai*) to him — is a theological assertion that Jesus does not dispute. The passive voice implies God permitted this transfer (cf. Job 1-2, where Satan operates within divine permission). The temptation offers a shortcut to universal rule without the cross. The Greek *exousia* ('authority, power') is the same word Jesus will use for his own authority throughout the Gospel.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Job 1-2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The Greek *proskynesēs* ('worship, bow down before') is the verb used for worship of God throughout the Septuagint and New Testament. The devil demands the one thing that belongs exclusively to God — worship. This is the most direct and naked of the three temptations: it explicitly asks Jesus to transfer his allegiance from God to Satan in exchange for earthly power.
8. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13. The SBLGNT does not include 'Get behind me, Satan' (which appears in Matthew and some Luke manuscripts). The Deuteronomy passage is from the Shema context — the foundational confession of Israel's exclusive loyalty to God. The verb *latreusis* ('serve, render religious service') is the same verb used by Zechariah for the goal of redemption (1:74). Worship and service belong to God alone.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 6:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Luke places the temple temptation last (third), ending in Jerusalem — the city that will be the climax of Jesus's story. The Greek *pterygion* ('pinnacle, wing, highest point') of the temple may refer to the southeastern corner of the temple platform, which towered over the Kidron Valley. The temptation is to force God's hand — to compel a miraculous rescue that would prove sonship publicly.
10. The devil now quotes Scripture — Psalm 91:11-12. This is a psalm of divine protection for the righteous. The devil's use of Scripture demonstrates that quoting the Bible does not guarantee correct application. The citation is accurate but the application is twisted — Psalm 91 promises divine protection for those who trust God, not for those who recklessly test him.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 91:11-12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The quotation from Psalm 91:12 continues. Notably, the devil omits the phrase 'in all your ways' from Psalm 91:11 — a significant omission that changes the meaning. The psalm promises protection for those walking in God's appointed ways, not for those deliberately seeking danger. The devil's exegesis is selective and misleading.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 91:11-12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16, which specifically references Israel's testing of God at Massah (Exodus 17:1-7), where Israel demanded that God prove himself. The verb *ekpeiraseis* ('test, put to the test') is stronger than the simple *peirazo* — it implies testing with the intent to provoke or to force God's hand. Jesus completes the Deuteronomy trilogy (8:3, 6:13, 6:16), demonstrating mastery of the very scriptures that defined Israel's failure.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 6:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 17:1-7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The phrase *achri kairou* ('until an opportune time, until the right moment') is ominous — the devil has not been defeated permanently but has withdrawn temporarily. Luke will identify the devil's return at 22:3, when Satan enters Judas. The word *kairos* ('opportune moment') rather than *chronos* ('duration of time') suggests the devil is watching for the strategically right moment to attack again.

14. The threefold Spirit reference in the temptation narrative (4:1a, 4:1b, 4:14) shows progression: full of the Spirit, led by the Spirit, returning in the power of the Spirit. Jesus emerges from the testing with the Spirit's power demonstrated and confirmed. The Greek pheme ('report, fame, rumor') indicates Jesus's reputation is already spreading before Luke narrates any specific ministry.
15. The imperfect edidasken ('was teaching, kept teaching') indicates ongoing activity across multiple synagogues. The verb doxazomenos ('being glorified, being praised') creates an ironic contrast with what is about to happen in Nazareth — universal praise will give way to murderous rejection. Luke sets up the Nazareth scene by first noting the positive reception elsewhere.
16. The phrase kata to ethos auto ('as was his custom') indicates Jesus had a regular practice of synagogue attendance — this was not his first visit as an adult. The phrase 'where he had been raised' (hou en tethrammenos) connects to the childhood narrative of chapter 2. Standing to read was the posture for reading Scripture; sitting was the posture for teaching (v. 20). Luke provides the most detailed description of a synagogue service in the New Testament.
17. The Greek biblion ('scroll, book') refers to a physical scroll; 'unrolled' (anaptuxas) is the literal action. Whether Jesus chose this passage or it was the assigned reading for that Sabbath is debated — the verb heuren ('found') could support either deliberate seeking or providential coincidence. The Isaiah scroll would have been one of the most prominent scrolls in any synagogue.
18. The quotation is from Isaiah 61:1-2 with a line from Isaiah 58:6 ('to set free the oppressed') inserted. The verb echrisen ('anointed') is the verbal root of Christos ('Christ/Anointed One') — Jesus reads a passage about anointing and will claim it as his own identity. 'Good news to the poor' (euangelisasthai ptochois) is Luke's signature theme. The four activities — good news to the poor, release to captives, sight to the blind, freedom for the oppressed — define Jesus's mission programmatically.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 61:1-2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 58:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The 'year of the Lord's favor' (eniauton kyriou dektion) alludes to the Jubilee year (Leviticus 25), when debts were cancelled, slaves freed, and ancestral land returned. Isaiah 61 reinterprets the Jubilee eschatologically — the ultimate release, the final restoration. Critically, Jesus stops reading mid-verse. Isaiah 61:2 continues with 'and the day of vengeance of our God,' which Jesus deliberately omits. The omission is theologically significant — Jesus announces favor, not vengeance.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 61:1-2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 25. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Jesus sits down to teach — the seated posture of a rabbi delivering instruction. The verb atenizontes ('gazing intently, staring fixedly') conveys intense anticipation. The entire congregation senses that something significant is about to happen. The dramatic pause between sitting and speaking heightens the tension Luke is building.
21. The word semeron ('today') is one of the most important words in Luke's Gospel (cf. 2:11, 5:26, 19:5, 9, 23:43). It declares that the ancient prophecy has moved from promise to fulfillment in the present moment. The perfect tense peplerōtai ('has been fulfilled') indicates completed action with ongoing results — the fulfillment has happened and continues to be in effect. 'In your hearing' (en tois osin hymon, literally 'in your ears') emphasizes that they are eyewitnesses to the fulfillment event.
22. The initial reaction is positive — the congregation speaks well (emarturoun, 'bore witness, testified favorably') of Jesus and marvels at his 'words of grace' (logois tes charitos). But the question 'Is this not Joseph's son?' contains the seed of rejection: they know his ordinary origins and struggle to reconcile them with extraordinary claims. The shift from admiration to hostility (vv. 28-29) will be triggered by Jesus's own provocative words.
23. Jesus anticipates their demand — perform miracles here like you did in Capernaum. The proverb 'Physician, heal yourself' (iatre, therapeuson seauton) was a common ancient maxim meaning 'prove your claims on your own turf first.' This implies Jesus had already been active in Capernaum before the Nazareth visit, even though Luke places this scene first in his narrative — another indication of Luke's theological rather than strictly chronological arrangement.
24. The phrase amen lego hymin ('truly I tell you') is a solemn introductory formula unique to Jesus in the Gospels — no rabbi or prophet before him used 'amen' to introduce rather than conclude a statement. Jesus identifies himself as a prophet and simultaneously predicts his rejection. The word dektos ('accepted, welcome') echoes the 'acceptable year' (eniauton dektion) of v. 19 — the same root word. The year is acceptable; the prophet is not.
25. Jesus introduces two Old Testament precedents that will enrage his audience. The 'three years and six months' specification matches James 5:17 but exceeds the 1 Kings 18:1 reference to 'the third year.' The detail may come from Jewish tradition. The point is building: even in Elijah's day, God's prophet was rejected by Israel and sent instead to a Gentile.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Kings 18:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The reference is to 1 Kings 17:8-24. Zarephath was in Phoenician territory — Gentile land. The scandalous implication is clear: God bypassed all the widows of Israel and sent his prophet to a Gentile woman. This is not just a historical anecdote but a prophetic pattern that Jesus is about to repeat — his ministry will extend beyond Israel's borders.

26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Kings 17:8-24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The reference is to 2 Kings 5:1-14. Naaman was a commander of the Syrian army — not just a Gentile but an enemy military officer. Jesus's point is devastating: God's grace is not bound by ethnic boundaries, and when Israel rejects God's prophet, God sends that prophet's healing power to Israel's enemies. This is the statement that transforms admiration into rage (v. 28).
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 5:1-14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The verb *eplesthesan* ('were filled') is the same word used for being 'filled with the Holy Spirit' (1:15, 41, 67) — here the filling is with *thymos* ('rage, fury, wrath'). The transition from 'all spoke well of him' (v. 22) to 'all were filled with rage' is abrupt and total. The trigger is clear: Jesus's implication that God's grace extends to Gentiles, especially when Israel proves unfaithful.
29. The mob action — expulsion from the city and attempted execution — mirrors the pattern of rejected prophets. Nazareth sits on a ridge with steep slopes. The verb *katakremisai* ('to throw down a cliff, to hurl headlong') describes a form of execution. The attempt to kill Jesus at the very beginning of his ministry foreshadows the crucifixion — rejection by his own people leading to his death outside the city.
30. The manner of Jesus's escape is left unexplained — whether by natural means (the crowd's hesitation, his composure) or supernatural intervention. The brevity of the statement (seven Greek words) is striking after the dramatic buildup. Jesus is untouchable until his appointed hour (cf. John 7:30, 8:59). The verb *eporeueto* ('was going on his way') uses the imperfect, suggesting calm, deliberate movement — not panicked flight.
31. The verb *katelton* ('went down') is geographically accurate — Capernaum sits on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, significantly lower than Nazareth in the hills. Capernaum becomes Jesus's base of operations in Galilee, replacing the hometown that rejected him. The imperfect 'was teaching' (*en didaskon*) indicates regular, ongoing instruction.
32. The Greek *exousia* ('authority, power') is a key Lukan term. Unlike the scribes who taught by citing rabbinic precedent, Jesus taught with inherent authority — his word itself carried weight. The verb *exeplessonto* ('were astonished, were struck with amazement') indicates the teaching made a deep impact. The contrast with Nazareth is implicit: in Capernaum, Jesus's authority is recognized; in Nazareth, it was rejected.
33. Luke's phrase *pneuma daimoniou akathartou* ('spirit of an unclean demon') is fuller than Mark's 'unclean spirit.' The encounter takes place in the synagogue — the sacred space is not immune to demonic presence. The loud cry (*anekraxen phone megale*) disrupts the worship setting. Luke presents exorcism as a core component of Jesus's ministry alongside teaching.
34. The interjection *ea* ('ha!' or 'leave us alone!') expresses alarm. The phrase *ti hemin kai soi* ('what to us and to you?') is a Semitic idiom meaning 'what business do you have with us?' The demon uses the plural 'us' (*hemin, hemas*), possibly speaking for all demons. The title 'the Holy One of God' (*ho hagios tou theou*) is a correct identification — the demons know exactly who Jesus is. In the ancient world, knowing and speaking someone's name was believed to give power over them; the demon attempts to control Jesus by identifying him.
35. The verb *phimotheti* ('be muzzled, be silenced') is a strong command — the same verb used for muzzling an animal. Jesus refuses the demon's identification not because it is wrong but because the testimony of demons is not the appropriate source for revealing his identity. The detail 'without injuring him' (*meden blapsan auton*) shows Jesus's protective concern for the man even during the dramatic exorcism.
36. The Greek *thambos* ('amazement, astonishment, wonder') is a stronger reaction than the earlier 'astonishment' at his teaching (v. 32). The combination of *exousia* ('authority') and *dynamis* ('power') represents both the right and the ability to command — Jesus has both the divine authorization and the supernatural power to cast out demons. The crowd recognizes that teaching authority (v. 32) and power over demons (v. 36) are manifestations of the same *logos* ('word').
37. The Greek *echos* ('sound, report, echo') suggests the news reverberates outward like sound waves. The verb *exeporeueto* (imperfect, 'kept going out') indicates ongoing, expanding fame. This echoes the summary of v. 14 and shows the growing impact of Jesus's combined ministry of teaching and healing.
38. Luke introduces Simon (Peter) without prior explanation — the reader is assumed to know who Simon is, or Luke treats his first mention as sufficient introduction. Luke the physician uses medical language: *pyreto megalo* ('a great/high fever'). The verb *synechomene* ('held fast, gripped, suffering from') suggests the fever's oppressive hold on her. That 'they asked him about her' indicates the household's trust in Jesus's power to heal.
39. Luke uniquely describes Jesus rebuking (*epetimesen*) the fever — the same verb used for rebuking the demon (v. 35). This suggests Luke views the fever as having a spiritual dimension or at least shows Jesus exercising the same authority over disease as over demons. The immediate recovery (*parachrona*, 'at once') and her ability to serve (*diekonei*, 'was serving, was ministering') demonstrate the completeness of the healing — no recovery period needed.
40. The timing 'as the sun was setting' (*dynontos tou heliou*) marks the end of the Sabbath — people waited until the Sabbath restrictions on carrying burdens were lifted before bringing the sick. Luke uniquely notes that Jesus laid hands 'on each one' (*heni hekasto*) — individual, personal attention to every sick person, not a mass healing from a distance. This detail reflects Luke's interest in Jesus's compassionate engagement with individuals.
41. The demons' confession 'You are the Son of God' (*su ei ho huios tou theou*) is theologically correct but procedurally inappropriate. Jesus silences them (*ouk eia auta lalein*, 'he was not permitting them to speak') because the messianic identity must be revealed on God's timetable and through proper channels, not through demonic proclamation. Luke explains the reason plainly: 'because they knew he was the Christ' (*edeisan ton christon auton einai*).

42. Jesus's withdrawal to a 'deserted place' (eremon topon) for prayer is a Lukan pattern (5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 28). The verb *kateichon* ('were holding back, were restraining') is strong — the crowds physically tried to prevent him from leaving. Their desire to keep him reflects the attractiveness of his healing ministry, but Jesus will redirect their attention to the broader mission.
43. The verb *dei* ('it is necessary, I must') again expresses divine necessity — Jesus's mission is not self-determined but divinely appointed. The phrase *euangelisasthai ten basileian tou theou* ('to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God') is Luke's summary of Jesus's core message. 'The kingdom of God' (he *basileia tou theou*) is the central concept of Jesus's teaching — God's rule breaking into the present world. The passive *apestalen* ('I was sent') identifies Jesus as one sent by God, a prophetic self-understanding.
44. The SBLGNT reads 'Judea' (*Ioudaias*) rather than 'Galilee' (*Galilaias*, found in many manuscripts). Luke may use 'Judea' in the broader sense of 'the land of the Jews' (i.e., all of Palestine), which is attested elsewhere in Luke-Acts (cf. 6:17, 7:17, 23:5, Acts 10:37). The imperfect periphrastic *kerisson* ('was preaching, continued preaching') emphasizes the ongoing nature of Jesus's synagogue ministry.

5

Summary: *Luke 5 narrates the miraculous catch of fish and the calling of Simon Peter, James, and John; the healing of a man with leprosy; the healing of a paralytic lowered through a roof (with Jesus's claim to forgive sins); the calling of the tax collector Levi and the banquet at his house; and a series of confrontations about fasting and new wine. The chapter establishes the pattern of Jesus's ministry: miraculous power, radical inclusion, and escalating conflict with religious authorities.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Luke's call of Peter is far more detailed than Mark's or Matthew's — it includes the miraculous catch that overwhelms professional fishermen and Peter's profound response: 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord.' This is a classic theophany response (cf. Isaiah 6:5). The paralytic story introduces the first explicit controversy about Jesus's authority to forgive sins — the Pharisees correctly identify this as a divine prerogative, which is precisely Jesus's point. Levi's banquet scandalizes the religious establishment by putting Jesus at table with 'sinners.'*

Translation Friction: *The chronological relationship between the call narratives in Luke 5 and those in Mark 1/Matthew 4 is debated — Luke places the call after a miracle, while Mark and Matthew place it as an immediate response to Jesus's command. The roof-opening scene differs between Mark ('dug through') and Luke ('through the tiles'), likely reflecting different audiences' familiarity with different building styles.*

Connections: *Peter's call echoes the prophetic call narratives (Isaiah 6, Jeremiah 1, Ezekiel 1-3) — encounter with the divine, awareness of unworthiness, commissioning for mission. The leper's cleansing fulfills the Isaiah 61 program (4:18-19). The paralytic scene raises the Christological question of divine authority. The new-wine parable points to the incompatibility of Jesus's movement with existing religious structures.*

¹Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret. ²He saw two boats moored at the edge of the lake; the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. ³He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. ⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water, and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵Simon answered, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing. But at your word, I will let down the nets." ⁶When they had done this, they enclosed such a large number of fish that their nets began to tear. ⁷They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came, and they filled both boats so full that they began to sink. ⁸When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus's knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord!" ⁹For astonishment had seized him and all who were with him at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰James and John, Zebedee's sons and Simon's fishing partners, were equally amazed. But Jesus told Simon, "Don't be afraid. From now on, you will be catching people." ¹¹When they had brought the boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. ¹²While he was in one of the cities, there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." ¹³He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing. Be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him. ¹⁴He ordered him to tell no one: "Go, show yourself to the priest, and make the offering for your cleansing that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." ¹⁵But the word about him spread even more, and large

crowds gathered to listen and to be healed of their illnesses. ¹⁶But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray. ¹⁷On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting nearby. They had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal. ¹⁸Then some men came carrying on a stretcher a man who was paralyzed, and they were trying to bring him in and set him before Jesus. ¹⁹Finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his stretcher through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. ²⁰When he saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you." ²¹The scribes and the Pharisees began to question this, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ²²But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, responded to them, "Why are you questioning in your hearts? ²³Which is easier to say: 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? ²⁴But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he said to the paralyzed man — "I say to you, get up, pick up your stretcher, and go home." ²⁵Immediately he stood up before them, picked up what he had been lying on, and went home, glorifying God. ²⁶As the crowd seized all of them, and they glorified God. Filled with awe, they said, "We have seen extraordinary things today!" ²⁷After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." ²⁸And leaving everything behind, he got up and followed him. ²⁹Then Levi hosted a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. ³⁰The Pharisees and their scribes complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" ³¹Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ³²I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." ³³They said to him, "The disciples of John fast frequently and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink." ³⁴Jesus said to them, "Can you make the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? ³⁵And then will they fast at that time, but the days will come, when the bridegroom will be taken away from them. ³⁶He also told them a parable: "No one tears a patch from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. Otherwise, the new garment would be torn, and the patch from the new would not match the old. ³⁷And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins — the wine will be spilled and the skins will be ruined. ³⁸Rather, new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. ³⁹And no one who drinks old wine wants new, for he says, 'The old is good enough.'"

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The 'lake of Gennesaret' is the Sea of Galilee, named here after the fertile plain on its northwestern shore. Luke consistently calls it a 'lake' (limne) rather than 'sea' (thalassa) as in Mark and Matthew — a more geographically precise term, as it is a freshwater lake. The crowd 'pressing in' (epikeisthai, 'pressing upon, crowding') demonstrates the intensity of the response to Jesus's teaching.
2. The 'boats' (ploia) were fishing boats typical of the Sea of Galilee — roughly 26 feet long based on archaeological finds. Washing nets after fishing was standard maintenance to remove debris and prevent rotting. The detail places the scene after an unsuccessful night of fishing (v. 5 will confirm this). The fishermen's ordinary work becomes the setting for an extraordinary encounter.
3. Jesus uses Simon's boat as a floating pulpit — the water would create a natural amphitheater for his voice to carry to the shore. He sits to teach (the posture of a rabbi, as in 4:20). This practical use of Simon's boat precedes the command that will change Simon's life. Jesus first enters Simon's ordinary world before calling him to an extraordinary one.
4. The shift from singular ('put out' — epanagage, addressed to Simon as captain) to plural ('let down your nets' — chalasate, addressed to the crew) is natural: Simon steers the boat; everyone lowers the nets. The command to fish in deep water during daylight contradicts professional fishing practice — Galilean fishermen worked at night in shallow water. Jesus, a carpenter, tells professional fishermen how to fish.
5. Simon's address epistata ('master, chief, commander') is a Lukan term (used six times in Luke, nowhere else in the NT) that acknowledges authority without necessarily implying belief in divinity. His statement 'we worked hard all night and caught nothing' (di holes nyktos kopiasantes ouden elabomen) establishes the futility of human effort. His willingness to obey 'at your word' (epi de to remati sou) despite professional judgment is the first step of faith.
6. The verb synekleisan ('enclosed, caught, trapped') emphasizes the overwhelming quantity. The imperfect diērresseto ('were tearing, began to tear') indicates the nets were in the process of breaking — an ongoing struggle with an impossible abundance. The catch exceeds what human equipment can contain. This is the pattern of divine provision: superabundance beyond expectation (cf. the feeding of the five thousand, 9:10-17).
7. The verb kateneusan ('beckoned, signaled') suggests they were too far from shore or too overwhelmed to shout. The partners (metochois) in the other boat are identified as James and John in v. 10. Two fully loaded fishing boats beginning to sink (bythizesthai, 'to be submerged') paints a vivid picture of abundance threatening to overwhelm. The miracle exceeds all practical capacity.

8. This is the first time Luke uses the full name 'Simon Peter' (Simon Petros). Peter's response is a classic theophany reaction — when Isaiah sees God's glory, he cries 'Woe to me! I am a man of unclean lips' (Isaiah 6:5). Peter recognizes that the miracle reveals divine presence and that divine holiness exposes human sinfulness. The address *kyrie* ('Lord') here carries more weight than *epistata* in v. 5 — Peter's understanding of who Jesus is has deepened in the space of one miracle.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 6:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The verb *periaschen* ('had seized, had gripped, had surrounded') is a strong term — amazement doesn't just come upon them but seizes and encircles them. The reaction is collective — Peter, his crew, and everyone present is overwhelmed. These are professional fishermen who know what is natural and what is not.
10. James and John are introduced as business partners (*koinonoi*, 'partners, sharers') with Simon. Jesus's 'Do not be afraid' (*me phobou*) echoes the divine reassurance given to Abraham (Genesis 15:1), Moses (Numbers 21:34), and others who encounter God. The verb *zogron* ('catching alive, taking alive') means literally 'to capture alive' — used in the Septuagint for taking prisoners alive (cf. 2 Timothy 2:26). The metaphor transforms fishermen into rescuers of people.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 15:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 21:34 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The phrase *aphentes panta* ('having left everything') is radical — they abandon boats, nets, the miraculous catch itself, their livelihood. Luke emphasizes the totality of their response more than Mark's account. The verb *ekolouthēsan* ('followed') is the standard term for discipleship — it implies not just physical movement but life commitment. This is the first formal calling of disciples in Luke's narrative.
12. Luke intensifies Mark's description with *pleres lepras* ('full of, covered with leprosy'), indicating an advanced case. 'Leprosy' (*lepra*) in the Bible covers a range of skin diseases, not just modern Hansen's disease. The man's approach violates Levitical quarantine laws (Leviticus 13:45-46) — he should not be in the city or near people. His statement is remarkable theology: he has no doubt about Jesus's ability ('you can'), only about his willingness ('if you are willing'). He addresses Jesus as *kyrie* ('Lord').
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 13:45-46. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The touch (*hepsato*) is extraordinary — touching a leper made a person ritually unclean (Leviticus 13-14). Instead of Jesus becoming unclean through contact, the man becomes clean through Jesus's touch. The direction of contamination is reversed by Jesus's holiness. The command *katharisthēti* ('be cleansed') is an aorist passive imperative — a single, decisive act of cleansing. The response is instantaneous (*eutheos*, 'immediately').
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 13-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Jesus commands compliance with Leviticus 14:1-32 — the elaborate priestly ritual for certifying that a leper has been cleansed. This included examination by the priest, two birds, cedar wood, scarlet yarn, hyssop, and a series of offerings over eight days. The phrase *eis martyron autois* ('as a testimony to them') is ambiguous — testimony to the priests that a genuine healing has occurred, or testimony against them if they reject it. Jesus affirms the Mosaic law even while transcending it.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 14:1-32. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. Despite the command to silence, the report (*logos*, 'word') spreads 'even more' (*mallon*). The crowds come for two things: hearing (*akouein*) and healing (*therapeuesthai*) — the twin pillars of Jesus's ministry. Luke consistently presents teaching and healing as inseparable aspects of the kingdom's arrival.
16. The imperfect periphrastic *en hypochoron* ('was withdrawing, would withdraw') indicates habitual practice — this was Jesus's regular pattern, not a single event. The connection between ministry demands and prayerful withdrawal is a consistent Lukan theme. Jesus's power comes through dependence on the Father, maintained through regular prayer.
17. Luke uniquely notes that Pharisees and *nomodidaskaloi* ('teachers of the law, experts in Torah') had gathered from across the land — this is an official observation, not a casual visit. The phrase *dynamis kyriou en eis to iasthai auton* ('the power of the Lord was present for him to heal') is a distinctive Lukan note — the Lord's healing power is specifically present in this moment, suggesting that divine power operates in particular moments rather than as a constant, automatic capacity.
18. The Greek *paralelymenos* ('having been paralyzed') is a perfect passive participle indicating an established, ongoing condition. The verb *ezetoun* ('were seeking, were trying') shows persistent effort — they did not give up when access was blocked. Luke does not specify the number of carriers (Mark says four, Mark 2:3). Their faith-in-action — bringing the paralyzed man to Jesus despite obstacles — is about to be commended.
19. Luke says 'through the tiles' (*dia ton keramon*) where Mark says they 'dug through' the roof (Mark 2:4). Palestinian roofs were typically made of wooden beams covered with branches and packed earth, which could be dug through; Luke may be adapting the description for a Gentile audience familiar with tiled roofs. The Greek *klinidion* ('small bed, stretcher') is a diminutive, emphasizing the improvised nature of the arrangement.

- 20.** Jesus sees 'their faith' (ten pistin auton) — the plural 'their' includes both the paralyzed man and his friends. Faith in this context is demonstrated through action, not verbal confession. The address anthrope ('man, friend') is a Lukan distinctive (cf. 12:14, 22:58, 60). The declaration apheontai soi hai hamartiai sou ('your sins have been forgiven you') is a divine passive — God is the implied agent of the forgiveness. Jesus speaks what only God can do.
- 21.** The religious leaders' theological logic is impeccable: only God can forgive sins (cf. Isaiah 43:25, 'I, even I, am the one who blots out your transgressions'). Their conclusion — that Jesus is blaspheming by claiming a divine prerogative — is correct if Jesus is merely human. The question 'Who is this?' (tis estin houtos) is the central christological question of Luke's Gospel. Jesus will answer it not by withdrawing the claim but by demonstrating the authority behind it.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 43:25. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 22.** The verb epignous ('having known, having perceived') indicates supernatural knowledge of their internal reasoning — they have not spoken their objection aloud. Jesus knows their dialogismous ('thoughts, deliberations, reasonings'). This itself is a divine attribute (cf. 1 Kings 8:39, 'you alone know the hearts of all people'; Jeremiah 17:10, 'I the LORD search the heart').
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 8:39. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 17:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** The question is a rhetorical trap for the critics. To say 'your sins are forgiven' is easier because it cannot be verified or falsified — no one can see whether forgiveness has actually occurred. To say 'get up and walk' is harder because it can be immediately tested. Jesus will do the harder, verifiable thing to prove the authority behind the easier, invisible thing.
- 24.** This is the first use of 'Son of Man' (ho huios tou anthropou) in Luke. The title draws on Daniel 7:13-14, where 'one like a son of man' receives authority, glory, and an everlasting kingdom from the Ancient of Days. Jesus claims that this heavenly authority operates 'on earth' (epi tes ges) — the divine prerogative of forgiveness is being exercised here and now. The sentence breaks mid-thought as Jesus turns from the critics to the patient — Luke preserves the dramatic pause.
- 24.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 7:13-14. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 25.** The adverb parachrona ('immediately, at once') emphasizes the instantaneous nature of the healing. The man does exactly what Jesus commanded — stands, picks up the stretcher, goes home — demonstrating both the completeness of the healing and the authority of Jesus's word. His response of 'glorifying God' (doxazon ton theon) is the proper recognition that divine power has been at work.
- 26.** The Greek ekstasis ('astonishment, amazement, ecstasy') is the root of the English 'ecstasy' — a state of being outside oneself with wonder. The crowd is simultaneously amazed, glorifying God, and filled with phobos ('fear, awe'). The word paradoxa ('extraordinary things, things contrary to expectation') gives us the English 'paradox' — they have witnessed things that defy normal categories. The word semeron ('today') echoes the programmatic 'today' of 4:21.
- 27.** Levi (identified as Matthew in Matthew 9:9) is sitting at his telonion ('tax booth, toll station'), likely a customs post on a trade route near Capernaum. Tax collectors were despised as collaborators with Rome and presumed cheaters. Jesus's invitation 'Follow me' (akolouthei moi) is the same simple, authoritative command that called the fishermen. Jesus does not ask Levi to reform first and then follow — the call comes to him in the midst of his despised occupation.
- 28.** Like the fishermen (v. 11), Levi leaves 'everything' (panta). For a tax collector, this means abandoning a lucrative position — unlike fishing, the tax-collection franchise could not be easily resumed once abandoned. The imperfect ekolouthei ('was following, began to follow') may indicate the beginning of ongoing discipleship.
- 29.** Levi's response to his call is immediate hospitality — a 'great banquet' (dochen megalen) that introduces Jesus to Levi's social network. The verb katakeimenoi ('reclining') indicates a formal Greco-Roman banquet setting where diners reclined on couches. The guest list — tax collectors and 'others' (presumably those outside respectable society) — will provoke the criticism of v. 30. Table fellowship in the ancient world implied acceptance and social equality among the diners.
- 30.** The verb egongyzon ('were grumbling, were complaining') is the same word used for Israel's grumbling against Moses in the wilderness (Exodus 15:24, 16:2 LXX) — Luke may be drawing the parallel. The complaint is directed at the disciples rather than at Jesus directly. 'Tax collectors and sinners' (telonon kai hamartolon) is a stock phrase for the socially and religiously marginalized. The offense is table fellowship — eating with someone implied approval and solidarity.
- 30.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 15:24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 31.** Jesus responds with a proverb that reframes the situation entirely. The Greek hugiainontes ('the healthy, those who are sound') and kakos echontes ('those having it badly, the sick') draw from medical vocabulary — fitting for Luke's audience. The proverb is both an explanation (I go where the need is) and a subtle challenge to the Pharisees (are you sure you're as healthy as you think?).

32. The verb *elelitha* ('I have come') implies purpose and mission — Jesus has come from somewhere (heaven) for a specific reason. The phrase *eis metanoian* ('to repentance') is added by Luke (Mark 2:17 lacks it), making the purpose explicit: Jesus seeks sinners not to condone their sin but to call them to transformation. Whether 'the righteous' (*dikaiois*) is said with irony (no one is truly righteous) or seriously (some are already in right relationship with God) is debated.
33. The complaint shifts from who Jesus eats with (v. 30) to the fact that his disciples eat at all rather than fasting. John's disciples and the Pharisees' disciples fasted 'frequently' (*pykna*) — the Pharisees fasted twice a week (Monday and Thursday, cf. 18:12). The contrast between fasting (religious austerity) and eating and drinking (celebration) sets up Jesus's response about the bridegroom.
34. The phrase *huios tou nymphonos* ('sons of the bridal chamber,' i.e., wedding guests, attendants of the bridegroom) is a Semitic idiom. The bridegroom image for God's relationship with his people has deep Old Testament roots (Isaiah 54:5, 62:5, Hosea 2:16-20). Jesus implicitly identifies himself as the bridegroom — a divine role. A wedding is a time of celebration, not fasting; Jesus's presence inaugurates a time of joy.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 54:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Hosea 2:16-20. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. The verb *aparthē* ('will be taken away') is a violent term — it suggests forcible removal, not voluntary departure. This is the first oblique reference to Jesus's death in Luke's Gospel. The passive voice implies others will take him away. The future fasting 'in those days' (*en ekeinaiis tais hemeraiis*) points to the period after the crucifixion. The statement subtly moves from the present joy of Jesus's ministry to the future sorrow of his death.
36. Luke's version of the patch parable is more elaborate than Mark's. Luke uniquely adds that the new garment would be ruined by cutting it — double loss. The point is not simply that new and old are incompatible but that trying to combine them destroys both. Jesus's movement is not a patch on existing religious structures but something entirely new.
37. New wine continues to ferment and expand; old wineskins have lost their elasticity. The metaphor drives home the same point as the patch parable: Jesus's message and movement cannot be contained within the old structures. The 'new wine' represents the kingdom of God breaking in; the 'old wineskins' represent the existing religious frameworks. Both the wine (the message) and the skins (the structure) are lost if forced together.
38. The verbal adjective *bleteon* ('must be put') expresses necessity — this is not optional but required. The new reality Jesus brings demands new forms to contain it. Luke does not include 'and both are preserved' (found in some manuscripts), keeping the focus on the necessity of the new.
39. This verse is unique to Luke and adds a surprising coda. The Greek *chrestos* ('good, pleasant, useful') — some manuscripts read *chrestoteros* ('better') — describes the old wine's appeal. The saying acknowledges a psychological reality: people prefer what they're accustomed to. The religious establishment will not readily embrace the new because the old system seems satisfactory. This verse may express gentle irony about the Pharisees' resistance or may acknowledge that the transition from old covenant to new is genuinely difficult.

6

Summary: *Luke 6 contains two Sabbath controversies (grain-picking and healing a withered hand), the choosing of the Twelve apostles after a night of prayer, and the Sermon on the Plain — Luke's parallel to Matthew's Sermon on the Mount. The sermon includes four blessings and four woes, teaching on loving enemies, not judging, and the parable of the two foundations. This chapter establishes Jesus's ethical teaching and the formation of his core community.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Luke's Beatitudes differ significantly from Matthew's. Luke has four blessings and four corresponding woes (Matthew has eight/nine blessings and no woes). Luke's blessings are addressed in the second person ('Blessed are you who are poor') rather than Matthew's third person ('Blessed are the poor in spirit'). Luke's version appears more concrete and socioeconomic — 'poor' rather than 'poor in spirit,' 'hungry now' rather than 'hungry for righteousness.' The 'love your enemies' teaching (vv. 27-36) is the most radical ethical instruction in the Gospels.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between Luke's Sermon on the Plain and Matthew's Sermon on the Mount is debated — whether they are different versions of the same event, different events with overlapping material, or literary compositions drawing on a common source. We render Luke's Greek text as given without harmonizing with Matthew.*

Connections: *The Sabbath controversies connect to Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15, with Jesus reinterpreting Sabbath in light of its original humanitarian purpose. The Beatitudes echo the Magnificat's reversal theme (1:46-55) and Hannah's prayer (1 Samuel 2:1-10). The 'love your enemies' teaching connects to Leviticus 19:18 while radically extending it. The two-foundations parable echoes Ezekiel 13:10-16 and Proverbs 10:25.*

¹On a Sabbath, as Jesus was passing through the grain fields, his disciples were picking heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them. ²Some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not permitted on the Sabbath?" ³Jesus answered them, "Have you not even read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴He entered the house of God, took the bread of the Presence and ate it, and gave some to his companions — bread that only the priests are permitted to eat." ⁵Then he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath." ⁶On another Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. A man was there whose right hand was withered. ⁷The scribes and the Pharisees were watching him closely to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a charge to bring against him. ⁸But he knew their thoughts and said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and stand in the middle." He got up and stood there. ⁹Jesus said to them, "I ask you: is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to destroy it?" ¹⁰After looking around at all of them, he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was restored. ¹¹But they were filled with fury and began discussing with one another what they might do to Jesus. ¹²In those days he went out to the mountain to pray, and he spent the whole night in prayer to God. ¹³When day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: ¹⁴Simon, whom he also named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip and Bartholomew, ¹⁵Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes, ¹⁶Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor. ¹⁷He came down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there, along with a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon, ¹⁸They that were vexed with unclean spirits — then they were healed. ¹⁹The whole crowd sought to touch him — for there traveled virtue out of him, and healed them all.

²⁰Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

"Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be satisfied.
Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.

²²Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. ²³Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for your reward is great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.

²⁴But woe to you who are rich,
for you have already received your comfort.

²⁵Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.
Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will mourn and weep.

²⁶Woe to you when all people speak well of you,
for their ancestors treated the false prophets in the same way.

²⁷"But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which maliciously use you. ²⁹To the one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from the one who takes your cloak, do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰Give to everyone who asks you, and from the one who takes what is yours, do not demand it back. ³¹Treat others the way you want them to treat you. ³²If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. ³³And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do the same. ³⁴And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive back, what credit is that

to you? Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount. ³⁵But love your enemies, do good, and lend expecting nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. ³⁷"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸Give, and it will be given to you — a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use will be measured back to you." ³⁹He also told them a parable: "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like the teacher. ⁴¹Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ⁴²How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. ⁴³"No good tree produces bad fruit, nor does a bad tree produce good fruit. ⁴⁴Each tree is known by its own fruit. People do not gather figs from thornbushes, or pick grapes from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil. For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ⁴⁶"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and acts on them — I will show you what that person is like. ⁴⁸That person is like someone building a house who dug deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹But the one who hears and does not act is like someone who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, it collapsed immediately, and the destruction of that house was great."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT reads simply *en sabbato* ('on a Sabbath') without the textually difficult *deuteroproto* ('second-first') found in some manuscripts and reflected in the KJV. The disciples' actions — picking grain (*etillon*) and rubbing it (*psochontes*) — would have been considered reaping and threshing under strict Pharisaic Sabbath interpretation. Deuteronomy 23:25 permitted eating from a neighbor's field by hand; the issue was not theft but Sabbath work.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 23:25. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The Greek *exestin* ('it is permitted, it is lawful') refers to halakhic legal interpretation — the Pharisees' oral tradition had elaborated thirty-nine categories of forbidden Sabbath work. The accusation is specific: the disciples are violating the Sabbath by performing agricultural labor. The Pharisees address 'you' (plural), including Jesus as responsible for his disciples' behavior.
3. Jesus's opening 'Have you not even read?' (*oude touto anegnote*) is a pointed challenge to the Pharisees' biblical expertise. The appeal to David's precedent (1 Samuel 21:1-6) is a brilliant rhetorical move: if David, the greatest king, could supersede the letter of the law when necessity demanded, how much more can the Son of David? The parallel is: David was hungry and broke the bread law; the disciples are hungry and break the Sabbath law.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Samuel 21:1-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The 'bread of the Presence' (*artos tes protheseos*, literally 'bread of the setting-forth') refers to the twelve loaves placed before God in the tabernacle and renewed weekly (Leviticus 24:5-9, Exodus 25:30). Only priests could eat the old loaves. David's action in 1 Samuel 21:1-6 established a principle: human need can take precedence over ritual restriction. Jesus does not argue that the Sabbath law is wrong but that its application must serve human well-being.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 24:5-9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 25:30. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Samuel 21:1-6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The claim is extraordinary: the Son of Man is *kyrios* ('lord, master, sovereign') of the Sabbath — the day God himself instituted (Genesis 2:2-3, Exodus 20:8-11). If Jesus is lord of the Sabbath, he has authority to determine its proper observance. Luke does not include Mark's statement 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath' (Mark 2:27), going directly to the christological claim.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 2:2-3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 20:8-11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

6. Luke specifies 'the right hand' (he dexia) — a detail absent from Mark and Matthew. The right hand was considered the hand of power, skill, and blessing; its loss was particularly disabling. The Greek xera ('dry, withered, atrophied') indicates a chronic condition, not an acute injury. The scene is set for another Sabbath confrontation.
7. The verb pareterounto ('were watching closely, were observing carefully') suggests hostile surveillance. Luke reveals their intent: not to learn or to wonder but to 'find a charge' (heurōsin kategorein) — legal language for building a case. The healing has not yet occurred, but the opposition has already decided on their conclusion.
8. Again Jesus demonstrates knowledge of internal thoughts (edei tous dialogismous auton, cf. 5:22). Rather than avoiding the confrontation, Jesus makes it public — placing the man 'in the middle' (eis to meson) forces everyone to see the human need that stands at the center of the Sabbath debate. The man's obedient response sets the stage for the healing.
9. Jesus reframes the question entirely. The Pharisees asked whether healing was permitted; Jesus asks whether doing good or doing harm is permitted. The verbs agathopoesai ('to do good') and kakopoesai ('to do harm') create a stark binary — if healing is forbidden, then refusing to heal when one can is doing harm. The Sabbath, meant for human flourishing, becomes an instrument of suffering when its observance prevents mercy. Jesus forces the opposition to choose between their interpretation and basic human compassion.
10. The verb periblepsamenos ('having looked around at') describes a deliberate, sweeping gaze — Jesus looks each opponent in the eye before acting. The command 'stretch out your hand' (ekteinon ten cheira sou) requires the man to do what he cannot do — and in the act of obedience, ability is given. The passive apekatestathē ('was restored') is a divine passive — God restores through Jesus's command.
11. The Greek anoias ('madness, fury, senselessness') indicates an irrational rage — literally 'without mind.' They are 'filled' (eplesthesan) with it, as others have been 'filled' with the Holy Spirit. Luke presents two types of fullness: Spirit-filled praise and fury-filled plotting. Their discussion about 'what they might do to Jesus' (ti an poiesean to Iesou) is the beginning of the conspiracy that will lead to the cross.
12. The verb dianyktereoun ('spending the whole night') appears only here in the New Testament. Jesus's all-night prayer precedes the appointment of the Twelve — the most consequential leadership decision of his ministry is preceded by the most extended prayer Luke records. The phrase en te proseuche tou theou ('in the prayer of God') could mean 'in prayer to God' or possibly 'in a house of prayer dedicated to God.' The former is more likely.
13. The verb exelexamenos ('having chosen, having selected') indicates deliberate, Spirit-informed selection from a larger group of disciples. The title apostolous ('apostles, sent ones') from the verb apostello ('to send') defines their role: they are commissioned representatives, sent with the authority of the one who sends them. The number twelve corresponds to the twelve tribes of Israel — the apostles represent the reconstituted people of God.
14. Simon receives the name Petros ('Peter,' from petra, 'rock'). This renaming echoes the Old Testament pattern of God renaming those he commissions for special roles (Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel). Andrew and Simon are brothers; James and John are brothers (sons of Zebedee, 5:10). The list is arranged in pairs, a pattern that may reflect mission practice (cf. 10:1, sent 'two by two').
15. Matthew is identified with Levi the tax collector (5:27-28) by tradition. Thomas (from Aramaic te'oma, 'twin') will later be known for his doubt and his confession (John 20:24-28). James son of Alphaeus is distinguished from James son of Zebedee. Simon 'the Zealot' (zeoloten) indicates either membership in the Zealot political movement opposing Rome or simply religious zeal. The group includes a former tax collector (Roman collaborator) and a zealot (anti-Roman nationalist) — an extraordinary combination.
16. Two men named Judas (Ioudas) are listed. 'Judas of James' (Ioudan Iakobou) is called 'son of James' by most interpreters (though 'brother of James' is possible; the KJV chooses 'brother'). Judas Iscariot — whose surname may mean 'man of Kerioth' (a Judean town) or may derive from the Latin sicarius ('dagger-man') — is identified proleptically as prodotes ('traitor, betrayer'). Luke names the end from the beginning.
17. The Greek topou pedinou ('a level/flat place') gives this sermon its traditional name, 'Sermon on the Plain,' distinguishing it from Matthew's 'Sermon on the Mount.' Jesus has come down from the mountain (v. 12) to level ground. The audience includes people from Tyre and Sidon — Gentile territory — consistent with Luke's universal scope. The crowd includes 'disciples' (mathetōn, a larger group than the Twelve) and 'the people' (laou, the general population).
18. Luke distinguishes between those with diseases (nosōn, physical illness) and those troubled by unclean spirits (pneumatōn akathartōn) — different conditions requiring different interventions, though both are resolved by Jesus's power. The verb etherapeuonto ('were being healed, were cured') is in the imperfect, suggesting ongoing healing activity.
19. The verb ezetoun ('were seeking, were trying') shows the crowd's desperate urgency. The Greek dynamis ('power') literally 'was going out from him' (par autou exercheto) — Luke depicts healing power as a tangible force that radiates from Jesus's person. This same concept appears in the story of the woman who touched his garment (8:46). The universal scope — 'healing everyone' (iato pantas) — demonstrates the comprehensive nature of Jesus's restorative power.
20. Luke's Beatitudes are addressed directly to the disciples in the second person ('you who are poor') rather than Matthew's third person ('the poor in spirit'). The Greek ptochoi ('poor, destitute, beggars') without Matthew's qualifying 'in spirit' (to pneumati) refers primarily to material poverty, though spiritual poverty is not excluded. Luke's Jesus consistently champions the economically poor (1:52-53, 4:18, 7:22, 14:13, 16:19-31). The kingdom of God belongs to the poor — not as a future reward for suffering but as a present reality of divine reversal.

21. Luke adds *nyn* ('now') twice, creating a temporal contrast between present suffering and future reversal. The Greek *chortasthesesthe* ('you will be satisfied, you will be filled') was originally used for feeding animals to satisfaction — it implies complete, even excessive fullness. The verb *gelasete* ('you will laugh') is unique to Luke's Beatitudes — laughter as the reversal of weeping. The structure mirrors the Magnificat: God fills the hungry and satisfies those who mourn.
22. Four verbs describe escalating persecution: hate (*misesōsin*), exclude/separate (*aphorisosin* — possibly excommunication from the synagogue), insult/reproach (*oneidisōsin*), and reject/cast out your name (*ekbalosin to onoma*). The phrase 'on account of the Son of Man' (*heneka tou huiou tou anthrōpou*) specifies that the blessing applies specifically to persecution for loyalty to Jesus, not suffering in general.
23. The verb *skirtesate* ('leap for joy') is the same word used for the unborn John leaping in Elizabeth's womb (1:41, 44) — physical, exuberant joy. The persecuted are placed in the lineage of the prophets — to be rejected for God's sake is to share the fate of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Elijah. The 'great reward in heaven' (*misthos polys en to ourano*) does not mean a distant, immaterial compensation but the heavenly reality that already exists and will be fully revealed.
24. The four woes (vv. 24-26) are unique to Luke and mirror the four blessings exactly. The Greek *ouai* ('woe') is not a curse but a prophetic lament — 'how terrible for you.' The verb *apechete* ('you have received in full') is a commercial term used for receipts — the rich have been paid in full; there is no more coming. The Greek *paraklesin* ('comfort, consolation') is the same word used for the 'consolation of Israel' Simeon awaited (2:25). Those who have already found their consolation in wealth will not find it in God.
25. The reversal is exact: full now/hungry later mirrors hungry now/satisfied later (v. 21); laughing now/mourning later mirrors weeping now/laughing later (v. 21). The word *nyn* ('now') again marks the temporal dimension — present condition does not determine ultimate destiny. Luke's Jesus consistently warns that present prosperity can be spiritually dangerous when it becomes self-sufficient and indifferent to the suffering of others.
26. The fourth woe mirrors the fourth blessing. Universal popularity is a danger sign — the false prophets who told people what they wanted to hear were praised (cf. Jeremiah 5:31, Micah 2:11), while the true prophets who spoke God's uncomfortable word were persecuted (v. 23). If everyone speaks well of you, you may be telling people what they want to hear rather than what God says.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 5:31. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Micah 2:11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The phrase 'to you who are listening' (*hymn tois akouousin*) narrows the audience to those willing to hear. The command *agapate tous echthrous hymon* ('love your enemies') is the most radical ethical demand in the Gospels. The Greek *agapao* is not an emotion but a deliberate choice to act for another's good — it can be commanded because it is about action, not feeling. 'Do good' (*kalōs poieite*) specifies what love looks like in practice.
28. Four commands form two pairs: love/do good (v. 27) and bless/pray (v. 28). 'Bless' (*eulogeite*) means to speak well of, to invoke God's favor upon — the opposite of their cursing. 'Pray for' (*proseuchesthe peri*) goes beyond words to intercessory action. The verb *epereavonton* ('those who mistreat, those who abuse') describes deliberate hostility. Jesus commands active good toward those who actively harm.
29. The slap on the cheek (*siagona*) was an insult rather than an assault — a backhanded slap was a gesture of contempt. Offering the other cheek is not passive acceptance of abuse but a refusal to retaliate that asserts dignity. Luke reverses the garment order from Matthew (Matthew says tunic then cloak; Luke says cloak then tunic). The *himation* ('outer cloak') was essential for warmth; the *chiton* ('inner tunic') was the basic garment. The teaching demands radical non-retaliation that goes beyond what is taken.
30. The command is sweeping: *panti aitounti* ('to everyone who asks') allows no exceptions. The verb *apaitei* ('demand back') implies legal recourse — do not sue for recovery. These are radical economic principles that prioritize relationship over property. They are not legal codes for civil government but principles for kingdom living that demonstrate trust in God's provision rather than self-protection.
31. The 'Golden Rule' appears in positive form here and in Matthew 7:12. The negative form ('do not do to others what you would not want done to you') was already known in Judaism — attributed to Rabbi Hillel (b. Shabbat 31a). Jesus's positive formulation is more demanding: it requires active initiative, not merely passive restraint. The Greek *kathos thelete* ('as you want') makes the standard one's own desires for good treatment.
32. The Greek *charis* ('credit, grace, thanks') is used here in the sense of 'what is remarkable or praiseworthy about that?' Luke uses 'sinners' (*hamartoloi*) where Matthew uses 'tax collectors' — both make the same point: reciprocal love requires no grace or moral distinction. Even those outside the covenant community practice reciprocal love. Jesus's ethic demands something qualitatively different.
33. The threefold repetition (love, vv. 32; do good, v. 33; lend, v. 34) drives the point home: every form of reciprocal virtue is practiced by people who make no claim to follow God. The standard for disciples must exceed the baseline of ordinary human reciprocity.
34. The Greek *danisete* ('lend') and the expectation of receiving *ta isa* ('equal amount, same amount back') describes ordinary commercial lending. This is not charity but investment. Jesus challenges the economic logic of reciprocity: kingdom economics gives without calculating return.
35. The phrase *meden apelpizontes* ('expecting nothing back, despairing of nothing') captures the radical nature of kingdom generosity. The motivation is not reciprocity but imitation of God — 'you will be children of the Most High' (*esesthe huiou hypsistou*). To be God's children means to act like God. And God's character is defined here as *chrestos* ('kind, good, gracious') toward *tous acharistous kai ponerous* ('the ungrateful and the wicked'). This is Luke's version of Matthew's 'perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

36. Where Matthew 5:48 says 'be perfect' (teleioi), Luke says 'be merciful' (oiktirmones). The Greek oiktirmon ('compassionate, merciful') echoes the Hebrew rachum (from rechem, 'womb') — the deep, visceral compassion of a parent for a child. The standard is not abstract moral perfection but God's own compassionate character. This verse encapsulates the entire Sermon on the Plain.
37. Three prohibitions and three corresponding promises form a tight structure. The Greek krinete ('judge') means to pass sentence, to render a verdict — not to exercise discernment (which is required elsewhere). The verb katadikazete ('condemn') is even stronger — to pass a guilty verdict. The verb apolyete ('forgive, release, let go') is the same word used for forgiveness of sins (aphesis). Each human action triggers a divine response: how we treat others determines how God treats us.
38. The imagery is from the grain market: filling a container, pressing the grain down to remove air, shaking it to settle, and piling more until it overflows. God's return is not merely proportional but superabundant. The 'lap' (kolpon, literally 'bosom' or the fold of a garment used as a pocket) was where merchants received their measured goods. The proverb 'the measure you use will be measured back to you' (ho metro metreite antimetrethesetai hymin) applies to generosity, judgment, forgiveness, and all human dealings.
39. The parable is brief and proverbial. In Matthew 15:14, it is directed at the Pharisees; in Luke, the context suggests it applies to the disciples — those who would teach others must first be able to see clearly themselves. The rhetorical questions expect obvious answers: no, a blind guide cannot lead; yes, both will fall.
40. The Greek katertismenos ('fully trained, fully equipped, made complete') does not mean 'perfect' in the moral sense (as the KJV suggests) but 'fully formed' or 'thoroughly prepared.' The principle is that a student's goal is to become like the teacher. If the teacher is blind, the student will also be blind (v. 39). The positive implication: if Jesus is the teacher, the fully trained disciple will be like him.
41. The Greek karpheos ('speck, splinter, small piece of straw') contrasted with dokos ('beam, log, main structural timber') creates deliberate absurdist humor. The contrast is comically exaggerated to make a serious point about self-righteousness. The verb katanoeis ('notice, observe carefully, consider') implies that failure to see one's own faults requires willful inattention.
42. The term hypokrita ('hypocrite') originally meant 'actor' — one who plays a role. Jesus applies it to those who perform the role of moral adviser while ignoring their own greater faults. Note that Jesus does not forbid helping others with their faults — he says 'first' (proton) deal with your own, 'and then' (kai tote) you will see clearly to help. The goal is not indifference to others' faults but honest self-examination as the prerequisite for genuine helpfulness.
43. The Greek sapron ('rotten, worthless, bad') describes fruit that is spoiled and useless. The tree-and-fruit metaphor establishes a direct connection between inner character and outward behavior. The logic is: examine the fruit to know the tree, examine the behavior to know the heart.
44. The examples are common-sense observations from Palestinian agriculture. Figs (syka) come from fig trees, not from thornbushes (akanthōn). Grapes (staphylen) come from grapevines, not from bramble bushes (batou). The principle is self-evident: the nature of the source determines the nature of the product. Applied to human character, one's actions inevitably reveal one's inner condition.
45. The Greek thesauros ('treasure, storehouse') of the heart is the accumulated deposit of character, conviction, and disposition. The verb propherei ('brings forth, produces') indicates that speech and action emerge from this inner storehouse. The concluding proverb — 'out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks' (ek perisseumatōs kardias lalei to stoma) — identifies speech as the most immediate revelation of the heart's condition.
46. The doubled kyrie kyrie ('Lord, Lord') indicates emphatic address — these are not casual followers but people who use the most respectful title. Yet verbal acknowledgment without corresponding obedience is empty. Jesus's challenge is directed at the gap between confession and conduct. The question is unanswerable — there is no good reason for the contradiction.
47. Three actions define the true disciple: coming to Jesus (erchomenos), hearing his words (akouon), and doing them (poion). All three are necessary — hearing without doing is insufficient (v. 49). Luke frames this as a comparison ('I will show you what that person is like'), introducing the parable of the two builders.
48. Luke's version emphasizes the effort of preparation: eskapsev kai ebathynen ('dug and went deep') — the builder deliberately dug down to bedrock rather than building on the surface. The flood (plemmys, a word unique to this passage in the NT) and the river's violent assault (proserexen, 'burst against, dashed against') represent the trials and crises of life. The house stands not because of the storm's weakness but because of the foundation's strength — dia to kalos oikodomesthai ('because it had been well built').
49. The contrast is not between two different storms but between two different foundations — choris themeliou ('without a foundation'). Both houses face the same crisis; the difference is entirely in the preparation. The collapse is immediate (euthys, 'at once') and total — to rhegma ('the destruction, the ruin, the crash') is catastrophic. Luke ends the sermon on this sobering note: hearing Jesus's words without obeying them leads not to a minor setback but to complete ruin.

7

Summary: *Luke 7 presents three major episodes that reveal Jesus's authority and compassion across social boundaries. A Roman centurion in Capernaum displays extraordinary faith by asking Jesus to heal his servant with a word alone — faith Jesus declares unmatched in Israel. At Nain, Jesus raises a widow's only son from the dead, evoking the Elijah-Elisha prophetic tradition. When John the Baptist sends disciples to ask if Jesus is 'the one who is to come,' Jesus responds by pointing to the evidence of his ministry. The chapter concludes with a sinful woman anointing Jesus's feet at a Pharisee's dinner, provoking a parable about forgiveness and love.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The centurion's faith is remarkable precisely because he is a Gentile who understands authority structures — he recognizes that Jesus commands illness the way a military officer commands soldiers. The raising at Nain has no parallel in Matthew or Mark and closely mirrors Elijah's raising of the widow's son at Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24). Jesus's reply to John's disciples (vv. 22-23) is a mosaic of Isaiah quotations (29:18-19, 35:5-6, 61:1) that implicitly identifies Jesus as the fulfillment of prophetic hope. The anointing scene demonstrates Luke's distinctive theology of forgiveness: the woman's great love is the evidence of great forgiveness already received, not its cause.*

Translation Friction: *The centurion story differs in detail from Matthew 8:5-13, where the centurion comes in person. Luke has him send intermediaries (Jewish elders, then friends), which many scholars consider the more historically precise account. We render Luke's text as it stands. The identity of the anointing woman is not specified — she is not Mary Magdalene (a later tradition) or Mary of Bethany (John 12). Luke calls her simply 'a woman in the city who was a sinner.'*

Connections: *The widow of Nain episode echoes 1 Kings 17:17-24 (Elijah) and 2 Kings 4:18-37 (Elisha). Jesus's words to John's disciples draw from Isaiah 29:18-19, 35:5-6, and 61:1-2. The parable of the two debtors (vv. 41-43) anticipates the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:23-35. John the Baptist's question connects to his earlier testimony in Luke 3:15-17.*

¹After he had finished all his words in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. ²Now a centurion's servant, who was highly valued by him, was sick and about to die. ³When he heard about Jesus, he sent Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and save the life of his servant. ⁴When they came to Jesus, they urged him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy for you to do this for him, ⁵Since he loveth our nation, then he has built us a synagogue. ⁶Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. ⁷Therefore I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. ⁸For I too am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me. I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." ⁹When Jesus heard this, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd following him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." ¹⁰And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant in good health. ¹¹Soon afterward, he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. ¹²As he drew near to the gate of the town, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the town was with her. ¹³When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." ¹⁴Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." ¹⁵The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. ¹⁶Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" ¹⁷And this report about him spread through all Judea and all the surrounding region. ¹⁸The disciples of John reported all these things to him. ¹⁹And John, summoning two of his disciples, sent them to the Lord, asking, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" ²⁰When the men came to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, asking, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'" ²¹In that very hour he healed many people of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits, and to many who were blind he gave sight. ²²And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the

dead are raised, and the poor have good news proclaimed to them. ²³And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." ²⁴When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear splendid clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. ²⁶What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷This is the one about whom it is written, 'Look, I send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' ²⁸I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." ²⁹When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God righteous, having been baptized with John's baptism. ³⁰But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him. ³¹"To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? ³²They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.' ³³For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' ³⁴The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' ³⁵Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children." ³⁶One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. ³⁷And a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment. ³⁸Stood at his ankles behind him weeping, and started to wash his ankles with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him — that she is a sinner." ⁴⁰Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he said, "Say it, Teacher." ⁴¹"A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²When they could not pay, he graciously forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?" ⁴³Simon answered, "I suppose the one to whom he forgave more." He said to him, "You have judged correctly." ⁴⁴Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven — for she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little." ⁴⁸Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. This verse connects the Sermon on the Plain (chapter 6) to the narratives that follow. The phrase *eis tas akoas tou laou* ('in the hearing of the people') emphasizes the public nature of the teaching.
2. The word *entimos* ('valued, precious, honored') indicates this was no ordinary slave — the centurion had genuine affection for this servant. Luke uses *doulos* ('slave, servant') rather than Matthew's *pais* ('boy, servant, child').
3. Unlike Matthew's account where the centurion approaches directly, Luke has him send intermediaries — Jewish elders (*presbyterous tōn Ioudaiōn*). This may reflect the centurion's cultural sensitivity about a Gentile approaching a Jewish teacher, or Luke's interest in the relationship between this Roman and the Jewish community.
4. The Jewish elders vouch for the centurion's worthiness (*axios*) — a judgment that will be ironically reversed by the centurion's own words in verse 6. The elders' advocacy reveals an unusual relationship between this Roman officer and the local Jewish community.
5. A Roman centurion who loves (*agapa*) the Jewish nation and funds synagogue construction is a God-fearer — a Gentile sympathizer with Judaism who has not undergone full conversion. Such figures appear frequently in Luke-Acts (cf. Cornelius in Acts 10).
6. The centurion now sends a second delegation — friends (*philous*) — with a message of self-abasement. Where the elders said 'he is worthy' (*axios*, v. 4), the centurion says 'I am not worthy' (*ouk hikanos*). The concern about Jesus entering his house may reflect awareness of Jewish purity concerns about Gentile homes.
7. Luke uses *pais* ('servant, child') here rather than *doulos* ('slave') as in verse 2, suggesting the terms may be interchangeable for this relationship. The centurion's faith is in the authority of Jesus's word alone — no touch, no visit, no ritual required.

8. The centurion's reasoning is profound: he understands authority from the inside. Because he operates under the authority of Rome and exercises delegated authority over soldiers, he recognizes that Jesus operates under the authority of God and exercises delegated authority over illness. The 'how much more' logic is implicit — if a Roman officer's word commands obedience, how much more the word of one who commands on behalf of God.
9. The verb *ethaumasēn* ('marveled, was amazed') is striking — Jesus is rarely said to be amazed. That a Gentile soldier displays greater faith than anyone in Israel is a provocative declaration, anticipating Luke's consistent theme that outsiders often respond more readily than insiders (cf. the Samaritans, the prodigal's return).
10. Luke records the healing without narrating the moment — the messengers simply find the servant well (*hygiainonta*, 'in good health'). The healing has occurred at a distance, confirming the centurion's faith that Jesus's word alone is sufficient.
11. Nain is a small village about six miles southeast of Nazareth. This episode is unique to Luke. The detail that both disciples and a large crowd accompanied Jesus sets the stage for a public miracle with many witnesses.
12. Every detail heightens the pathos: the son is dead (*tethnēkōs*), he is her only son (*monogenēs*), and she is a widow (*chēra*). Without a son, a widow in the ancient world had no provider, no legal advocate, no social standing. The word *monogenēs* ('only-begotten, one-of-a-kind') is the same word John uses for Jesus (John 3:16). Two crowds converge at the town gate — one following Jesus, one following death.
13. Luke calls Jesus 'the Lord' (*ho kyrios*) — a title Luke uses in narrative more freely than the other Gospels. The verb *esplanchnisthē* ('had compassion') derives from *splanchna* ('intestines, bowels'), reflecting the ancient understanding that deep emotion was felt in the gut. Jesus initiates this miracle unprompted — no one asks him to intervene.
14. Touching a bier (*soros*, the open coffin or funeral stretcher) rendered a person ceremonially unclean (Numbers 19:11-16). Jesus's touch stops the procession. The command *egerthēti* ('arise, be raised') is the same verb used for resurrection throughout the New Testament. Jesus addresses the dead man directly — his word has authority even over death.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 19:11-16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The phrase 'gave him to his mother' (*edōken auton tē mētri autou*) directly echoes 1 Kings 17:23, where Elijah 'gave him to his mother' after raising the widow of Zarephath's son. Luke's readers would recognize the prophetic parallel. The detail that the young man began to speak confirms the reality of the restoration — he is not merely resuscitated but fully alive.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Kings 17:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The crowd's response identifies Jesus as a prophet — specifically a great prophet, evoking Elijah or the prophet like Moses promised in Deuteronomy 18:15. The verb *epeskepsato* ('has visited') is a key Lukan term (cf. 1:68, 78) meaning God has come to intervene on behalf of his people, echoing the Hebrew *paqad*.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 18:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The word *logos* ('word, report, account') indicates that the story of the Nain miracle becomes widely known. 'Judea' here may refer broadly to the land of the Jews rather than strictly to the southern province.
18. John the Baptist is in prison (Luke 3:19-20). His disciples serve as intermediaries, bringing news of Jesus's ministry. The phrase *peri pantōn toutōn* ('about all these things') refers to the centurion's healing and the raising at Nain.
19. John's question is startling from the one who identified Jesus at the Jordan (Luke 3:16). Whether it reflects genuine doubt in prison, a desire for his disciples' benefit, or a prophetic impatience that the kingdom has not yet arrived in the way he expected (cf. Luke 3:17, the 'winnowing fork'), is debated. The phrase 'the one who is to come' (*ho erchomenos*) was a recognized messianic title.
20. The repetition of the question emphasizes its weight. Luke records the full exchange, showing the messengers faithfully relaying John's exact words.
21. Luke inserts this summary of healing activity so that Jesus's response to John in the next verse is grounded in observable evidence. The verb *echarisato* ('gave as a gift, granted graciously') shares the root of *charis* ('grace') — sight is a gift of grace.
22. Jesus does not answer John's question directly but points to evidence drawn from Isaiah's prophecies: Isaiah 29:18-19 (deaf hear, blind see), Isaiah 35:5-6 (blind, deaf, lame), and Isaiah 61:1 (good news to the poor). The list forms a composite fulfillment citation. The final item — the poor receiving good news — is climactic, echoing Jesus's own programmatic statement in Luke 4:18.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 29:18-19. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 35:5-6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 61:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

- 23.** The verb *skandalisthē* ('caused to stumble, take offense') is a warning: Jesus's ministry does not match the expected pattern of a conquering Messiah. The beatitude is gentle but pointed — even John may need to recalibrate his expectations. Jesus is the stumbling stone (*skandalon*) for those whose messianic hopes don't match his methods.
- 24.** Jesus waits until John's messengers leave before publicly praising John — perhaps to spare John's dignity. The image of a reed shaken by the wind suggests weakness and vacillation. The answer is obviously 'No' — John is anything but weak-willed.
- 25.** The contrast is between the desert prophet in rough garments and the courtier in fine robes. John is in Herod's prison, but he does not belong to Herod's world. Luke adds 'luxury' (*tryphē*) to Matthew's version, sharpening the contrast.
- 26.** Jesus affirms John's prophetic identity but elevates him beyond it — John is 'more than a prophet' (*perissoteron prophētou*) because he is the forerunner who directly precedes the Messiah.
- 27.** The quotation combines Exodus 23:20 and Malachi 3:1. In the original Malachi context, God sends his messenger before his own coming to the temple. By applying this to John as the forerunner of Jesus, the text implicitly identifies Jesus with the LORD whose coming Malachi announces.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Malachi 3:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 23:20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** The SBLGNT omits 'prophet' (*prophētēs*) after 'John' — making the statement even more sweeping: no human born has been greater than John. Yet the kingdom of God introduces a new order in which even the least participant surpasses the greatest figure of the old order. This is not a diminishment of John but an exaltation of the kingdom.
- 29.** The phrase *edikaiōsan ton theon* ('justified God, declared God righteous') is a remarkable expression — the people acknowledged that God's plan through John was right. Tax collectors (*telōnai*), despised as collaborators with Rome, are singled out as responsive to God's purposes.
- 30.** The contrast is stark: sinners accepted God's plan; the religious experts rejected (*ēthetēsan*) it. The phrase *boulēn tou theou* ('the purpose/counsel of God') is a weighty theological term — the Pharisees are not merely declining a ritual but rejecting God's redemptive plan.
- 31.** Jesus introduces a parable with a double rhetorical question — a common rabbinic teaching format. The phrase 'this generation' (*tēs geneas tautēs*) carries a negative connotation throughout the Gospels, suggesting stubbornness and spiritual obtuseness.
- 32.** The image is of petulant children who refuse to play along regardless of the game proposed. Whether the game is a wedding (flute, dancing) or a funeral (dirge, weeping), they refuse to participate. This generation rejected both John's austerity and Jesus's celebration.
- 33.** John's ascetic lifestyle — no bread, no wine — was consistent with prophetic and Nazirite traditions, but his critics dismissed it as demonic. The accusation 'He has a demon' is the most extreme form of rejection.
- 34.** The accusation *phagos kai oinopotēs* ('glutton and drunkard') echoes the charge against a 'rebellious son' in Deuteronomy 21:20, which carried the death penalty. Jesus's critics may be implicitly making a capital accusation. The phrase 'friend of tax collectors and sinners' (*philos telōnōn kai hamartōlōn*) was intended as an insult but has become one of the most beloved descriptions of Jesus.
- 34.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 21:20. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 35.** The personification of Wisdom (*sophia*) echoes Proverbs 8-9. The meaning is that God's wisdom — expressed through both John's austerity and Jesus's celebratory presence — is proven right by its results ('children,' *teknōn*). Luke has 'all her children' where Matthew has 'her deeds' (Matthew 11:19).
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Proverbs 8-9 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** Jesus accepts dinner invitations from Pharisees as well as sinners — he is not partisan in his associations. The verb *kateklithē* ('reclined') indicates a formal meal; diners reclined on couches, leaning on the left elbow with feet extending behind them — a detail essential for understanding the woman's approach in verse 38.
- 37.** The woman is identified only as 'a sinner' (*hamartōlos*) — likely a euphemism for a prostitute, though Luke does not specify. She is not named, and there is no basis for identifying her with Mary Magdalene (a conflation dating to Pope Gregory I in 591 AD). The alabaster flask (*alabastron*) of *myron* ('perfumed ointment') was an expensive luxury item.
- 38.** Because diners reclined with feet extending away from the table, she could approach his feet from behind without disrupting the meal. Every action is extravagant: tears as washing water, unbound hair as a towel (a Jewish woman letting down her hair in public was scandalous), repeated kissing (*katephilei*, imperfect tense indicating continuous action), and costly ointment on feet rather than head. The scene is an act of lavish, self-abandoning devotion.
- 39.** The Pharisee's reasoning contains a double error: he assumes a prophet would (1) know the woman's character, and (2) refuse her touch. In fact, Jesus does know (as he will demonstrate), and his acceptance of her is precisely the prophetic act. The Pharisee is named Simon in verse 40.

40. Jesus 'answered' (apokritheis) the Pharisee's unspoken thought — demonstrating the very prophetic knowledge Simon doubted. By addressing Simon by name, Jesus personalizes the confrontation. Simon's polite response ('Teacher,' Didaskale) maintains social decorum.
41. A denarius (dēnariion) was approximately one day's wage for a laborer. The debts are therefore roughly 500 days' wages versus 50 — a tenfold difference. The parable is deceptively simple but contains the key to the entire scene.
42. The verb echarisato ('forgave graciously, granted as a favor') shares the root of charis ('grace'). Both debts are cancelled — forgiveness is complete in both cases. The question is about proportional response: who will be more grateful?
43. Simon's cautious 'I suppose' (hypolambanō) suggests he senses a trap. Jesus's confirmation — 'You have judged correctly' (orthōs ekrinas) — is both an affirmation and an ironic reversal: Simon has just pronounced the principle that condemns his own lack of hospitality.
44. Jesus physically turns toward the woman but speaks to Simon — forcing Simon to see her as a person, not a category. The threefold contrast (water/tears, kiss/kissing, oil/ointment) exposes Simon's failure of basic hospitality. Providing water for a guest's feet was a minimal courtesy.
45. A greeting kiss was standard hospitality. Simon neglected even this basic courtesy, while the woman's devotion has been continuous (ou dielipen, 'has not ceased') from the moment Jesus arrived.
46. The final contrast is the sharpest: Simon did not even provide basic olive oil (elaion) for Jesus's head; she provided expensive perfumed ointment (myron) for his feet. Anointing a guest's head was a sign of honor and welcome (cf. Psalm 23:5).
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 23:5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
47. The logic of the parable makes clear that her love is the result of forgiveness, not its cause. The Greek hou charin ('for which reason') and hoti ('because') indicate evidence, not causation: her great love demonstrates that she has already received great forgiveness. The sentence about 'the one forgiven little' is a subtle rebuke of Simon's self-righteousness.
48. Jesus now addresses the woman directly for the first time. The perfect tense apheōntai ('have been and remain forgiven') confirms a completed action — her forgiveness is not new but is now publicly declared.
49. The other guests raise the question that has been building since Luke 5:21: forgiving sins is a divine prerogative. Their question is left unanswered — Luke lets the implicit Christological claim stand without resolution, forcing the reader to answer for themselves.
50. The verb sesōken ('has saved') is the same word used for physical healing and spiritual salvation. The phrase poreuou eis eirēnēn ('go into peace') translates the Hebrew lekhi leshalom and is a benediction of wholeness — she departs not merely forgiven but restored to shalom.

8

Summary: Luke 8 opens with a summary of Jesus's itinerant ministry, naming the women who supported it financially. Jesus teaches the Parable of the Sower, explaining how different responses to God's word yield different outcomes. He then redefines family around obedience to God's word. Three dramatic miracles follow in rapid succession: Jesus calms a violent storm on the Sea of Galilee, delivers the Gerasene demoniac from a 'Legion' of unclean spirits, and — in an interwoven double narrative — heals a woman with a twelve-year hemorrhage while raising Jairus's twelve-year-old daughter from death.

What Makes This Remarkable: The named women in verses 1-3 are extraordinary in ancient literature: Mary Magdalene, Joanna (wife of Herod's steward Chuza), and Susanna are identified as financial patrons of Jesus's mission. Luke alone preserves this detail, showing that the movement was funded by women of means. The Gerasene demoniac episode is the most detailed exorcism in the Gospels, with the demons self-identifying as 'Legion' — a Roman military term carrying political undertones in occupied Palestine. The sandwiched miracle stories of Jairus's daughter and the hemorrhaging woman share the number twelve, linking the girl's age with the woman's years of suffering and creating a literary frame of restoration.

Translation Friction: The Gerasene/Gadarene/Gergesene location varies across manuscripts; the SBLGNT reads Gerasenes (Gerasenon). The herd of pigs raises questions about property destruction and Gentile territory. We render the Greek as given without harmonizing with the Markan or Matthean parallels. The phrase 'your faith has saved you' (he pistis sou sesoken se) in verse 48 uses sozo, which means both 'save' and 'heal' — a double meaning impossible to capture in a single English word.

Connections: The Parable of the Sower parallels Mark 4:1-20 and Matthew 13:1-23. The storm narrative echoes Psalm 107:23-30 and Jonah 1. The demoniac episode parallels Mark 5:1-20. The Jairus/hemorrhage double story parallels Mark 5:21-43. The women patrons anticipate the women at the cross and tomb (Luke 23:49, 55; 24:1-10).

¹Soon afterward, he traveled through every city and village, proclaiming and announcing the good news of the kingdom of God, and the twelve were with him, ²Specific women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom traveled seven devils, ³Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's manager, and Susanna, and numerous others, which served him of their substance. ⁴When a large crowd was gathering and people from every town were coming to him, he spoke by means of a parable: ⁵"A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the sky devoured it. ⁶Other seed fell on rock, and when it grew up, it withered because it had no moisture. ⁷Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. ⁸And other seed fell into good soil, and when it grew up, it produced fruit a hundredfold." As he said these things, he called out, "The one who has ears to hear, let him hear." ⁹Then his disciples asked him what this parable meant. ¹⁰He said, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest they are given in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. ¹¹Now the parable is this — The seed is the message of God. ¹²The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. ¹³The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a time, and in a season of testing they fall away. ¹⁴As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the worries and riches and pleasures of life, and they do not bring fruit to maturity. ¹⁵But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, having heard the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with endurance. ¹⁶"No one, after lighting a lamp, covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. ¹⁷For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything concealed that will not be known and come to light. ¹⁸Pay attention, then, to how you hear. For whoever has, more will be given to him; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him." ¹⁹Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. ²⁰He was told, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you." ²¹But he answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." ²²One day he got into a boat with his disciples and said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." So they set out. ²³As they were sailing, he fell asleep. A violent windstorm came down on the lake, and they were being swamped and were in danger. ²⁴They came and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. ²⁵He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid and marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?" ²⁶They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across from Galilee. ²⁷When he stepped out on land, a man from the city met him who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothing and did not live in a house but among the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, "What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me!" ²⁹For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For many times it had seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into desolate places. ³⁰Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion" — because many demons had entered him. ³¹And they were begging him not to command them to depart into the abyss. ³²Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter the pigs. And he gave them permission. ³³The demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. ³⁴When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and reported it in the city and in the countryside. ³⁵Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶Those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been saved. ³⁷Then all the people of the surrounding region of the Gerasenes asked him to leave them, because they were gripped with great fear. So he got into the boat and

returned. ³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹"Return to your home, and declare what God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what Jesus had done for him. ⁴⁰When Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. ⁴¹And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. He fell at Jesus's feet and begged him to come to his house, ⁴²Since he had one only daughter, concerning twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he traveled the people thronged him. ⁴³And a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years, who could not be healed by anyone, ⁴⁴Indeed, arrived behind him, and touched the border of his garment — and immediately her issue of blood stanchd. ⁴⁵Jesus said, "Who touched me?" When everyone denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds are surrounding you and pressing against you!" ⁴⁶But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceived that power had gone out from me." ⁴⁷When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched him and how she was immediately healed. ⁴⁸He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace." ⁴⁹While he was still speaking, someone came from the synagogue ruler's house, saying, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any longer." ⁵⁰But Jesus, hearing this, answered him, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be saved." ⁵¹When he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him except Peter, John, and James, and the father and mother of the child. ⁵²Everyone was weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Stop weeping, for she has not died but is sleeping." ⁵³And they laughed at him, knowing that she had died. ⁵⁴But taking her by the hand, he called out, saying, "Child, arise." ⁵⁵Her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that she be given something to eat. ⁵⁶Her parents were amazed, but he ordered them to tell no one what had happened.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase euangelizomenos ten basileian tou theou ('announcing the good news of the kingdom of God') combines two verbs of proclamation — kerusson ('heralding') and euangelizomenos ('bringing good news'). Luke emphasizes the content of Jesus's preaching: the kingdom of God, not merely moral teaching.
2. Mary Magdalene is named first among the women, indicating her prominence. The 'seven demons' (daimonia hepta) denotes the severity of her former affliction, not moral failing — the text says nothing about sexual sin, a later tradition without biblical basis. 'Magdalene' identifies her hometown of Magdala on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.
3. The verb diekonoun ('were serving, providing for') is the root of 'deacon/ministry.' These women were not passive followers but active financial supporters. Joanna's connection to Herod's court (Chuza was epitropos, a household manager or steward) means Jesus's movement had sympathizers within the ruling elite. Luke alone preserves this remarkable social detail.
4. The phrase dia parabolees ('by means of a parable') introduces Luke's version of the Sower. Luke compresses the parable material compared to Mark 4, but retains the core teaching about receptivity to God's word.
5. Luke adds the detail that the seed was 'trampled underfoot' (katepatethee), absent from Mark and Matthew. The sower broadcasts seed across all types of ground — ancient Palestinian farming practice involved sowing before plowing, so the different soil types would not yet be visible.
6. Luke uses ikmada ('moisture') where Mark has 'depth of earth' and 'root' — a slight difference in imagery but the same agricultural reality: thin soil over limestone bedrock, common in Palestine, allows quick germination but no sustained growth.
7. The verb apepnixan ('choked, strangled') is vivid — the thorns do not merely crowd the grain but suffocate it. Luke's symphueisai ('growing up together with') emphasizes that the competing growth was simultaneous.
8. Luke simplifies to a single yield — 'a hundredfold' (hekatontaplasiona) — whereas Mark gives thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold. A hundredfold yield was extraordinary in ancient agriculture, where tenfold was typical. The closing formula 'the one who has ears to hear' signals that the parable demands active interpretation.
9. Luke's version is simpler than Mark's, where the disciples ask about parables in general. Here they ask specifically about this parable's meaning.
10. The word mysteria ('mysteries') does not mean puzzles but divine secrets now being revealed to insiders. The Isaiah 6:9-10 allusion ('seeing they may not see') raises the difficult question of whether parables conceal or reveal — Luke softens Mark's harder formulation but retains the tension between revelation and hiddenness.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. Luke identifies the seed as ho logos tou theou ('the word of God'), where Mark has simply 'the word.' Luke's version makes the divine origin of the message explicit.

12. Luke alone adds the purpose clause 'so that they may not believe and be saved' (hina mee pisteusantes sothōsin), making explicit what Mark leaves implicit: the stakes of receptivity to the word are salvation itself. Luke uses 'the devil' (ho diabolos) where Mark has 'Satan.'
13. Luke uses peirasmos ('testing, trial, temptation') where Mark has 'tribulation or persecution' — a broader term that encompasses both external persecution and internal spiritual trial. The verb aphistantai ('they fall away, withdraw') is the root of 'apostasy.'
14. Luke adds hēdonōn ('pleasures') to the thorns' identification — worries, riches, and pleasures form a three-pronged threat. The verb telesophorousin ('bring to maturity, bring to completion') is unique to Luke's version and implies that fruit-bearing requires sustained growth, not merely initial response.
15. The phrase kardia kalē kai agathē ('an honest and good heart') echoes Greek moral vocabulary — kalos kai agathos was the classical Greek ideal of nobility. Luke may be adapting the parable for a Hellenistic audience. The word hypomonē ('endurance, patient steadfastness') is a key virtue in Luke-Acts, emphasizing that fruitfulness requires perseverance.
16. The lamp saying follows naturally from the parable's theme of revelation. What is taught in parables is not meant to remain hidden permanently. Luke's version specifies 'those who enter' (hoi eisporuomenoi), possibly reflecting the setting of a house church where the lamp illuminates a room for newcomers.
17. The double negative ou mē ('certainly not') with the subjunctive gnōsthē ('be known') creates the strongest possible assurance: what is now hidden will without exception be revealed. This applies both to the mysteries of the kingdom and to human secrets.
18. Luke writes 'how you hear' (pōs akouete) where Mark has 'what you hear' — Luke stresses the manner of reception, not merely the content. The paradox of having and losing echoes the parable's logic: those who receive the word rightly gain more understanding, while those who receive it poorly lose even their initial grasp.
19. Luke softens Mark's account where Jesus's family comes to seize him thinking he is out of his mind (Mark 3:21). Luke omits the negative motivation entirely, presenting the family's arrival neutrally.
20. The notification sets up Jesus's redefinition of family in the next verse. The physical separation — they are 'outside' (exō) — becomes symbolic of the distinction between biological and spiritual kinship.
21. This saying redefines kinship around obedience to God's word — the same theme as the Sower parable. Luke connects hearing and doing (akouontes kai poiountes), a pair that will recur in 6:47-49 (the house on the rock) and 11:28. The saying does not reject biological family but subordinates it to the family formed by response to God's word.
22. Luke uses limnēs ('lake') rather than Mark's thalassēs ('sea') — geographically more accurate for the Sea of Galilee, which is a freshwater lake. The command to cross to 'the other side' moves them toward Gentile territory, where the Gerasene episode will take place.
23. The verb aphypnōsen ('he fell asleep') emphasizes Jesus's full humanity. The geography matters: the Sea of Galilee sits 700 feet below sea level, surrounded by hills through which winds funnel suddenly. The verb ekindyneuon ('they were in danger') is unique to Luke's account and underscores the life-threatening nature of the storm.
24. Luke uses epistatēs ('Master, overseer') — a title unique to Luke's Gospel — rather than Mark's 'Teacher.' The doubled address 'Master, Master' conveys urgency. Jesus 'rebuked' (epetimēsen) the storm with the same verb used for rebuking demons, suggesting the storm is treated as a hostile force. The sudden calm (galēnē) echoes Psalm 107:29.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 107:29. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The question 'Where is your faith?' implies the disciples should have trusted Jesus even during the storm. Their response combines fear (phobēthentes) and wonder (ethaumasas) — the typical human reaction to a theophany. The Old Testament reserves power over sea and storm for God alone (Job 38:8-11; Psalm 89:9; Psalm 107:29), so the question 'Who is this?' carries an implicit christological answer.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Job 38:8-11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 89:9 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 107:29 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The SBLGNT reads Gerasēnōn ('Gerasenes'). Gerasa was a city of the Decapolis, predominantly Gentile territory. Luke clarifies the geography for his readers: it is 'across from Galilee' (antipera tēs Galilaias), on the eastern shore of the lake.
27. Luke describes three marks of the man's dehumanization: demon possession, nakedness, and habitation among the dead. Living in tombs would make him perpetually unclean under Jewish purity law. The detail 'from the city' (ek tēs poleōs) suggests he had once been part of normal society before his affliction drove him out.
28. The formula ti emoi kai soi ('what to me and to you?') is a Semitic idiom expressing incompatibility or protest. The demon recognizes Jesus as 'Son of the Most High God' (huie tou theou tou hypsistou) — 'Most High' (hypsistos) is the same title used of God in Genesis 14:18-22 and in Gabriel's announcement to Mary (Luke 1:32). The irony is that the demon correctly identifies Jesus while the disciples have just asked 'Who is this?'

- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 14:18-22 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** This parenthetical explains why the demon cried out — Jesus had already issued a command. The description of the man's superhuman strength in breaking chains and his being 'driven' (elauneto) into wilderness areas portrays total domination by the demonic power. The passive voice emphasizes the man's lack of agency.
- 30.** A Roman legion comprised approximately five to six thousand soldiers. The name 'Legion' (Legiōn) is a Latin loanword in Greek, carrying military overtones that would resonate in Roman-occupied territory. The name also reveals how thoroughly the man's identity has been consumed — he no longer has a personal name, only the collective designation of his oppressors.
- 31.** The abyssos ('abyss') is the place of confinement for evil spirits (cf. Revelation 9:1-2, 11; 20:1-3). Luke uses this term where Mark does not, reflecting Jewish apocalyptic belief that demons feared premature imprisonment. The demons recognize Jesus's authority to sentence them.
- 32.** The presence of pigs confirms this is Gentile territory — pigs were unclean animals forbidden to Jews (Leviticus 11:7). The demons must ask Jesus's permission, demonstrating his absolute authority even over a legion of evil spirits. The verb epetrepsen ('he permitted') shows that Jesus controls the terms.
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 11:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 33.** The verb hōrmēsen ('rushed, charged') is violent and sudden. The verb apepnigē ('drowned, were choked') is the same root used for the thorns 'choking' the seed in verse 7 — an ironic verbal connection. The destruction of the herd serves as visible proof that the demons have genuinely departed from the man.
- 34.** The herdsmen's flight and report set up the confrontation between Jesus and the townspeople. They function as witnesses to both the loss of the pigs and the implied power of the exorcism.
- 35.** The contrast is stunning: the man who was naked, chained, and living among the dead is now clothed (himatismēnon), in his right mind (sōphronounta), and seated at Jesus's feet — the posture of a disciple. Each detail reverses his former condition. The townspeople's fear (ephobēthēsan) mirrors the disciples' fear after the storm, but leads to a different response.
- 36.** Luke uses esōthē ('was saved') rather than merely 'was healed' — the verb sōzō carries both physical and spiritual dimensions. The man's deliverance is described as salvation, not simply a medical cure.
- 37.** The entire population asks Jesus to leave — the only place in the Gospels where a community rejects Jesus's presence after witnessing a miracle. Their great fear (phobō megalō) is not reverence but terror, possibly compounded by the economic loss of the pigs. Jesus complies without protest, respecting their choice.
- 38.** The man's desire to follow Jesus contrasts sharply with the townspeople's desire for Jesus to leave. 'To be with him' (einai syn autō) uses the language of discipleship. Unusually, Jesus refuses — in Gentile territory, the healed man himself will be the witness.
- 39.** Jesus says 'what God has done for you'; the man proclaims 'what Jesus has done for him.' Luke lets the substitution stand without comment — the reader is left to draw the christological conclusion. The man becomes the first Gentile evangelist in Luke's narrative.
- 40.** The contrast between the Gerasenes' rejection and the Galilean crowd's welcome is deliberate. The verb apedexato ('welcomed, received gladly') sets up the warm reception that frames the two miracle stories to follow.
- 41.** Jairus (Iairos, from Hebrew Ya'ir, 'he enlightens') is named only in Luke and Mark. As archōn tēs synagōgēs ('ruler of the synagogue'), he was responsible for organizing worship services — a prominent community figure. His prostration before Jesus shows the desperation that overrides social status.
- 42.** Luke emphasizes she is monogenēs ('only-begotten, one and only') — the same word used of Jesus in John's Gospel. She is about twelve years old — the same number of years the hemorrhaging woman has suffered (v. 43), creating a deliberate literary connection. The crowd 'pressing in' (synepnigon) sets up the interruption by the hemorrhaging woman.
- 43.** The 'discharge of blood' (rhysei haimatos) made her perpetually unclean under Levitical law (Leviticus 15:25-27), excluding her from worship and social contact. For twelve years she has lived in isolation. Some manuscripts add 'who had spent all her livelihood on physicians' (paralleling Mark 5:26), but the SBLGNT omits this clause.
- 43.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 15:25-27 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 44.** The kraspedon ('fringe, tassel, border') refers to the tassels (Hebrew tzitzit) on the corners of a Jewish garment as commanded in Numbers 15:38-39. Her approach from behind reflects her awareness of her unclean status — touching someone would transmit impurity. Instead, Jesus's holiness flows outward and cleanses her. The adverb parachrēma ('immediately') is characteristic of Luke.
- 44.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 15:38-39. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

45. Jesus's question is not about information — he distinguishes between the crowd's jostling and one person's deliberate touch of faith. Peter's response, using epistatēs ('Master') again, expresses bewilderment: in such a crush, how could one touch be singled out?
46. The word dynamin ('power') is not 'virtue' in the modern English sense (as the KJV might suggest) but active healing energy. Jesus experiences the outflow of power — a remarkable detail suggesting that the healing was not merely willed but cost something.
47. Her trembling (tremousa) reflects fear — she had taken a social risk by touching someone while unclean. But Jesus forces a public declaration for her benefit: her healing must be witnessed by the community so that her social restoration is public, not merely private. She is healed in body but needs public vindication to be restored to community life.
48. The address 'Daughter' (Thygatēr) is extraordinary — it is both tender and restorative, publicly declaring her a member of the family of God. The phrase hē pistis sou sesōken se ('your faith has saved you') uses sōzō, which means both 'save' and 'heal.' The double meaning is intentional: physical healing and spiritual salvation converge. 'Go in peace' (poreuou eis eirēnēn) echoes the Hebrew shalom — complete well-being, not merely absence of conflict.
49. The timing is devastating — the interruption caused by the hemorrhaging woman's healing has cost Jairus precious minutes. The messenger's words 'do not trouble the Teacher' (mēketi skylle ton didaskalon) assume that death is beyond Jesus's power. The verb skyllēō ('to trouble, bother, harass') suggests the messenger views further appeal as pointless.
50. Jesus responds to the death announcement with the same sōzō ('will be saved/made whole') used for the hemorrhaging woman. The command structure — 'Do not fear... only believe' — strips away every response except faith. Jairus has just witnessed the hemorrhaging woman's faith rewarded; now he must exercise the same trust in a more extreme situation.
51. The inner circle of Peter, John, and James witnesses the most significant miracles (also the Transfiguration, Luke 9:28). Luke reverses Mark's order, placing John before James — possibly reflecting John's greater prominence in the early church as known to Luke's audience.
52. The verb ekoptonto ('were mourning, beating their breasts') describes the loud, demonstrative mourning customary in ancient Jewish funerals. Jesus's statement that the girl is 'sleeping' (katheudei) is either a metaphor for death (as Paul uses in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14) or a literal claim that she is not yet dead. Luke leaves the ambiguity intact.
53. The verb kategelōn ('were laughing scornfully') indicates mocking derision, not amusement. The mourners' certainty that she is dead sets up the miracle — there is no ambiguity about her condition in the minds of witnesses.
54. Jesus takes her hand — touching a corpse would normally render one unclean (Numbers 19:11), but as with the hemorrhaging woman, Jesus's power flows outward to restore rather than receiving contamination inward. Luke simplifies Mark's Aramaic talitha kum to the Greek hē pais egeire ('Child, arise'). The verb egeirō is the same word used for resurrection throughout the New Testament.
54. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 19:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
55. The phrase 'her spirit returned' (epstrepsen to pneuma autēs) is unique to Luke and confirms that she had genuinely died — her spirit had departed and now comes back. The command to give her food serves two purposes: it proves the resurrection is physical (a spirit does not eat) and it shows Jesus's practical compassion even in a moment of cosmic power.
56. The command to silence (the 'messianic secret') contrasts with the Gerasene demoniac, who was told to proclaim. In Jewish territory, public reports of raising the dead would provoke dangerous political attention. The parents' amazement (exestēsan, literally 'were beside themselves') is the appropriate response to witnessing death reversed.

9

Summary: Luke 9 is a pivotal chapter that marks the transition from Jesus's Galilean ministry to the journey toward Jerusalem. Jesus sends the Twelve on their first independent mission, feeds five thousand with five loaves and two fish, and elicits Peter's confession that he is the Christ. The chapter then introduces the cost of discipleship, reveals Jesus's glory at the Transfiguration, heals a demon-possessed boy, and repeatedly warns the disciples about his coming suffering. The chapter closes with three would-be followers who each face the radical demands of following Jesus.

What Makes This Remarkable: Luke compresses an enormous range of material into this chapter, creating a deliberate theological arc: Jesus empowers the Twelve (vv. 1-6), the crowds respond (vv. 7-17), Peter confesses (vv. 18-20), and then Jesus immediately redefines messiahship through suffering (vv. 21-27). The Transfiguration (vv. 28-36) — unique in Luke for noting that Jesus was praying when it happened — confirms divine sonship just after the first passion prediction. Luke alone records that Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus about his 'exodus' (exodon) that he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem, a word loaded with Old Testament resonance. The chapter's final

section (vv. 51-62) sets Jesus's face toward Jerusalem, a journey that will occupy the next ten chapters of Luke's Gospel.

Translation Friction: *The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle recorded in all four Gospels, and Luke's version is the most compressed. Herod's perplexity about Jesus (vv. 7-9) is unique to Luke in its emphasis on Herod's desire to see Jesus — a thread that will not resolve until the passion narrative (23:8). The phrase 'set his face' (to prosōpon estērisen) in v. 51 echoes Isaiah's Servant Songs (Isaiah 50:7) and signals a decisive shift in the narrative structure. The Samaritan village's rejection (vv. 52-56) introduces the Samaritan theme that Luke will develop more fully than any other Gospel.*

Connections: *The feeding miracle echoes Elisha feeding a hundred men in 2 Kings 4:42-44. The Transfiguration connects to Moses on Sinai (Exodus 34) and Elijah on Horeb (1 Kings 19). Peter's confession parallels the Caesarea Philippi accounts in Matthew 16 and Mark 8, though Luke omits the geographic marker. The 'exodus' language at the Transfiguration ties Jesus's coming death to Israel's foundational deliverance event. The journey to Jerusalem beginning in v. 51 initiates Luke's distinctive 'Travel Narrative' (9:51-19:27).*

¹He called the Twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to heal diseases. ²He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. ³He told them, "Take nothing for the journey — no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, and do not have two tunics each. ⁴Whatever house you enter, stay there and depart from there. ⁵Wherever people do not welcome you, as you leave that town, shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." ⁶So they set out and traveled through the villages, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere. ⁷Now Herod the tetrarch heard about everything that was happening, and he was perplexed because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead, ⁸Of some, that Elias had appeared. And of others, that one of the ancient God's spokespersons was risen again. ⁹Herod said, "I beheaded John. So who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he kept trying to see him. ¹⁰When the apostles returned, they reported to him everything they had done. He took them and withdrew privately to a town called Bethsaida. ¹¹But the crowds found out and followed him. He welcomed them, spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing. ¹²As the day began to decline, the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and food, because we are in a desolate place here." ¹³But he told them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish — unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." ¹⁴For there were about five thousand men. He said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty." ¹⁵They did so and had everyone sit down. ¹⁶Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, blessed them, broke them, and kept giving them to the disciples to set before the crowd. ¹⁷They all ate and were satisfied, and twelve baskets of leftover pieces were picked up. ¹⁸Once when Jesus was praying alone, the disciples were with him, and he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" ¹⁹They answered, "John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the ancient prophets has risen." ²⁰He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God." ²¹He strictly warned them and commanded them to tell this to no one, ²²Declaring, the Descendant of Person must suffer numerous matters, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and legal experts, and be slain, and be raised the third day. ²³Then he said to them all, "If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me. ²⁴For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵For what does it profit a person to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit himself? ²⁶For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of that person when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. ²⁷But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." ²⁸About eight days after these words, he took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothing became dazzling white. ³⁰And suddenly two men were talking with him — Moses and Elijah, ³¹They appeared in radiant glory and spoke about the departure he was about to carry out in Jerusalem. ³²Now Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. ³³As they were departing from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three shelters — one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" — not knowing what he was saying. ³⁴While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. ³⁵A voice came from the

cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One — listen to him!" ³⁶When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen. ³⁷The next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. ³⁸Suddenly a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹A spirit seizes him, and he suddenly screams. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth, and it scarcely leaves him, battering him as it goes. ⁴⁰I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." ⁴¹Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long must I be with you and put up with you? Bring your son here." ⁴²While the boy was still approaching, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. ⁴³Everyone was astonished at the majesty of God. But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁴"Let these words sink into your ears: the Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." ⁴⁵But they did not understand this saying. It was concealed from them so that they could not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it. ⁴⁶An argument arose among them about which of them was the greatest. ⁴⁷But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and placed the child beside him. ⁴⁸He told them, "Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For the one who is least among all of you — that person is great." ⁴⁹John responded, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he does not follow with us." ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, "Do not stop him, for whoever is not against you is for you." ⁵¹When the days were approaching for him to be taken up, he resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵²He sent messengers ahead of him. They went and entered a Samaritan village to prepare for his arrival, ⁵³Indeed, they did not accept him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. ⁵⁴When the disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to consume them?" ⁵⁵But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶They traveled to another village. ⁵⁷As they were traveling along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸Jesus said to him, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ⁵⁹He said to another, "Follow me." But the man said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." ⁶⁰Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say goodbye to those at my home." ⁶²Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Luke distinguishes between *dynamis* ('power' — the ability to act) and *exousia* ('authority' — the right to act). This pairing is distinctive to Luke's account of the commissioning and emphasizes that the disciples operate with both divine capability and divine authorization.
2. The verb *apostelein* ('sent out') is the root of 'apostle' (*apostolos*). Luke uses the formal commissioning verb here, underscoring that this is an authorized mission, not a voluntary outing. The dual mandate — proclamation and healing — mirrors Jesus's own ministry pattern established in Luke 4:18-19.
3. Luke's version prohibits even a staff (*rabdon*), whereas Mark 6:8 allows one — a well-known discrepancy between the Synoptic accounts. The Greek *pēran* ('bag') refers to a traveler's knapsack or beggar's bag. The prohibition of provisions forces total dependence on God's provision through local hospitality, a radical trust that mirrors Israel's wilderness dependence on manna.
4. The instruction to remain in one house prevents the disciples from seeking better accommodations — moving from a poor host to a wealthier one. This preserves the dignity of the first household to offer hospitality and keeps the mission free from the appearance of self-interest.
5. Shaking dust from one's feet was a Jewish practice when leaving Gentile territory, symbolizing the removal of ritual impurity. Applied to Jewish towns, it is a prophetic warning: those who reject the kingdom's messengers place themselves outside the covenant community. The phrase *eis martyron* ('as a testimony') indicates a visible sign that will serve as evidence at the future judgment.
6. The participle *euangelizomenoi* ('proclaiming good news') is Luke's characteristic vocabulary — he uses this verb more than any other New Testament writer. The word carries the sense of announcing glad tidings, specifically the arrival of God's reign. 'Villages' (*kōmas*) rather than 'towns' or 'cities' suggests a rural, grassroots mission.
7. This is Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who ruled Galilee and Perea as tetrarch (literally 'ruler of a quarter'). The verb *diēporei* ('was perplexed, was at a loss') is stronger than mere curiosity — it suggests genuine confusion and unease. Luke alone among the Synoptics emphasizes Herod's ongoing perplexity rather than his fear.

8. The three popular theories about Jesus — resurrected John, returned Elijah, or a risen ancient prophet — all frame him within prophetic categories. The expectation of Elijah's return was rooted in Malachi 4:5. Luke's phrase 'ancient prophets' (prophētēs tis tōn archaiōn) is distinctive and may reflect popular beliefs about eschatological prophetic return.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Malachi 4:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The emphatic egō ('I myself') in Herod's statement stresses personal responsibility and perhaps defensive anxiety. The imperfect ezētei ('kept trying, was seeking') indicates ongoing, unfulfilled desire — Herod will not actually see Jesus until the passion narrative (Luke 23:8), where this thread finally resolves. Luke plants a narrative seed here that will not bear fruit for fourteen chapters.
10. Luke uses 'apostles' (apostoloi) here rather than 'disciples,' the only time he uses this title in the narrative before Acts. The verb hypechōrēsen ('withdrew') suggests intentional retreat, possibly for rest after the mission or to avoid Herod's attention. Bethsaida was just outside Herod Antipas's jurisdiction, in the tetrarchy of Philip.
11. Despite seeking privacy, Jesus 'welcomed' (apodexamenos) the crowds — a gracious response that contrasts with the disciples' later suggestion to send them away (v. 12). Luke's note that Jesus both taught and healed reinforces the dual nature of his ministry: word and deed together constitute the kingdom's arrival.
12. The phrase hē hēmera ērxato klinein ('the day began to decline') is a literary expression for late afternoon. The word epistimon ('provisions, food') appears only here in the New Testament — it is a supply-chain term suggesting the practical concern behind the disciples' request. Luke's erēmō topō ('desolate place') evokes the wilderness, connecting this feeding to the manna narrative.
13. The emphatic hymeis ('you yourselves') places the responsibility squarely on the disciples, testing their faith and resourcefulness. The disciples' response reveals both their literal-mindedness and the absurdity of the situation from a human perspective. The five loaves would have been flat barley bread, the standard food of the poor.
14. The count of andres ('men') likely excludes women and children, following ancient Near Eastern counting conventions. The organized seating in groups of fifty echoes Moses' organization of Israel in the wilderness (Exodus 18:21, 25), reinforcing the new-exodus typology that runs through the feeding narrative.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 18:21. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The brief obedience statement — they simply did as instructed — mirrors the pattern of faithful response that Luke highlights throughout his Gospel. No objections, no further questions.
16. The sequence — took, blessed, broke, gave — anticipates the Last Supper (Luke 22:19) and the Emmaus meal (Luke 24:30). Luke's readers would recognize eucharistic echoes. The imperfect edidou ('kept giving') suggests a continuous action: the bread did not run out as he distributed it. The act of looking up to heaven before blessing follows standard Jewish mealtime prayer practice.
17. The verb echortasthēsan ('were satisfied, were filled') implies being fully fed, not merely having a taste. The twelve baskets (kophinoi) — one for each apostle — may symbolize God's provision for all twelve tribes of Israel. The kophinos was a distinctly Jewish wicker basket, different from the larger spuris used in the feeding of the four thousand.
18. Luke uniquely sets this pivotal scene in the context of prayer — kata monas ('alone') modified by the prayer participle. Luke consistently places major revelatory moments at times of prayer (baptism 3:21, Transfiguration 9:28-29, Gethsemane 22:41). The apparent paradox of being 'alone' yet 'with' the disciples likely means Jesus had been praying privately and the disciples then joined him, or that they were present but not praying.
19. The disciples relay the same three popular opinions reported in verses 7-8, forming a deliberate literary echo. These prophetic identifications, while honoring Jesus by placing him in exalted company, all fall short of the truth Peter is about to confess.
20. The emphatic hymeis ('but you') contrasts the disciples' personal knowledge with popular opinion. Peter's confession ton Christon tou theou ('the Christ of God') is more compact in Luke than in Matthew ('the Christ, the Son of the living God,' Matt 16:16). Luke's simpler form focuses on the messianic title itself — the Anointed One who belongs to God.
21. The verb epitimēsas ('rebuked, sternly warned') is the same word used for silencing demons (4:35, 41). The messianic secret motif — suppressing the Christ title — likely reflects the danger that popular messianic expectations (military deliverer, political king) would distort Jesus's mission before the cross redefines messiahship.
22. The word dei ('it is necessary, must') introduces divine necessity — this is not merely a prediction but a theological imperative rooted in God's plan. The title 'Son of Man' (ho huios tou anthrōpou) alludes to Daniel 7:13-14, where the 'one like a son of man' receives universal dominion. Jesus fuses this exalted figure with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 — a combination his contemporaries did not expect. The three groups named — elders, chief priests, scribes — compose the Sanhedrin.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:13-14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 53. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

23. Luke alone adds *kath' hēmeran* ('daily') to the cross-bearing command, transforming it from a one-time act of martyrdom into an ongoing pattern of self-renunciation. The address 'to them all' (*pros pantas*) extends the invitation beyond the Twelve to the entire crowd. For a first-century hearer, 'take up his cross' was not a metaphor — it evoked the Roman practice of forcing condemned prisoners to carry the crossbeam to the execution site.
24. The Greek *psychē* means both 'life' and 'soul,' and Jesus exploits this double meaning. The person who clings to physical life (self-preservation) loses their true self, while the one who surrenders their life for Jesus's sake discovers authentic life. The paradox is structurally chiasmic: save-lose / lose-save.
25. Luke's version has 'lose or forfeit himself' (*heauton apolesys ē zēmiotheis*) where Mark has 'his soul' — Luke makes it more personal and existential. The verb *zēmioō* ('to suffer loss, to forfeit') is a commercial term: the image is of a catastrophic business deal where the gains cannot compensate for what was surrendered.
26. The triple glory — his own, the Father's, and the angels' — is unique to Luke and creates a vision of overwhelming majesty. The verb *epaischunthēsetai* ('will be ashamed of') establishes a principle of reciprocity: present shame leads to future shame. Jesus speaks of the Son of Man in the third person, which may indicate a distinction between his present humble state and his future glorified state, or may simply be the idiom of the title.
27. The expression 'taste death' (*geusōntai thanatou*) is a Semitic idiom meaning 'experience death.' This saying has been interpreted variously as referring to the Transfiguration (which follows immediately), the resurrection, Pentecost, the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, or the ongoing advance of God's reign. Luke's placement of this saying directly before the Transfiguration account may suggest he understood the Transfiguration as its primary fulfillment.
28. Luke says 'about eight days' where Mark and Matthew say 'after six days' — this is not a contradiction but reflects different counting conventions (Luke may include the bookend days). Luke uniquely notes that the purpose of ascending was prayer (*proseuxasthai*), consistent with his emphasis on Jesus at prayer before revelatory moments. Peter, John, and James form the inner circle present at key moments (also at Jairus's house, 8:51, and Gethsemane in Mark 14:33).
29. Luke says the 'appearance of his face changed' (to *eidōs tou prosōpou autou heteron*) rather than Mark's 'was transfigured' (*metemorphōthē*). Luke may avoid the Greek *metamorphosis* terminology because of its associations with pagan mythology for his Gentile audience. The adjective *exastraptōn* ('flashing like lightning, dazzling') suggests supernatural radiance, echoing the description of angels (Luke 24:4, Acts 1:10).
30. The phrase *idou* ('look, suddenly') marks the supernatural irruption. Moses represents the Law and Elijah the Prophets — together they embody the whole of Israel's Scripture bearing witness to Jesus. Both figures had unusual departures from earthly life: Moses was buried by God (Deuteronomy 34:6) and Elijah was taken up in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:11).
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 34:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Kings 2:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. This verse is unique to Luke and is theologically momentous. The word *exodon* ('departure, exodus') is loaded with Old Testament resonance — Jesus's death in Jerusalem is framed as a new exodus, a liberation event parallel to Israel's deliverance from Egypt. The verb *plēroun* ('to fulfill, accomplish') indicates that this death is not merely an ending but a completion of divine purpose. Moses, who led the first exodus, now discusses the second with Jesus.
32. The detail of the disciples' sleepiness is unique to Luke and foreshadows their sleeping in Gethsemane (Luke 22:45). The verb *diagrēgorēsantes* ('having become fully awake') is rare and emphatic — despite their drowsiness, they were fully alert when they witnessed the glory. Luke may include this detail to establish that the vision was not a dream.
33. Luke uses *epistata* ('master, commander') rather than Mark's 'rabbi,' reflecting Luke's Gentile readership. The word *skēnas* ('tents, tabernacles, shelters') may allude to the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*), when Israel commemorated God's dwelling with them in the wilderness. Peter's offer to build shelters, while well-intentioned, attempts to prolong and domesticate a revelatory moment. Luke's editorial note — 'not knowing what he was saying' — is a gentle correction of Peter's impulse.
34. The cloud (*nephelē*) recalls the pillar of cloud that guided Israel through the wilderness and the cloud of God's glory (*kavod/doxa*) that filled the tabernacle and temple (Exodus 40:34-35, 1 Kings 8:10-11). The verb *epeskiazēn* ('overshadowed') is the same verb used of the Holy Spirit overshadowing Mary (Luke 1:35), creating a connection between the incarnation and the Transfiguration. The disciples' fear at entering the cloud reflects the proper human response to divine presence.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 40:34-35. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Kings 8:10-11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. Luke's reading has *ho eklelegmenos* ('the Chosen One') where Matthew and Mark have *ho agapētos* ('the Beloved'). This variant is well attested in the SBLGNT and echoes Isaiah 42:1, the first Servant Song: 'my chosen one in whom my soul delights.' The command 'listen to him' (*autou akouete*) echoes Deuteronomy 18:15, where Moses predicts a prophet like himself whom God will raise up: 'you shall listen to him.' The voice thus identifies Jesus as both the Servant of Isaiah and the Prophet like Moses.

35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 42:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 18:15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The sudden disappearance of Moses and Elijah leaves Jesus alone — a visual demonstration of the voice's command to listen to him alone. The disciples' silence is voluntary in Luke (where in Mark 9:9, Jesus commands it), suggesting the experience was too overwhelming to articulate. The phrase 'in those days' implies they eventually did speak — Luke himself is reporting what they later testified.
37. Luke specifies 'the next day' (tē hexēs hēmera), a detail absent from Matthew and Mark. The descent from the mountain of glory to the chaos of the crowd below creates a deliberate contrast — from heaven's affirmation to earth's brokenness. The pattern echoes Moses descending from Sinai to find Israel in disorder (Exodus 32).
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 32. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. The word monogenēs ('only, unique, one and only') is the same term used of Jesus in John's Gospel (John 1:14, 18; 3:16). Luke uses it three times for human children (here, 7:12, 8:42), each time heightening the pathos — this father's only hope is in peril. The verb deomai ('I beg, I plead') conveys desperate urgency.
39. The father's description is vivid and medically detailed: seizure (lambanei), sudden screaming (exaiphnēs krazei), convulsions (sparassei), foaming (aphrou), and physical damage (syntribon, 'crushing, bruising'). The symptoms described overlap with what modern medicine would classify as epileptic seizures, though Luke attributes the cause to a spirit (pneuma). The verb mogis ('scarcely, with difficulty') suggests the spirit is reluctant to release the boy even temporarily.
40. The disciples' failure is especially striking given that Jesus had delegated power and authority over all demons to them (v. 1). Their inability raises the question of what has gone wrong — a question Jesus addresses in the next verse with sharp disappointment.
41. The exclamation echoes Moses' frustration with Israel in Deuteronomy 32:5, 20 — the 'twisted generation' (genea diestrammenē) language comes directly from the Song of Moses. Jesus's exasperation is directed broadly at 'this generation,' not solely at the disciples. The rhetorical question 'how long?' expresses the pain of divine patience with unbelief, similar to God's lament in Numbers 14:11.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 32:5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 14:11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
42. The demon's violent attack as the boy approaches Jesus represents a last desperate assault. The verb apedōken ('gave back, restored') is tender — Jesus returns the child to his father as a gift, restoring the family unit that the demon had torn apart. This same verb was used when Elijah restored the widow's son (1 Kings 17:23 LXX), and Luke may intend the echo.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 17:23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. The word megaleioteeti ('majesty, grandeur, greatness') appears only here and in Acts 19:27 and 2 Peter 1:16 in the New Testament. Luke's framing is significant: the crowd attributes the miracle to God's majesty, not to Jesus's personal power. Jesus immediately pivots from this moment of popular acclaim to another passion prediction — a jarring juxtaposition that Luke leaves unresolved.
44. The idiom thesthe eis ta ōta hymōn ('place into your ears') means 'listen carefully and remember.' The passive paradidosthai ('to be delivered, to be handed over') implies divine agency — God is the unstated subject who will deliver his Son. The wordplay between 'Son of Man' (huios tou anthrōpou) and 'hands of men' (cheiras anthrōpōn) creates an ironic contrast: the heavenly Man will be subjected to merely human power.
45. Luke presents a threefold failure: ignorance (ēgnooun), concealment (parakekalymmenon), and fear (ephobounto). The passive 'it was concealed' (ēn parakekalymmenon) suggests divine hiddenness — God has temporarily veiled the meaning. This is not merely intellectual failure but a divinely ordered inability that will persist until the resurrection opens their understanding (Luke 24:45). Their fear of asking reveals they sense the gravity of Jesus's words even without comprehending them.
46. The juxtaposition is brutal: Jesus has just predicted his death and the disciples immediately argue about rank. The word dialogismos ('reasoning, argument, dispute') can mean an internal thought or an external debate — the context suggests it became vocal, since Jesus responds to it. This scene exposes how thoroughly the disciples have misunderstood the nature of Jesus's messiahship.
47. Jesus's perception of their hearts (eidōs ton dialogismon tēs kardias autōn) demonstrates supernatural knowledge. The physical placement of the child 'beside him' (par' heautō) is a visual lesson: the child occupies the position of honor, the very position the disciples were arguing about.
48. Jesus establishes a chain of representation: child Jesus God. Welcoming the powerless is equivalent to welcoming God himself. The paradox 'the least is great' (ho mikroteros... houtos estin megas) directly inverts the disciples' argument. In the ancient world, children had no social status or power — they were the definitional 'least.' Jesus redefines greatness as service to those with nothing to offer in return.

49. John's concern is about institutional boundaries — 'he does not follow with us' (ouk akolouthei meth' hēmōn). The irony is sharp: the disciples who could not cast out the demon in verse 40 are trying to prevent someone who can. Luke uses epistata ('master') rather than Mark's didaskale ('teacher'), consistent with his pattern for the disciples' address of Jesus.
50. The principle 'whoever is not against you is for you' (hos gar ouk estin kath' hymōn hyper hymōn estin) appears to contradict Luke 11:23 ('whoever is not with me is against me'). The two sayings address different situations: here, the point is tolerance toward allies working outside the inner circle; in 11:23, the point is that neutrality toward Jesus himself is not possible. Jesus refuses to restrict God's work to his own followers' circle.
51. This verse marks the decisive turning point of Luke's Gospel, initiating the 'Travel Narrative' (9:51-19:27). The phrase to prosōpon estērisen ('set his face firmly') echoes Isaiah 50:7 (Servant Song): 'I have set my face like flint.' The word analēmpseōs ('taking up, ascension') encompasses not just the ascension but the entire complex of death-resurrection-ascension. Luke views these as a single redemptive event. Jesus moves toward his destiny with deliberate resolve, not reluctant submission.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 50:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
52. The phrase angelous pro prosōpou autou ('messengers before his face') echoes Malachi 3:1, where God sends a messenger before his face. The route through Samaria was the most direct path from Galilee to Jerusalem but was avoided by many Jews due to the Samaritan-Jewish hostility. Jesus's choice of this route is itself a statement.
52. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Malachi 3:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
53. The Samaritans' refusal is theological, not personal: they reject him because Jerusalem is his destination. The Samaritan-Jewish schism centered on rival worship sites — Mount Gerizim versus the Jerusalem temple (cf. John 4:20). A Jewish pilgrim traveling to Jerusalem represented everything the Samaritans opposed. The phrase 'his face was going toward Jerusalem' preserves the Semitic idiom of v. 51.
54. James and John's proposal alludes to Elijah calling fire from heaven on the soldiers of King Ahaziah (2 Kings 1:10-12) — a connection made explicit in some manuscripts though not in the SBLGNT. The irony is layered: they have just witnessed the Transfiguration with Elijah and now want to play Elijah themselves. Their desire for destructive judgment is precisely the kind of messianic power Jesus is rejecting by heading toward the cross.
54. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Kings 1:10-12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
55. The SBLGNT contains only the brief rebuke without the additional words found in some later manuscripts ('You do not know what spirit you are of' and 'The Son of Man came not to destroy lives but to save them'). While these additions express authentic Lukan theology, we follow the critical text. The physical turning (strapheis) suggests Jesus had been walking ahead and deliberately turned back to correct them.
56. The matter-of-fact simplicity of this verse contrasts sharply with the disciples' violent proposal. Jesus does not retaliate, does not curse the village, does not even complain — he simply moves on. This models the non-retaliatory ethic that will characterize his teaching in the Travel Narrative.
57. This begins a series of three encounters with would-be followers (vv. 57-62), each illustrating a different obstacle to discipleship. The first volunteer is enthusiastic but uninformed about the cost. Luke does not identify this person (Matthew 8:19 says 'a scribe'), keeping the encounter universal — any reader can see themselves here.
58. The contrast is between the most common animals (foxes, birds) and the Son of Man — even creatures with no social standing have shelter, but the one to whom Daniel 7 promises universal dominion lives as a homeless itinerant. The phrase 'birds of the sky' (ta peteina tou ouranou) is a Septuagint expression. Jesus does not refuse the volunteer but ensures he understands the cost.
58. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
59. Unlike the first volunteer, this person is called by Jesus but hesitates. Burying one's father was considered the most sacred obligation in Jewish culture — it took precedence over virtually all other religious duties, even Torah study and temple service (cf. Mishnah Berakhot 3:1). The request may mean the father has just died, or it may be an idiom for 'let me wait until my father dies and I've fulfilled my family obligations.'
60. This is one of the most shocking sayings in the Gospels. 'Let the dead bury their own dead' uses 'dead' in two senses: the spiritually dead can attend to the physically dead. The command to prioritize kingdom proclamation over the most sacred family duty would have been deeply offensive in first-century Jewish culture. Jesus is not callous — he is asserting that the kingdom's arrival creates an unprecedented urgency that relativizes even the most honored obligations.
61. The third encounter — unique to Luke — echoes Elisha's call by Elijah in 1 Kings 19:19-21, where Elisha asked to kiss his parents goodbye and Elijah permitted it. The request seems entirely reasonable, which makes Jesus's response in the next verse all the more startling. The verb apotaxasthai ('to say farewell, to take leave of') implies a formal departure, not a quick wave.
61. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Kings 19:19-21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
62. The agricultural image is precise: a farmer plowing with a wooden plow and a team of oxen must look ahead to maintain a straight furrow. Looking backward produces a crooked line and wastes the field. The verb euthetos ('fit, suitable, useful') implies that backward-looking discipleship is not merely imperfect but useless for kingdom work. The implicit contrast with Elisha's call is significant: what Elijah permitted, Jesus does not —

because the kingdom's demands exceed even the prophetic calling.

10

Summary: *Luke 10 opens with Jesus sending out seventy-two disciples on a broader mission, paralleling but expanding the commissioning of the Twelve in chapter 9. The chapter contains the famous parable of the Good Samaritan — Jesus's answer to the question 'Who is my neighbor?' — which redefines love of neighbor by making a despised outsider the moral hero. The chapter closes with the contrasting portraits of Martha and Mary in Bethany, where Jesus affirms that attentive listening to his word is the 'one thing needed.' Between these memorable narratives, Jesus rejoices in the Spirit, pronounces blessings on the disciples for what they see and hear, and reveals the intimate mutual knowledge between Father and Son.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The sending of the seventy-two (or seventy, depending on the manuscript tradition) likely alludes to the seventy elders of Israel (Numbers 11:16-25) or the seventy nations of Genesis 10, suggesting a mission that extends beyond Israel. The Good Samaritan parable is uniquely Lukan and is one of the most culturally influential stories in Western civilization. Its placement as the answer to 'Who is my neighbor?' transforms a question about the limits of obligation into a challenge about becoming the kind of person who shows mercy. The Mary and Martha story, also unique to Luke, elevates the role of women as disciples who learn at a rabbi's feet — a radical social claim in the first century.*

Translation Friction: *The number seventy-two versus seventy is a well-known textual variant; the SBLGNT reads seventy-two (hebdomekonta duo). The lawyer's question in v. 25 uses ekpeirazon ('testing'), a verb with hostile overtones, yet Jesus engages him seriously. The Samaritan parable would have been profoundly offensive to a Jewish audience — making a Samaritan the moral exemplar over a priest and a Levite was a deliberate provocation. The Martha/Mary episode has been read as privileging contemplation over action, but Luke's point is more nuanced: Martha's distraction (periespato) is the problem, not her service (diakonia) itself.*

Connections: *The commissioning echoes and expands the Twelve's mission (Luke 9:1-6). Jesus's rejoicing in the Spirit (v. 21) connects to his programmatic Spirit-anointing in Luke 4:18. The Good Samaritan parable reinterprets Leviticus 19:18 ('love your neighbor as yourself') and draws on the Samaritan theme Luke has been developing (9:52-56). The Mary/Martha story anticipates the theme of faithful hearing that runs through Luke's Travel Narrative. The woe oracles over Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum echo Old Testament prophetic judgment oracles.*

¹After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him into every town and place where he himself was about to go. ²He told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest. ³Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. ⁴Carry no money bag, no traveler's bag, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' ⁶If a person of peace is there, your peace will rest on that person. But if not, it will return to you. ⁷Stay in that same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and they welcome you, eat what is set before you. ⁹Heal the sick who are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' ¹⁰But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, ¹¹'Even the dust from your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. But know this: the kingdom of God has come near.' ¹²I tell you, on that day it will be more bearable for Sodom than for that town. ¹³"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴But it will be easier for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment, than it will be for you. ¹⁵And you, Capernaum — will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. ¹⁶Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me." ¹⁷The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name!" ¹⁸He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. ¹⁹Look, I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will harm

you in any way. ²⁰Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." ²¹In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this was your gracious will. ²²All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." ²³Then turning to the disciples privately, he said, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. ²⁴For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see and did not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it." ²⁵Then a legal expert stood up to test him, saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ²⁶He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" ²⁷He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." ²⁸He said to him, "You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live." ²⁹But wanting to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" ³⁰Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers. They stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹By coincidence, a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³²Likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan who was traveling came upon him, and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion. ³⁴He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he placed him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' ³⁶Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" ³⁷He said, "The one who showed mercy to him." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." ³⁸As they continued on their way, he entered a certain village, and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. ³⁹She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and was listening to his word. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted by all her preparations. She came to him and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her to help me!" ⁴¹The Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴²However, one thing is needful — and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The textual variant between 'seventy' and 'seventy-two' (hebdomēkonta duo) is one of the most debated in Luke. The SBLGNT reads seventy-two. Seventy may allude to the elders appointed by Moses (Numbers 11:16-25), while seventy-two may reflect the number of nations in the Septuagint's version of Genesis 10, suggesting a universal mission scope. Sending in pairs follows the Old Testament principle that testimony requires two witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15).
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 11:16-25. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 19:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The harvest metaphor draws on Old Testament prophetic imagery where harvest represents God's gathering of people (cf. Joel 3:13, Isaiah 27:12). The verb *ekbalē* ('to throw out, to send out forcefully') is surprisingly strong — the same word used for casting out demons. God must thrust workers into the field; they will not go on their own initiative.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Joel 3:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 27:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The image of lambs (*arnas*) among wolves is more vulnerable than Matthew's 'sheep' (*probata*, Matt 10:16). Lambs are younger, weaker, more defenseless. The present tense apostellō ('I am sending') conveys immediacy. The mission is deliberately risky — Jesus does not promise safety but commissions them into danger.

4. The prohibition against greeting people on the road does not reflect rudeness but urgency — Near Eastern greetings were elaborate, time-consuming social rituals. Elisha gave the same instruction to Gehazi (2 Kings 4:29). The three prohibited items (purse, bag, sandals) strip the missionaries of all provision and self-sufficiency, forcing reliance on God's provision through hospitality.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Kings 4:29. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The greeting *eirēnē tō oikō toutō* ('peace to this house') reflects the Hebrew *shalom* greeting. In this context, it is not merely a pleasantry but a performative blessing — the peace carried by the messengers of the kingdom is an actual spiritual reality that can rest on a household or return to the messenger (v. 6).
6. The Semitic expression *huios eirēnēs* ('son of peace') means a person characterized by peace, one who is receptive to the kingdom message. The concept of peace as a quasi-physical force that can 'rest on' someone or 'return' to the sender reflects the Hebrew understanding of a spoken blessing as having real power — a word once released either finds its target or comes back.
7. The principle 'the worker deserves his wages' (*axios ho ergatēs tou misthou autou*) establishes that hospitality for kingdom workers is not charity but fair compensation for spiritual labor. Paul quotes this saying as authoritative in 1 Timothy 5:18, placing it on the level of Scripture. The prohibition against moving between houses prevents the appearance of seeking luxury or playing hosts against each other.
8. The instruction to eat 'what is set before you' (*ta paratithemena hymin*) may have significance beyond mere hospitality — for Jewish missionaries entering Gentile or Samaritan homes, this could mean eating food not prepared according to Jewish dietary laws. If so, the instruction anticipates the breaking down of food boundaries that becomes explicit in Acts 10.
9. The combination of healing and proclamation demonstrates that the kingdom of God is not merely a verbal announcement but a present reality that transforms bodies and communities. The perfect tense *ēngiken* ('has come near, has arrived') indicates a completed approach — the kingdom is not distant but has reached their doorstep through the messengers' presence and power.
10. The public declaration in the streets (*plateias*, 'broad streets, public squares') transforms the rejection into a witnessed prophetic act. The messengers are not to slink away in shame but to make a formal, visible proclamation of judgment.
11. The dust-wiping gesture is more detailed here than in 9:5, with the addition of 'that clings to our feet' (*ton kollēthenta hēmin ek tēs poleōs hymōn eis tous podas*), emphasizing thoroughness of separation. The ironic twist is that the kingdom's nearness remains true regardless of the town's response — their rejection does not prevent God's reign from arriving, only their participation in it.
12. Sodom was the quintessential symbol of divine judgment in Jewish thought (Genesis 19). To say that any town's fate will be worse than Sodom's is the most severe warning imaginable. The logic is one of accountability: Sodom never received kingdom messengers with healing power, so rejecting such messengers incurs greater responsibility.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 19. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Chorazin and Bethsaida were Galilean towns near Capernaum where Jesus had ministered extensively. Tyre and Sidon were Gentile coastal cities that the Old Testament prophets condemned (Isaiah 23, Ezekiel 26-28). The argument from lesser to greater is devastating: pagan cities under prophetic judgment would have repented if given what these Jewish towns received. Sackcloth and ashes were the traditional signs of mourning and repentance.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 23 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 26-28 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The phrase *en tē krisei* ('at the judgment') refers to the eschatological final judgment. Jesus implies graduated accountability — greater privilege brings greater responsibility and thus more severe judgment for rejection. The comparative *anektoterōn* ('more bearable, more tolerable') suggests degrees of judgment rather than a uniform outcome.
15. The language echoes Isaiah 14:13-15, the taunt against the king of Babylon who sought to ascend to heaven but was brought down to Sheol. Capernaum was Jesus's base of operations in Galilee (Luke 4:31) and had received more of his teaching and miracles than any other town. The Greek *hadēs* translates the Hebrew *Sheol* — the realm of the dead, not the later Christian concept of hell as a place of punishment.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 14:13-15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. This verse establishes a chain of representation parallel to 9:48 but in the negative direction: messenger → Jesus → God. The verb *athetōn* ('rejects, sets aside, nullifies') is a legal term meaning to declare something invalid or to annul a contract. Rejecting the messengers is not merely a social offense but a rejection of divine authority. The sending language (*ton aposteilanta me*) affirms Jesus's own identity as the sent one of God.
17. The disciples' report focuses on demonic submission (*hypotassetai*, 'submit, are subject to') — the one result that most astonished them. Their joy is genuine but slightly misdirected, as Jesus will redirect their attention in v. 20. The phrase 'in your name' (*en tō onomati sou*) indicates they acted not by their own power but as authorized representatives of Jesus.

- 18.** The imperfect *etheōroun* ('I was watching, I kept seeing') suggests Jesus was observing in real time as the disciples were on their mission. The imagery of Satan falling like lightning combines the speed and brilliance of a lightning strike with the finality of a fall. This may allude to Isaiah 14:12 (the fall of the 'morning star') or may describe a visionary experience of Satan's cosmic defeat being enacted through the disciples' mission.
- 18.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 14:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 19.** The perfect tense *dedōka* ('I have given') indicates an accomplished and continuing gift. Snakes and scorpions function both literally (protection from physical danger) and symbolically (power over demonic forces, cf. the serpent of Genesis 3). The phrase *pasan tēn dynamin tou echthrou* ('all the power of the enemy') identifies Satan as 'the enemy' and declares his complete subordination to the authority Jesus delegates. The double negative *ou mē* ('by no means, absolutely not') is the strongest negation in Greek.
- 19.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 20.** Jesus redirects their joy from what they can do (power over spirits) to what God has done (inscribing their names in heaven). The perfect passive *engegraptai* ('have been written and remain written') indicates a permanent record. The image of names written in heaven draws on the Old Testament concept of God's book (Exodus 32:32-33, Daniel 12:1, Psalm 69:28). The point is that identity and security in God's eternal record matters more than spiritual power.
- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 32:32-33 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 12:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 69:28 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** Luke alone specifies that Jesus rejoiced 'in the Holy Spirit' (*en tō pneumati tō hagiō*), one of the rare moments where Jesus's own emotional experience is described in terms of the Spirit's activity. The verb *ēgalliasato* ('rejoiced greatly, exulted') denotes intense, exuberant joy. The prayer follows the Jewish *todah* (thanksgiving) form. The 'wise and intelligent' (*sophōn kai synetōn*) may refer to religious scholars whose learning becomes an obstacle, while 'infants' (*nēpiois*) represents the unlettered disciples whose openness allows revelation.
- 22.** This verse, sometimes called the 'Johannine thunderbolt' because it sounds more like John's Gospel than the Synoptics, asserts mutual exclusive knowledge between Father and Son. The verb *paredothē* ('have been handed over') implies total delegation of authority. The claim of reciprocal knowing — only the Father knows the Son, only the Son knows the Father — places Jesus in a relationship with God that is unique and unparalleled. The Son's sovereign choice in revelation (*boulētai*, 'wills, chooses') makes him the sole mediator of knowledge of God.
- 23.** The beatitude form (*makarioi*, 'blessed, fortunate, to be envied') frames the disciples' experience as a supreme privilege. The physical turning (*straphēis*) signals a shift from public prayer to private instruction. The emphasis on seeing (*ophthalmoi... blepontes... blepete*) highlights the revelatory nature of the disciples' experience — they are witnessing what centuries of faithful people longed to see.
- 24.** Luke says 'prophets and kings' where Matthew 13:17 says 'prophets and righteous people' — Luke's version may be more pointed, since kings like David and Solomon, despite their power and privilege, never witnessed the messianic fulfillment. The disciples, simple Galileans, are more privileged than Israel's greatest leaders. The parallel structure (see/did not see, hear/did not hear) creates a chiasm of privilege and longing.
- 25.** The *nomikos* ('legal expert, lawyer') was an expert in the Torah, not a secular attorney. The verb *ekpeirazōn* ('testing, putting to the test') carries hostile undertones — this is an attempt to trap Jesus, not a sincere inquiry (though Jesus transforms it into genuine teaching). The question about inheriting eternal life assumes that eternal life is an inheritance, something received from a prior relationship rather than earned — a covenant concept.
- 26.** Jesus's counter-question is a classic rabbinic technique — answering a question with a question that directs the questioner back to Scripture. The double question ('what is written?' and 'how do you read?') distinguishes between the text itself and the interpreter's understanding of it. As a Torah expert, the lawyer should already know the answer.
- 27.** The lawyer combines the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:5) with Leviticus 19:18, joining love of God with love of neighbor into a single commandment. In Luke's account, it is the lawyer who produces this synthesis (in Mark 12:29-31, Jesus gives it). The fourfold formula (heart, soul, strength, mind) slightly expands the Hebrew original, with 'mind' (*dianoia*) added to the traditional three, perhaps reflecting the Septuagint tradition.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 6:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 19:18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** Jesus's response echoes Leviticus 18:5: 'Keep my statutes... by which, if a person does them, he will live.' The imperative 'do this' (*touto poiei*) shifts the conversation from theory to practice — knowing the right answer is not enough. The present tense *poiei* implies ongoing, habitual action, not a one-time performance.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 18:5: — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

29. The phrase *thelōn dikaiōsai heauton* ('wanting to justify himself') reveals the lawyer's motivation — he seeks to define 'neighbor' narrowly enough that he can claim compliance. The question 'who is my neighbor?' asks for the limits of obligation: who can I legitimately exclude? Jesus's parable will invert the question entirely: instead of asking 'who qualifies as my neighbor?' the question becomes 'to whom am I willing to be a neighbor?'
30. The Jerusalem-to-Jericho road descended about 3,400 feet over roughly seventeen miles through desolate, rocky terrain notorious for banditry. The word *lēstais* ('robbers, bandits') denotes violent criminals, not petty thieves (*kleptai*). The victim is deliberately left unidentified — no name, no ethnicity, no social status — so that the story cannot be limited to any particular group. Stripped and half dead, the man's identity cannot be determined by his clothing or speech, making the response to him purely a matter of mercy versus indifference.
31. The phrase *kata synkyrian* ('by coincidence') is used only here in the New Testament and frames the encounters as unplanned — this is not a setup but a test of character in an unexpected moment. The priest's avoidance (*antiparēlthen*, 'passed by on the opposite side') may have been motivated by purity concerns: contact with a corpse would render him ritually unclean (Leviticus 21:1-3), and the man appeared to be dead. However, Jesus's parable implies no excuse is adequate when a life hangs in the balance.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 21:1-3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The Levite's behavior mirrors the priest's — seeing (*idōn*) and passing by (*antiparēlthen*). The Levites were a secondary priestly class who served in the temple. Together, priest and Levite represent the religious establishment of Israel. The pattern of two religious figures failing creates the expectation that the third character will be an ordinary Israelite who succeeds — making the Samaritan identity in verse 33 a deliberate shock.
33. The word *esplanchnisthē* ('was moved with compassion, felt it in his guts') is one of the strongest emotional verbs in Greek — it refers to a visceral, gut-level response. In the Gospels, this verb is used primarily of Jesus himself (7:13, 15:20). The Samaritan sees the same wounded man the priest and Levite saw, but his seeing produces a fundamentally different response. For a first-century Jewish audience, making a Samaritan the hero would have been deeply offensive — Samaritans were considered heretical half-breeds (cf. John 4:9, 8:48).
34. The care is described in meticulous detail: approaching, bandaging, applying medicine (oil to soothe, wine to disinfect), mounting the man on his own animal (meaning the Samaritan walked), transporting him to an inn, and personally nursing him. Each action represents a personal cost — time, supplies, transportation, and the risk of being a Samaritan caring for a possibly Jewish stranger in hostile territory. The *pandocheion* ('inn') was a commercial establishment, not private hospitality.
35. Two denarii represented about two days' wages for a laborer and could cover roughly two weeks of lodging and food. The Samaritan's open-ended promise — 'whatever more you spend, I will repay' — represents an unlimited financial commitment to a stranger. The verb *prosdapanēsēs* ('spend in addition') indicates he expects the care to exceed the initial payment. The promise to return creates ongoing accountability.
36. Jesus's question brilliantly inverts the lawyer's original question. The lawyer asked 'who is my neighbor?' (who must I help?) — Jesus asks 'who proved to be a neighbor?' (who acted with mercy?). The question is no longer about the identity of the recipient but about the character of the responder. The verb *gegonenai* ('proved to be, became') suggests that being a neighbor is not a status but an action.
37. The lawyer cannot bring himself to say 'the Samaritan' — he answers with a circumlocution: 'the one who showed mercy' (*ho poiēsas to eleos*). The word *eleos* ('mercy, compassion') echoes the Septuagint's vocabulary for God's own compassion. Jesus's final command — 'go and do likewise' (*poreuou kai sy poiei homoiōs*) — turns the theological question into a practical mandate. The 'likewise' (*homoiōs*) means: be like the Samaritan. For a Jewish lawyer, this is a radical reorientation.
38. Luke does not name the village, though John 11:1 identifies Martha's home as Bethany, near Jerusalem. The verb *hypedexato* ('welcomed, received as a guest') indicates hospitality — Martha is the householder who opens her home. Luke places this domestic scene immediately after the Good Samaritan parable, creating a pairing: the parable teaches about active mercy, while the Martha/Mary story teaches about receptive listening. Both are needed.
39. The phrase *parakathētheisa pros tous podas tou kyriou* ('seated at the Lord's feet') is the technical posture of a rabbinic disciple — Paul describes himself as educated 'at the feet of Gamaliel' (Acts 22:3). For a woman to assume this posture was socially radical; women were not typically accepted as students of Torah. Luke presents Mary as a full disciple. The imperfect *ēkouden* ('was listening, kept listening') suggests sustained, absorbed attention.
40. The verb *periespato* ('was distracted, was pulled in different directions') suggests that Martha's many tasks were fragmenting her attention rather than centering it. The word *diakonia* ('service, ministry') is significant — it is the root of 'deacon' and is a valued activity in Luke-Acts. Martha's service is not condemned; her distraction is. Her complaint addresses Jesus rather than Mary directly, asking him to arbitrate — and her tone reveals frustration bordering on accusation: 'don't you care?' (*ou meleī soi*).
41. The double name 'Martha, Martha' (Martha Martha) is a form of address that conveys gentle concern and intimacy — compare 'Simon, Simon' (Luke 22:31) and 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem' (Luke 13:34). The two verbs *merimnās* ('you are anxious, worried') and *thorybazē* ('you are troubled, agitated') describe an internal state of fragmentation. Jesus does not criticize Martha's service but her anxiety — the inner turmoil that has overtaken her.
42. The phrase *henos estin chreia* ('one thing is necessary') is textually debated — some manuscripts read 'few things are necessary, or only one' (*oligōn de estin chreia ē henos*). The SBLGNT reading is the most concise. The word *merida* ('portion, share, part') may carry meal imagery — while Martha is busy with many dishes, Mary has chosen the one dish that matters. The passive 'will not be taken away' (*ouk aphairethēsetai*) implies divine protection of Mary's choice. Jesus affirms that attentive hearing of the word takes priority, though he does not condemn Martha's service itself.

11

Summary: *Luke 11 centers on prayer, spiritual warfare, and confrontation with religious hypocrisy. The chapter opens with Jesus teaching the Lord's Prayer in its shorter Lukan form, followed by the parable of the persistent friend and the promise that God gives good gifts to those who ask. The middle section addresses the Beelzebul controversy — Jesus's defense against the charge that he casts out demons by demonic power — and includes the parable of the strong man and the warning about the return of unclean spirits. The chapter closes with a series of sharp woe pronouncements against the Pharisees and legal experts, attacking their obsession with external purity while neglecting justice and the love of God.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Luke's Lord's Prayer is significantly shorter than Matthew's version (five petitions versus seven), likely reflecting an earlier or more compressed tradition. The prayer arises naturally from watching Jesus pray — a uniquely Lukan setting. The Beelzebul controversy is one of the most theologically charged episodes in the Gospels, as Jesus argues that his exorcisms are evidence that the kingdom of God has arrived. The six woes (three against Pharisees, three against lawyers) form one of the fiercest prophetic denunciations in the New Testament, echoing the 'woe' oracles of Isaiah and Amos. Luke's placement of these woes at a Pharisee's dinner table heightens the social tension dramatically.*

Translation Friction: *The differences between Luke's Lord's Prayer and Matthew's have generated extensive scholarly discussion. We render Luke's text as it stands without harmonizing with Matthew. The phrase 'your kingdom come' in some manuscripts is followed by a variant reading requesting the Holy Spirit, which reflects early liturgical practice but is not in the SBLGNT. The Beelzebul passage raises difficult questions about the 'unforgivable sin' (blasphemy against the Holy Spirit), though Luke's version is less explicit on this than Mark's. The woe pronouncements present Jesus in a confrontational prophetic mode that may surprise readers accustomed to 'gentle Jesus.'*

Connections: *The Lord's Prayer connects to Jesus's own prayer life (3:21, 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 9:28-29). The Beelzebul controversy draws on Old Testament language about 'the finger of God' (Exodus 8:19). The sign of Jonah connects to the Jonah narrative and the repentance of Nineveh. The lamp saying (v. 33-36) echoes the same imagery in 8:16. The woes parallel Matthew 23 but in a different narrative context. The reference to Abel's blood to Zechariah's blood spans the Hebrew canon from Genesis to Chronicles.*

¹He was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." ²He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, let your name be held holy. Let your kingdom come. ³Give us each day our daily bread. ⁴Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us into temptation.'" ⁵Then he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, ⁶Because a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set prior to him? ⁷And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything.' ⁸I tell you, even if he will not get up and give him anything because of their friendship, yet because of his shameless persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs. ⁹So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? ¹²Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" ¹⁴He was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the crowds were amazed. ¹⁵But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of demons." ¹⁶Others, testing him, demanded a sign from heaven. ¹⁷But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a house divided against itself falls. ¹⁸If Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. ¹⁹If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. ²⁰But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²¹When a strong man,

fully armed, guards his own courtyard, his possessions are secure. ²²But when one stronger than he attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the full armor in which the strong man trusted and distributes his plunder. ²³Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. ²⁴"When an unclean spirit goes out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' ²⁵When it arrives, it finds the house swept and put in order. ²⁶Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and settle there. And the final condition of that person becomes worse than the first." ²⁷As he was saying these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!" ²⁸But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" ²⁹As the crowds were increasing, he began to say, "This generation is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. ³⁰For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation. ³¹The queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the people of this generation and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear Solomon's wisdom — and look, something greater than Solomon is here. ³²The people of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah — and look, something greater than Jonah is here. ³³"No one lights a lamp and puts it in a hidden place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. ³⁴Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light. But when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. ³⁵Therefore be careful that the light in you is not darkness. ³⁶If then your whole body is full of light, with no part dark, it will be entirely full of light, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light." ³⁷While he was speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him. So he went in and reclined at the table. ³⁸The Pharisee was surprised to see that he did not first wash before the meal. ³⁹The Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. ⁴⁰Fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? ⁴¹But give what is inside as charity, and then everything is clean for you. ⁴²But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, but you neglect justice and the love of God. These you should have done without neglecting the others. ⁴³Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and the greetings in the marketplaces. ⁴⁴Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and the people who walk over them do not realize it." ⁴⁵One of the legal experts answered him, "Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us too." ⁴⁶He said, "Woe to you legal experts as well! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, but you yourselves will not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. ⁴⁷Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. ⁴⁸So you are witnesses and you approve of the deeds of your fathers, because they killed them and you build their tombs. ⁴⁹For this reason the wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,' ⁵⁰That the lifeblood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the present age, may be required of this generation. ⁵¹In deed, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple — truly I tell you, it will be required of this generation. ⁵²Woe to you legal experts! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering." ⁵³When he left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things, ⁵⁴They watched him closely, trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Luke uniquely grounds the Lord's Prayer in Jesus's own practice of prayer — the disciples see him praying and want to learn. The reference to John the Baptist teaching his disciples to pray indicates that distinctive prayers functioned as community identity markers; rabbinic schools and prophetic movements each had their own prayer traditions. The request is not simply for words to say but for a way of approaching God that distinguishes Jesus's community.
2. Luke's address is simply *Pater* ('Father') without Matthew's 'Our Father who is in heaven.' The bare 'Father' may reflect the Aramaic *Abba*, the intimate family address that Jesus used for God. The aorist passive *hagiasthētō* ('let it be made holy, let it be sanctified') is a divine passive — the petition asks God to act to hallow his own name, to cause his holiness to be recognized and honored. Luke omits Matthew's 'your will be done on earth as in heaven,' though the petition is implicit in 'let your kingdom come.'

3. The word *epiousios* ('daily') is one of the rarest words in Greek — it appears almost nowhere outside the Lord's Prayer, and its exact meaning is debated. Possible meanings include: 'for the coming day' (from *epi* + *ienai*, 'for tomorrow'), 'necessary for existence' (from *epi* + *ousia*, 'for being'), or 'supersubstantial' (a patristic reading connecting it to spiritual nourishment). The present tense *didou* ('keep giving') with 'each day' (to *kath' hēmeran*) in Luke's version (versus Matthew's aorist *dos*, 'give today') emphasizes ongoing daily dependence, echoing the daily manna provision in the wilderness.
4. Luke uses *hamartias* ('sins') where Matthew has *opheilēmata* ('debts'). Luke's version then switches to debt language in the second clause (*opheilonti*, 'indebted to'), creating a mixed metaphor that reveals the underlying connection: sins are debts owed to God. The present tense *aphiomen* ('we forgive') indicates habitual practice, not a one-time act. Luke omits Matthew's final petition 'but deliver us from evil/the evil one.' The petition about temptation (*peirasmon*) asks not to be led into a situation of testing that could overwhelm faith — the same word will appear in Jesus's Gethsemane warning (22:40, 46).
5. This parable is unique to Luke. The scenario assumes a Palestinian village where hospitality is a communal obligation — a host who cannot provide for an unexpected guest would bring shame on the entire village. The midnight hour (*mesonyktiou*) heightens the inconvenience. Three loaves would constitute a modest meal for one person.
6. The traveler's arrival 'from a journey' (*ex hodou*) at midnight was common in the ancient Near East, where people traveled in the cooler night hours to avoid the heat. The host's confession 'I have nothing' (*ouk echō*) creates urgency — hospitality failure was a serious social disgrace in this culture.
7. The reply from inside paints a realistic picture of a one-room peasant house where the entire family slept on a raised platform or mat. Opening the door and getting bread would mean stepping over sleeping children, unbarring the door, and fumbling in the dark. The perfect tense *kekleistai* ('has been locked and remains locked') emphasizes the finality of the closure.
8. The key word *anaideia* has been traditionally translated 'importunity' or 'persistence,' but it literally means 'shamelessness, lack of shame.' The argument is from lesser to greater (*qal wahomer*): if a reluctant neighbor responds to shameless persistence, how much more will God — who is not reluctant — respond to persistent prayer? God is not the reluctant friend; the parable contrasts human reluctance with divine generosity.
9. The three imperatives (*aiteite*, *zēteite*, *krouete*) are all present tense, indicating continuous action: 'keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking.' The escalating verbs suggest increasing effort and urgency. The divine passives (*dothēsetai*, 'it will be given'; *anoigēsetai*, 'it will be opened') indicate God as the agent. The promise is absolute in form, though the context (vv. 11-13) clarifies that God gives what is genuinely good.
10. The universal qualifier *pas* ('everyone') removes any limitation — the promise is not restricted to the pious, the worthy, or the experienced. The shift from imperative (v. 9) to indicative (v. 10) moves from command to assurance: this is not merely what you should do, but what actually happens. The present tenses (*lambanei*, *heuriskei*) describe a reliable pattern, not an occasional exception.
11. The SBLGNT text here differs from some manuscripts. Some include the bread/stone comparison found in Matthew 7:9, but the critical text begins with the fish/snake pair. The items are chosen for their visual similarity — a snake could resemble a fish, an egg could resemble a stone — making the substitution conceivable but cruel. The argument assumes that human fathers, despite their imperfection, would never deliberately harm their children.
12. The egg/scorpion pair is unique to Luke. A white scorpion with its tail curled could superficially resemble an egg. The escalation from snake (dangerous) to scorpion (deadly) heightens the absurdity — no parent would do this. The logic builds toward the climactic argument in verse 13.
13. Luke's version culminates with the Holy Spirit (*pneuma hagion*) where Matthew 7:11 has 'good things' (*agatha*). This is theologically significant: for Luke, the Holy Spirit is the supreme gift, the ultimate 'good thing' that encompasses all others. The acknowledgment of human evil (*ponēroi hyparchontes*, 'being evil by nature') is not rhetorical — it establishes the lesser-to-greater argument: even flawed humans give well; a perfect Father gives incomparably better. The phrase *ho patēr ho ex ouranou* ('the Father from heaven') is Luke's distinctive formulation.
14. The adjective *kōphon* ('mute, deaf') is applied to the demon rather than the man, suggesting the demon was the cause of the muteness. The immediate restoration of speech upon the demon's departure confirms this causation. The crowds' amazement (*ethaumasan*) is a typical response to Jesus's exorcisms, setting the stage for the divided reactions that follow.
15. Beelzebul (Beelzeboul) is derived from the name Baal-zebul ('lord of the flies') in 2 Kings 1:2, though the *-zebul* form may mean 'lord of the dwelling' or 'lord of the exalted place.' The accusation that Jesus works by the authority of Satan's chief officer is the most extreme charge his opponents could level — it acknowledges his power while attributing it to the worst possible source.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Kings 1:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The demand for a 'sign from heaven' (*sēmeion ex ouranou*) implies that an exorcism is not sufficient proof — they want a cosmic, undeniable display of divine power. The verb *peirazontes* ('testing') echoes the temptation narrative (4:2) and v. 25's description of the lawyer. Jesus will address this demand in vv. 29-32 with the sign of Jonah.
17. Jesus's knowledge of their thoughts (*eidōs autōn ta dianoēmata*) again demonstrates supernatural perception. The argument is logical: a kingdom at war with itself will collapse. The word *erēmoutai* ('is made desolate, is laid waste') echoes the prophetic language of national destruction. The 'house against house' (*oikos epi oikon*) may refer to families or to internal factions within a household.
18. The phrase 'his kingdom' (*hē basileia autou*) applies kingdom language to Satan — he has a counter-kingdom that opposes God's reign. Jesus accepts the premise that there is an organized demonic realm but argues that the Beelzebul hypothesis is internally incoherent: Satan would not authorize the destruction of his own forces.

19. The 'sons' (huiōi) refers to Jewish exorcists who were contemporaries of Jesus — exorcism was practiced within Judaism (cf. Acts 19:13-14, Josephus Antiquities 8.2.5). The argument is: if exorcism proves Satanic alliance, then your own exorcists stand condemned by the same logic. If their exorcisms are legitimate, then exorcism itself cannot be evidence of demonic power.
20. Luke preserves the phrase 'finger of God' (daktylō theou) where Matthew 12:28 has 'Spirit of God.' The 'finger of God' alludes directly to Exodus 8:19, where Pharaoh's magicians conceded that Moses' plagues were 'the finger of God' — a power they could not replicate. Jesus frames his exorcisms as a new exodus: God's finger is again at work, liberating people from bondage. The aorist ephthasen ('has come upon, has arrived') is decisive — the kingdom is not merely approaching but has already arrived.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 8:19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The 'strong man' (ho ischyros) represents Satan. The phrase kathōplismenos ('fully armed, having armed himself completely') emphasizes thorough military preparedness. His 'courtyard' (aulēn) is his domain of control — the lives and territories under demonic oppression. The false 'peace' (eirēnē) of his possessions means the captives are secure only in the sense of being securely imprisoned.
22. The 'stronger one' (ischyroteros) is Jesus himself. The word panoplian ('full armor, complete suit of armor') includes every defensive weapon — the stronger one does not merely defeat the strong man but strips him completely bare. The verb diadidōsin ('distributes') implies the liberation of captives and the redistribution of what was stolen. Luke's version is more detailed than Mark's, emphasizing the totality of the victory.
23. This saying appears to contradict 9:50 ('whoever is not against you is for you'), but the contexts differ. Here the issue is personal allegiance to Jesus in the cosmic battle against evil — neutrality is impossible. In 9:50, the issue was tolerance toward others who work in Jesus's name. The gathering/scattering language (synagōn/skorpizein) uses shepherd imagery: Jesus gathers the flock, and anyone working at cross-purposes scatters it.
24. The 'waterless places' (anhydron topōn) reflect the Jewish belief that demons inhabited deserts and desolate regions (cf. Isaiah 13:21, 34:14; Baruch 4:35). The spirit's reference to the person as 'my house' (ton oikon mou) reveals a possessive claim — the demon considers the human being its property. The seeking of 'rest' (anapausin) parallels the wandering of unhoused spirits in Jewish demonology.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 13:21. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The perfect participles sesarōmenon ('swept clean') and kekosmēmenon ('put in order, decorated') describe a house that has been cleaned but not occupied. The critical point is what is absent: there is no new tenant, no positive spiritual presence filling the space. Exorcism without replacement — removal of evil without the filling of good — creates a dangerous spiritual vacuum.
26. Seven represents completeness — the reinfestation is total. The comparative ponērotera ('more evil') indicates escalation: the returned spirits are worse than the original. The verb katoikei ('settle, take up permanent residence') is stronger than temporary inhabitation — they intend to stay. The warning applies both to individuals and, by extension, to Israel: deliverance (exodus, exile's end) without genuine commitment to God leads to a worse condition than before.
27. This exchange is unique to Luke. The woman's praise honors Jesus indirectly by blessing his mother — a common Near Eastern form of expressing admiration for a person by praising the mother who raised him. The language is earthy and physical: koilia ('womb, belly') and mastoi ('breasts'). Jesus will redirect this biological blessing to a spiritual one.
28. The particle menoun ('indeed, rather, on the contrary') does not necessarily negate the woman's blessing but redirects and surpasses it. The true blessing is not biological connection to Jesus but hearing and obeying God's word. The participles akouontes ('hearing') and phyllassontes ('keeping, guarding, obeying') describe ongoing habitual action. This saying echoes Luke 8:21: 'My mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.'
29. The verb epathroisomenōn ('were gathering in addition, crowding together') indicates swelling numbers. Jesus addresses the sign-seekers from v. 16. The phrase genea ponēra ('evil generation') echoes Deuteronomy 1:35 and frames the present generation as comparable to the rebellious wilderness generation. The 'sign of Jonah' is explained differently in Matthew (three days in the belly of the fish = three days in the tomb); Luke's explanation in v. 30 focuses on Jonah himself as the sign.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 1:35. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. Luke's version does not specify how Jonah was a sign — whether through his preaching of judgment, his survival from the fish, or his person itself. The parallel simply states that as Jonah functioned as a sign to Ninevites, so Jesus functions as a sign to this generation. The Ninevites responded to Jonah with repentance (Jonah 3:5-10); the implication is that this generation is failing to respond to one far greater.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jonah 3:5-10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. The 'queen of the South' is the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1-13), who traveled from southern Arabia to hear Solomon. The neuter pleion ('something greater'), not the masculine pleiōn ('someone greater'), is significant — Jesus may be referring to the kingdom of God rather than merely claiming personal superiority to Solomon. A pagan queen's pursuit of wisdom will stand as evidence against a generation that has God's wisdom in its midst and ignores it.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Kings 10:1-13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

32. Luke reverses Matthew's order, placing the Ninevites second for emphasis — they connect back to the sign of Jonah discussion. The verb *metanoēsan* ('repented, changed their minds') describes the complete turnaround of a pagan city. The repeated formula 'something greater than X is here' (pleion + genitive + *hōde*) establishes a pattern: if outsiders responded to lesser revelations, this generation has no excuse for rejecting the greater.
33. This lamp saying reappears in a different context (cf. 8:16). Here, following the sign-seeking discussion, the point is that Jesus's message is not hidden or cryptic — it is publicly displayed like a lamp on a stand. The problem is not insufficient evidence but refusal to see. The word *kryptēn* ('hidden place, cellar') is unique to Luke's version.
34. The adjective *haplous* ('single, healthy, generous') is contrasted with *ponēros* ('bad, evil, sick'). In the ancient world, the eye was understood as the organ that admits light into the body (like a window, not a camera). A 'single' or 'good' eye admits light; an 'evil' or 'diseased' eye blocks it. The metaphor also carries moral overtones — a 'good eye' in Jewish idiom meant generosity, while an 'evil eye' meant stinginess or envy.
35. The warning is paradoxical: what you think is light may actually be darkness. The verb *skopei* ('watch carefully, take heed') implies active vigilance. The danger is not simply lacking light but having a distorted perception that mistakes darkness for light — a more insidious condition because the person is unaware of their blindness.
36. The verse describes total illumination — no dark corners, no hidden areas. The comparison to a lamp's *astrapē* ('flash, radiance, lightning') suggests intense, penetrating brightness. The point is holistic spiritual perception: when the inner eye is healthy, the entire person is illuminated and can perceive God's truth clearly.
37. The verb *aristēsē* refers to the morning or midday meal, not dinner. Jesus accepts invitations from Pharisees on multiple occasions in Luke (7:36, 14:1), demonstrating willingness to engage with his critics. The verb *anepesen* ('reclined') describes the typical posture at a formal meal — reclining on one's left side on a couch.
38. The verb *ebaptisthē* (literally 'was baptized, was immersed') refers to the ritual hand-washing practiced by Pharisees before meals. This was not a matter of hygiene but of ritual purity — removing ceremonial contamination acquired through contact with common people or objects. The practice was a Pharisaic tradition, not a Torah commandment, which is precisely Jesus's point in what follows.
39. The cup and dish metaphor is brilliantly chosen at a dinner table. The word *harpagēs* ('greed, robbery, plunder') suggests that the contents of the Pharisees' clean cups were obtained through exploitation. The contrast between *exōthen* ('outside') and *esōthen* ('inside') establishes the external-versus-internal theme that drives all six woes.
40. The address *aphrones* ('fools, senseless ones') is sharp and direct. The theological argument is that God who created the exterior also created the interior — therefore both require purification. To clean only the outside is to ignore the Creator's concern with the whole person. The question expects the answer 'yes' — of course God made both.
41. This enigmatic verse has been interpreted variously. The phrase *ta enonta* ('the things within, the contents') likely refers to the contents of their cups and dishes — give away what you have as alms rather than hoarding it. When the inside (the heart's disposition toward generosity) is cleansed through charitable giving, the external purity rituals become genuinely meaningful rather than empty performance.
42. The first woe targets misplaced priorities. Tithing garden herbs (*hēdyosmon*, 'mint'; *pēganon*, 'rue') was an extreme extension of the tithing law — the Torah required tithes of grain, wine, and oil (Deuteronomy 14:22-23), but the Pharisees extended it to small garden herbs. Jesus does not condemn tithing itself (*tauta edei poiēsai*, 'these you should have done') but the neglect of weightier matters: justice (*krisin*) and the love of God (*tēn agapēn tou theou*). Luke's version uniquely includes 'the love of God' where Matthew has 'mercy and faithfulness.'
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 14:22-23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. The second woe targets the desire for public honor. The *prōtokathedrian* ('chief seat, front seat') in the synagogue was the bench facing the congregation, reserved for the most distinguished. The *aspasous* ('greetings') in the marketplace were elaborate public acknowledgments of status — being hailed with titles and deference. The verb *agapate* ('you love') ironically uses the same love-word that the previous verse said they neglect toward God.
44. The third woe compares the Pharisees to *adēla mnēmeia* ('unmarked, invisible graves'). Contact with a grave rendered a person ritually unclean for seven days (Numbers 19:16). The irony is devastating: the Pharisees who are obsessed with purity are themselves hidden sources of contamination. People who interact with them become spiritually defiled without knowing it. Matthew 23:27 uses the opposite image — whitewashed tombs that are visible but beautiful outside. Luke's version is sharper: these graves are invisible.
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 19:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
45. The *nomikos* ('legal expert') is distinct from the Pharisees — these were professional scholars of Torah law, whereas the Pharisees were a broader religious movement. The legal expert's complaint (*hybrizeis*, 'you insult, you treat shamefully') inadvertently invites Jesus to extend his critique to a second group, which he does in the next three woes.
46. The fourth woe (first against the lawyers) targets the imposition of religious obligations that the teachers themselves evade. The word *phortia* ('burdens, loads') refers to the accumulated legal rulings and interpretations that multiplied the Torah's requirements. The adjective *dysbastakta* ('hard to bear, oppressive') conveys crushing weight. The image of not touching with 'one finger' (*heni tōn daktylōn*) suggests they will not offer even minimal assistance in carrying the burdens they impose.

47. The fifth woe exposes an ironic complicity: building elaborate tombs for the prophets appears to honor them, but it actually serves as a monument to the violence of previous generations. The implied argument continues in the next verse — by building the tombs, they demonstrate solidarity with the killers, completing the cycle: the fathers killed, the sons build memorials, and both participate in the rejection of God's messengers.
48. The verb *syneudokeite* ('approve, consent to, share in the approval of') makes the charge explicit: tomb-building constitutes endorsement. The logic is sharp: the act of memorializing dead prophets while continuing to reject living ones reveals that the honor is for dead voices only. A dead prophet cannot challenge you; a living one can.
49. The phrase 'the wisdom of God said' (*hē sophia tou theou eipen*) is unique to Luke and its source is debated — it may be quoting a lost wisdom writing, or Jesus may be speaking as the Wisdom of God personified (cf. Proverbs 8), or Luke may be paraphrasing a saying that in Matthew 23:34 is spoken by Jesus directly ('I send you prophets'). The addition of 'apostles' (*apostolous*) alongside 'prophets' anticipates the early church's experience of persecution as described in Acts.
49. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Proverbs 8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
50. The passive *ekzētēthē* ('may be required, may be sought out, may be charged') uses judicial language — God will hold this generation accountable for the accumulated guilt of prophet-killing throughout history. The phrase *apo katabolēs kosmou* ('from the foundation of the world') extends the scope to all of human history. The logic is that this generation, by rejecting the final prophet and his messengers, brings the full weight of all previous rejections to a climax.
51. Abel's murder (Genesis 4) is the first murder in Scripture; Zechariah's (2 Chronicles 24:20-21) is the last in the Hebrew canon, which ends with Chronicles. Thus 'from Abel to Zechariah' spans the entire Old Testament from first book to last. Zechariah was killed 'between the altar and the sanctuary' (*metaxy tou thysiastēriou kai tou oikou*) — murdered in the temple precinct itself, the ultimate desecration. The identification is with Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Chronicles 24:20-21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
52. The sixth and final woe is perhaps the most devastating. The 'key of knowledge' (*tēn kleida tēs gnōseōs*) refers to the proper understanding of Scripture that the legal experts were supposed to teach. Instead of unlocking the Scriptures for people, they have removed the key — their interpretations block rather than facilitate understanding. Matthew 23:13 has 'you shut the kingdom of heaven' — Luke's version focuses on knowledge as the gateway. The double failure (they neither enter nor allow others to enter) makes them obstacles to the very truth they claim to teach.
53. The verb *deinōs enechlein* ('to press hard, to be bitterly hostile') describes intense antagonism. The word *apostomatizein* ('to provoke to speak, to cross-examine, to draw out statements') is rare and means to force someone to speak on specific topics — essentially trying to catch Jesus making incriminating statements. The shift from dinner conversation to hostile interrogation is abrupt and threatening.
54. The verb *enedrevontes* ('lying in ambush, setting a trap') is a hunting term — they are stalking Jesus like prey. The goal *thēreusai* ('to catch, to trap, to hunt') continues the predatory imagery. The phrase *ek tou stomatos autou* ('from his mouth') specifies that they want words they can use against him. This verse sets the stage for the escalating conflict that will dominate the rest of Luke's narrative.

12

Summary: *Luke 12 is a sweeping discourse on anxiety, possessions, and readiness for judgment. Jesus warns against the leaven of the Pharisees (hypocrisy), assures the disciples that God values them more than sparrows, tells the parable of the rich fool who stores up wealth only to die that night, teaches about freedom from anxiety by pointing to ravens and lilies, urges readiness for the master's return through parables of watchful servants and a faithful steward, and warns that his coming brings not peace but division. The chapter closes with Jesus's frustration that the crowds can read weather signs but not the signs of the present time.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The parable of the rich fool (vv. 13-21) is unique to Luke and encapsulates his distinctive concern about wealth — the man's soliloquy with his own soul is one of the most psychologically revealing passages in the Gospels. The anxiety discourse (vv. 22-34) parallels Matthew's Sermon on the Mount material but is placed in a different context, following the rich fool parable, which gives the teaching a sharper economic edge. Luke alone includes the promise 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom' (v. 32) — one of the most tender sayings attributed to Jesus. The fire/baptism/division sayings (vv. 49-53) present a startlingly combative Jesus who expects his mission to fracture families.*

Translation Friction: The transition between the rich fool parable and the anxiety discourse creates tension: is material security wrong, or only anxiety about it? Jesus appears to condemn both storing up wealth (v. 21) and worrying about basic needs (vv. 22-31), which raises questions about the practical ethic being proposed. The 'fire on earth' and 'baptism' sayings (vv. 49-50) are cryptic and have been interpreted variously. The family division passage (vv. 51-53) draws on Micah 7:6 and challenges the common assumption that Jesus's message is primarily about peace and harmony.

Connections: The rich fool parable connects to the broader Lukan theme of wealth reversal (1:53, 6:20-26, 16:19-31, 18:18-30). The anxiety discourse parallels Matthew 6:25-34 but with distinctive Lukan additions. The faithful steward parable anticipates the parables of chapter 16. The fire and division sayings connect to John the Baptist's prophecy of fire-baptism (3:16). The weather signs passage echoes the prophetic tradition of discerning God's activity in current events.

¹Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, he began to say to his disciples first, "Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. ²Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, and nothing hidden that will not be made known. ³Therefore whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in inner rooms will be proclaimed from the housetops. ⁴I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body and after that can do nothing more. ⁵But I will show you whom to fear: fear the one who, after killing, has authority to cast into Gehenna. Yes, I tell you, fear him! ⁶Are not five sparrows sold for two assaria? Yet not one of them is forgotten before God. ⁷Indeed, even the hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid — you are worth more than many sparrows. ⁸I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before people, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. ⁹But the one who denies me before people will be denied before the angels of God. ¹⁰Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. ¹¹When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you should say in your defense, or what you should speak. ¹²For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you must say." ¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." ¹⁴But he said to him, "Friend, who appointed me as a judge or arbitrator over you?" ¹⁵Then he said to them, "Watch out! Guard yourselves against every kind of greed, because a person's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." ¹⁶He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a certain rich man produced abundantly. ¹⁷He reasoned to himself, 'What should I do, since I have no place to store my crops?' ¹⁸Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many good things stored up for many years. Relax, eat, drink, and celebrate.'" ²⁰But God said to him, 'Fool! This very night your soul is demanded of you. And the things you have prepared — whose will they be?' ²¹So it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God." ²²He said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. ²³For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have no storeroom or barn, yet God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than birds! ²⁵And which of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life span? ²⁶If then you cannot do even this small thing, why do you worry about the rest? ²⁷Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these. ²⁸If God so clothes the grass that is in the field today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, you of little faith! ²⁹So do not keep striving for what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not be anxious. ³⁰For all the nations of the world pursue these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. ³²Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell your possessions and give to the needy. Make for yourselves purses that do not wear out — an inexhaustible treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ³⁵"Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶Be like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, ready to open the door for him the moment he arrives and knocks. ³⁷Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself for service, have them recline at the table, and come and serve them. ³⁸If he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them ready — blessed

are those servants! ³⁹But know this: if the homeowner had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰You also must be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." ⁴¹Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for everyone?" ⁴²The Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and wise steward whom the master will put in charge of his household servants, to give them their food allowance at the proper time? ⁴³Blessed is that servant whom his master finds doing so when he comes. ⁴⁴Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁵But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, ⁴⁶That servant's master will come on a day he does not expect, at a time he does not know. The master will cut him off and assign him a place with the unfaithful. ⁴⁷That servant who knew his master's will but did not prepare or act according to his will shall receive a severe beating. ⁴⁸But the one who did not know, yet did things deserving punishment, will receive a light beating. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be demanded. ⁴⁹"I came to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! ⁵¹Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! ⁵²For from now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. ⁵³Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." ⁵⁴He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'A rainstorm is coming,' and so it happens. ⁵⁵And when the south wind blows, you say, 'It will be scorching hot,' and it happens. ⁵⁶Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time? ⁵⁷"And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? ⁵⁸For as you are going with your adversary to the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, or he may drag you before the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. ⁵⁹I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word *myriadōn* ('myriads, tens of thousands') indicates an enormous crowd — Luke hyperbolically suggests tens of thousands. The crushing press (*katapatein allēlous*, 'trampling one another') creates a vivid physical scene. Despite the public setting, Jesus addresses the disciples 'first' (*prōton*), indicating priority of instruction. He defines the Pharisees' leaven specifically as hypocrisy (*hypokrisis*) — the disconnect between external appearance and internal reality, the theme of chapter 11's woes.
2. The perfect participle *synkekalymmenon* ('covered up, concealed') paired with the future passive *apokalyphthēsetai* ('will be uncovered, revealed') establishes an eschatological certainty: what hypocrisy hides, God's judgment will expose. The passive voice implies God as the agent of revelation.
3. The contrast between private speech (in darkness, whispered in inner rooms) and public exposure (in the light, proclaimed from rooftops) warns that hidden conversations will become public knowledge. The *tameiois* ('inner rooms, storerooms') were the most private spaces in a house. Housetops (*dōmatōn*) were flat roofs used as public gathering and proclamation spaces in the ancient Near East.
4. The address 'my friends' (*tois philois mou*) is uniquely Lukan and remarkably intimate — Jesus identifies the disciples as friends, not merely followers or students. The prohibition against fear of those who can only kill the body relativizes even death: physical destruction is the absolute limit of human power, and 'after that' (*meta tauta*) they are impotent.
5. The word *geennan* ('Gehenna') refers to the Valley of Hinnom (Hebrew *ge-hinnom*) south of Jerusalem, associated with child sacrifice to Molech (2 Kings 23:10) and later used as the city's burning garbage dump. It became a metaphor for divine judgment and destruction. The identity of 'the one' to fear is debated: most interpreters understand it as God, who alone has authority (*exousian*) beyond death. The emphatic repetition 'yes, I tell you, fear him' (*nai legō hymin, touton phobēthēte*) underscores the seriousness.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Kings 23:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Luke has five sparrows for two assaria where Matthew (10:29) has two for one assarion — Luke's version implies a bulk discount (buy four, get one free), emphasizing even greater cheapness. An assarion was worth roughly one-sixteenth of a denarius, about ten minutes of a laborer's wage. The point is not that sparrows are valuable but that even the most commercially worthless creatures are individually known to God.
7. The perfect passive *ērithmēntai* ('have been counted and remain counted') indicates God's thorough, ongoing knowledge. The average human head has about 100,000 hairs — God's attention to detail is incomprehensibly minute. The argument moves from lesser to greater: if God does not forget sparrows, and if God counts your hairs, then your life is absolutely secure in his attention.
8. The verb *homologēsē* ('confess, acknowledge, declare openly') means to make a public declaration of allegiance. The phrase 'before the angels of God' (*emprosthen tōn angelōn tou theou*) envisions a heavenly courtroom scene where Jesus serves as advocate. The reciprocity is exact: public confession leads to heavenly acknowledgment.

9. The passive *aparnēthēsetai* ('will be denied') implies that God or the Son of Man is the agent of denial. The shift from active (the human denies) to passive (the person is denied) creates distance — the judgment is not vindictive but a natural consequence of the choice. Peter's threefold denial (Luke 22:54-62) will test this saying dramatically.
10. This is Luke's version of the 'unforgivable sin' saying. The distinction between speaking against the Son of Man (forgivable) and blaspheming the Holy Spirit (unforgivable) is difficult. One interpretation: rejecting the earthly Jesus out of ignorance or confusion is forgivable (as with Paul, who persecuted the church before his conversion), but willfully attributing the Holy Spirit's work to evil (the Beelzebul charge of 11:15) represents a hardened condition that places oneself beyond the reach of repentance.
11. Three venues of persecution are named: synagogues (Jewish religious courts), rulers (archas, civil authorities), and authorities (exousias, governing powers). The verb *merimnēsēte* ('do not worry, do not be anxious') is the same word Jesus will use in the anxiety discourse later in this chapter (v. 22). The threefold 'how or what... or what' (*pōs ē ti apologēsēsthe ē ti eipēte*) covers both strategy and content of their defense.
12. The promise that the Holy Spirit will provide words *en autē tē hōra* ('in that very hour') excludes advance preparation in favor of in-the-moment divine guidance. The verb *didaxei* ('will teach') makes the Spirit the true instructor. This promise is fulfilled repeatedly in Acts (4:8, 6:10, 7:55). The word *dei* ('must, it is necessary') implies divinely scripted testimony.
13. This interruption from the crowd shifts the discourse from persecution to possessions. Rabbis were commonly asked to mediate disputes, including inheritance matters. Under Jewish law, the eldest son received a double portion (Deuteronomy 21:17), and disputes over the remainder were common. The man wants Jesus to serve as an authoritative arbitrator.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 21:17 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The address *anthrōpe* ('man, sir, friend') is blunt but not hostile. Jesus's refusal to arbitrate echoes Moses' questioner in Exodus 2:14: 'Who made you a ruler and judge over us?' Jesus declines the role of legal mediator, not because the question is unimportant, but because it addresses the symptom (unfair division) rather than the disease (greed), which he will address in the next verse.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 2:14:.. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The double imperative *horate kai phylassesthe* ('watch out and guard yourselves') conveys urgency. The word *pleonexias* ('greed, covetousness, desire for more') literally means 'the desire to have more.' The qualifier *pasēs* ('every kind of') broadens the warning beyond obvious avarice to include all forms of acquisitiveness. The principle that follows — life is not defined by possessions — directly contradicts the prevailing cultural assumption that wealth equals life, security, and value.
16. The parable is unique to Luke. The man is already rich (*plousiou*) before the bumper crop — the harvest creates surplus, not need. The verb *euphorēsen* ('produced well, bore good fruit') applies to the land, not the farmer: the productivity is a gift from the soil, not the man's achievement. This detail subtly undermines the man's later claim of ownership over what the land produced.
17. The internal monologue (*diologizeto en heautō*, 'reasoned within himself') reveals a man with no community — he consults no one, considers no one's needs, speaks only to himself. The possessive 'my crops' (*tous karpous mou*) begins a pattern of self-referential language that intensifies through the parable. His problem — too much abundance — is ironically a 'good' problem that reveals the poverty of his imagination.
18. The decisive 'this is what I will do' (*touto poiēsō*) shows a man who has resolved his dilemma entirely by himself. The solution — bigger barns — addresses only the storage problem. No thought is given to distribution, charity, or the community. The repeated possessives (*mou*, 'my') continue: my barns, my grain, my goods. The verb *kathelō* ('tear down, demolish') implies destruction of what was adequate in order to build something excessive.
19. The self-address to his own soul (*tē psychē mou*) is the climax of his isolation — his only conversation partner is himself. The four imperatives (*anapauou, phage, pie, euphraiou*: 'relax, eat, drink, celebrate') echo the philosophy of Ecclesiastes 8:15 and anticipate Paul's quotation of the Epicurean maxim in 1 Corinthians 15:32. The man assumes his future is secured by accumulated goods. The phrase 'many years' (*etē polla*) is about to be dramatically shortened.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ecclesiastes 8:15. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. God's direct speech is rare in Jesus's parables, making this intervention especially dramatic. The address *aphrōn* ('fool, senseless one') echoes Psalm 14:1: 'The fool says in his heart, there is no God.' The verb *apaitousin* ('they demand, they require back') uses the third person plural impersonally — 'they' may refer to angels of death or simply be a way of saying 'your life is being demanded.' The devastating question 'whose will they be?' (*tini estai*) exposes the futility of accumulation without God.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 14:1: — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The application distinguishes between storing up for oneself (*thēsaurizōn heautō*) and being 'rich toward God' (*eis theon ploutōn*). The phrase 'rich toward God' is unique and provocative — it suggests that true wealth is measured by one's relationship with God and generosity, not by accumulated possessions. The contrast implies that the two orientations are mutually exclusive: self-directed hoarding prevents God-directed richness.
22. The connecting phrase *dia touto* ('therefore, for this reason') links the anxiety teaching directly to the rich fool parable — because hoarding for oneself is foolish, worrying about material needs is equally misguided but from the opposite direction. The verb *merimnate* ('do not worry, do not be anxious') prohibits the kind of fretting that dominates one's thinking, not responsible planning. The two concerns (food for life, clothing for body)

cover the basic necessities.

23. The argument is from greater to lesser: if God gave you the greater gift (life, a body), he will surely provide the lesser gift (food, clothing) that sustains it. The word *psychē* here means 'life' in the biological sense, not 'soul' in the metaphysical sense.
24. Luke specifies ravens (*korakas*) where Matthew has 'birds of the air.' Ravens were unclean animals under Jewish law (Leviticus 11:15), making the choice pointed: God provides even for unclean scavengers. The mention of 'storeroom or barn' (*tameion oude apothēkē*) directly echoes the rich fool's barns — the ravens have none and yet are fed. The argument from lesser to greater (if God feeds ravens, how much more you) invites trust.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 11:15. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The word *hēlikian* can mean either 'stature' (height) or 'lifespan' (age). A cubit (*pēchyn*, roughly 18 inches) is absurd as an addition to height but makes more sense as a metaphor for a small unit of time added to one's life. Most modern interpreters prefer 'lifespan' — worrying cannot extend your life even slightly. The rhetorical question expects the answer 'no one.'
26. The word *elachiston* ('smallest, least, most trivial') frames extending one's life even slightly as the smallest imaginable accomplishment — and even that is beyond human power. The logical conclusion: if you cannot control the smallest thing, anxiety about larger matters is futile. This verse is unique to Luke.
27. The verb *katanoēsate* ('consider carefully, look closely at') invites sustained observation, not a glance. The lilies (*krina*) are likely wildflowers rather than cultivated lilies — common field flowers that require no human effort. The comparison with Solomon at the height of his royal splendor is hyperbolic and memorable: the most lavishly dressed king in Israel's history cannot match what grows wild in a field.
28. The dried grass and wildflowers were commonly used as fuel for bread ovens (*klibanon*) in Palestine. The contrast between their ephemeral existence (today alive, tomorrow fuel) and God's care for them makes the argument from lesser to greater even more powerful. The gentle rebuke *oligopistoi* ('you of little faith, you with small trust') appears four times in Matthew but only here in Luke. It implies that anxiety is a faith problem, not a planning problem.
29. The rare verb *meteōrizethe* ('do not be anxious, do not be in suspense, do not be tossed about') literally means 'to be raised up in the air' or 'to be suspended' — like a ship tossed on waves or a mind that cannot find solid ground. The image is of a person whose mind is constantly agitated, lifted and dropped by worry. This verb appears only here in the New Testament.
30. The phrase *ta ethnē tou kosmou* ('the nations of the world') refers to those who do not know God — their relentless pursuit of material security is understandable because they have no Father who provides. The disciples' situation is different: 'your Father knows' (*hymōn ho patēr oiden*) eliminates the need for anxious pursuit. Knowledge precedes provision — God knows before you ask.
31. Luke's shorter form — 'his kingdom' (*tēn basileian autou*) rather than Matthew's 'the kingdom of God and his righteousness' — focuses the command with singular clarity. The verb *prostethēsetai* ('will be added') implies that material provision comes as a byproduct of kingdom-seeking, not as a separate pursuit. The passive voice indicates God as the provider.
32. This verse, unique to Luke, is one of the most tender and reassuring sayings of Jesus. The diminutive 'little flock' (*to mikron poimnion*) acknowledges the disciples' smallness and vulnerability while the shepherd imagery implies Jesus's protective care. The verb *eudokēsen* ('has been pleased, has graciously decided') indicates that the kingdom is not earned by the flock's efforts but freely given by the Father's delight. The aorist tense suggests this decision has already been made.
33. The command to sell possessions (*pōlēstate ta hyparchonta hymōn*) is radical and specific to Luke's version. The metaphor shifts from earthly to heavenly economics: earthly purses (*ballantia*) wear out, but heavenly ones (*mē palaïoumena*, 'not growing old') endure. The word *anekleipton* ('unfailing, inexhaustible') describes a treasure that cannot be depleted. The threats of thief and moth represent loss through theft and slow decay — neither can touch heavenly investment.
34. This principle works in both directions: the heart follows the treasure, and where you invest reveals where your heart already is. The future tense *estai* ('will be') suggests that current investment decisions determine future heart orientation. This applies the rich fool's lesson positively: rather than storing up for yourself, invest in heaven and your heart will follow.
35. The image of girded loins (*hai osphyes periezōsmenai*) refers to tucking long robes into a belt for physical activity — the posture of a servant ready to work (cf. Exodus 12:11, Israel's posture at the first Passover). Combined with burning lamps, the image is of a household on alert, expecting the master's return at any moment.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 12:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The wedding feast (*gamōn*) could last days, making the master's return time genuinely uncertain. The verb *analsē* ('return, depart from') literally means 'to loose' or 'to break up' — to leave the feast. The emphasis on 'at once' (*eutheōs*) stresses instant readiness: no delay between knock and response. The parable envisions servants whose sole purpose is attentive waiting.
37. This verse contains one of the most astonishing reversals in Jesus's teaching. The master who returns does not sit down and demand service — he girds himself (*perizōsetai*, the servant's posture from v. 35) and serves his servants. This is a radical inversion of the master-servant relationship. The image anticipates Jesus washing the disciples' feet (John 13) and his self-description as 'one who serves' (Luke 22:27). The verb *diakonēsei* ('will serve, will minister') is the root of 'deacon.'

38. Luke uses the Jewish two-watch night system (second watch = roughly 10 PM to 2 AM; third watch = 2 AM to 6 AM) rather than the Roman four-watch system. The later the hour, the harder it is to stay awake, which increases the merit of readiness. The repeated 'blessed' (makarioi) reinforces that watchfulness itself is rewarded.
39. The metaphor shifts from master/servant to homeowner/thief. The word diorychthenai ('to be dug through') reflects first-century construction — mud-brick walls could be literally dug through by a burglar. The thief image for the Lord's return is deliberately jarring: Jesus comes like a thief only in the sense of unexpected timing, not in intent. The point is that unpredictability demands constant readiness.
40. The application identifies 'the master' and 'the thief' with the Son of Man — Jesus's preferred self-designation. The phrase hē hōra ou dokeite ('the hour you do not expect') makes the timing inherently unpredictable. Any attempt to calculate the moment is already a misunderstanding of the teaching: the point is perpetual readiness, not chronological calculation.
41. Peter's question is pragmatic: does this teaching about watchfulness apply only to the disciples (leaders) or to all followers? Jesus's answer (vv. 42-48) addresses both: it begins with the faithful steward (leadership responsibility) and ends with graduated accountability for all. Notably, Jesus never directly answers Peter's question — he tells another parable instead.
42. The word oikonomos ('steward, household manager') is the source of 'economy' — a steward managed the master's entire household. The sitometrion ('food ration, grain allowance') was the measured portion given to household servants at regular intervals. The steward's job is not to consume the master's resources but to distribute them faithfully. This parable addresses Peter's question by focusing on leadership responsibility.
43. The beatitude (makarios) rewards faithful action, not mere waiting. The participle poiounta ('doing') emphasizes ongoing activity — the blessed servant is found in the act of faithful service, not merely expecting the master's return.
44. The reward for faithful management of part is management of the whole. The promotion from household steward to manager of 'all possessions' (pasin tois hyparchousin autou) represents total trust. This principle of graduated authority — faithful in small things leads to responsibility for great things — runs throughout Jesus's parables (cf. 16:10, 19:17).
45. The internal reasoning ('says in his heart') mirrors the rich fool's self-dialogue. The servant's abuse of power takes two forms: violence against those under him (beating servants) and self-indulgence (eating, drinking, getting drunk). The perceived delay (chronizei, 'is taking a long time') becomes the excuse for both cruelty and excess. This is a warning to church leaders who exploit their position when accountability seems distant.
46. The verb dichotomēsei ('will cut in two, will cut to pieces') is shockingly violent — it may be literal (execution by bisection was practiced in the ancient world) or metaphorical for severe punishment. The phrase 'with the unfaithful' (meta tōn apistōn) — Luke's reading versus Matthew's 'hypocrites' — places the abusive steward among those who have no faith at all, the ultimate demotion from trusted insider to rejected outsider.
47. This verse begins a section unique to Luke that establishes the principle of graduated accountability. Knowledge increases responsibility: the servant who knew (gnous) the master's will and still disobeyed receives 'many blows' (darēsetai pollas, with plēgas implied). The double failure — neither preparing (hetoimasas) nor doing (poiasas) — covers both intention and action.
48. The principle of graduated accountability is stated twice: first negatively (more knowledge = more punishment for failure) and then positively in the famous maxim 'from everyone who has been given much, much will be required' (panti hō edothē poly, poly zētēthēsetai). The passive voices ('has been given,' 'has been entrusted') point to God as the giver. The progression from 'required' (zētēthēsetai) to 'demanded' (aitēsousin) intensifies the expectation.
49. This enigmatic saying is unique to Luke. The 'fire' (pyr) likely represents judgment, purification, or the crisis that Jesus's mission brings (cf. John the Baptist's prediction of fire-baptism, Luke 3:16). The phrase ti thelō ei ēdē anēphthē is debated — it could mean 'how I wish it were already burning!' (expressing eager anticipation) or 'what do I want, since it has already been kindled?' (acknowledging the process has begun). The former reading fits better with v. 50's longing.
50. The 'baptism' (baptisma) is a metaphor for his coming suffering and death — immersion in affliction (cf. Mark 10:38). The verb synechomai ('I am constrained, pressed, distressed') conveys intense inner pressure. The word telesthē ('be completed, be accomplished') echoes the cry from the cross: tetelestai ('it is finished,' John 19:30). Jesus experiences his approaching death not with resignation but with urgent tension — a desire for the crisis to come and be resolved.
51. Luke has 'division' (diameterismon) where Matthew 10:34 has 'a sword.' The word diameterismon ('division, separation, dissension') is more precise — the result of Jesus's coming is the splitting of communities and families along the fault line of faith. This saying appears to contradict the angels' announcement of 'peace on earth' (2:14), but the point is that the peace Jesus ultimately brings first creates a crisis of decision that divides.
52. The specific number five — an oddly precise detail — represents a typical household (parents, adult children, perhaps a grandparent or in-law). The uneven split (three versus two) means no neat halving — the division cuts irregularly through families, creating minority and majority factions within the same home.
53. The family relationships listed echo Micah 7:6, a prophetic text describing the breakdown of social order in the last days. Jesus applies this eschatological language to the present: the kingdom's arrival through his ministry is already creating the divisions that the prophets associated with the end times. The threefold pattern (father/son, mother/daughter, mother-in-law/daughter-in-law) covers three generations and both genders.
53. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Micah 7:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

54. The weather signs are geographically specific to Palestine: clouds from the west (from the Mediterranean Sea) bring rain. Jesus uses familiar meteorological knowledge to expose a deeper failure of perception. The adverb *eutheōs* ('immediately') emphasizes how quickly people can read weather signs — the contrast with their inability to read 'the present time' (v. 56) is the point.
55. The south wind (*noton*) blew from the Negev desert and brought extreme heat (*kausōn*, 'burning heat, scorching wind'). These two weather patterns (western cloud = rain, southern wind = heat) were universally known in Palestine. The repeated *kai ginetai* ('and it happens') confirms their reliability as signs.
56. The address 'hypocrites' (*hypokritai*) returns to the chapter's opening theme (v. 1). The word *kairon* ('time, opportune moment, season') is distinct from *chronos* (mere chronological time) — *kairos* refers to a decisive moment pregnant with significance. Jesus's ministry is the *kairos*: the kingdom is arriving, judgment is approaching, and the crowds are as oblivious as a farmer who cannot read clouds. The verb *dokimazein* ('to test, to interpret, to discern') means to evaluate evidence and draw conclusions.
57. The phrase *aph' heautōn* ('from yourselves, on your own') implies that moral discernment should not require external prophetic signs — they have the capacity to judge what is right (to *dikaion*) if they would use it. This is a call to moral common sense, not just theological insight.
58. The parable functions as both practical legal advice and eschatological warning. The *antidikos* ('adversary, opponent in a lawsuit') represents those with claims against you. The phrase *dos ergasian* ('make an effort, do your best') urges proactive reconciliation before the matter reaches court. On the theological level: settle accounts before the final judgment, while there is still time. The chain of consequences (adversary magistrate judge officer prison) shows escalating severity that could have been avoided by early action.
59. The *lepton* ('penny, mite') was the smallest coin in circulation — worth about one-128th of a denarius. The double negative *ou mē* ('absolutely not, never') makes the sentence emphatic: escape is impossible until every fraction of the debt is paid. The warning reinforces the urgency of v. 58: settle now, because the consequences of inaction are total and inescapable.

13

Summary: *Luke 13 opens with Jesus challenging the assumption that suffering indicates special sinfulness, using two contemporary tragedies — Pilate's massacre of Galilean worshipers and the collapse of the tower of Siloam — to call the entire nation to repentance. The parable of the barren fig tree extends the warning: Israel has been given one more season of grace. Jesus then heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath, provoking a confrontation with a synagogue ruler. The chapter continues with the parables of the mustard seed and leaven, followed by the sobering teaching about the narrow door. The chapter concludes with Jesus's defiance of Herod's threats and his lament over Jerusalem.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Luke 13 is uniquely Lukan in its opening section (vv. 1-9), which addresses theodicy — the question of why people suffer — with an answer that refuses the simplistic equation of suffering with personal sin. The healing of the bent-over woman (vv. 10-17) is unique to Luke and presents a woman who has been bound by Satan for eighteen years, framing illness as spiritual bondage and healing as liberation — a thoroughly Lukan emphasis. The lament over Jerusalem (vv. 34-35) is one of the most emotionally charged passages in the Gospels, revealing Jesus's grief over the city that kills its prophets.*

Translation Friction: *The historical incidents in vv. 1-5 (Pilate's massacre, the Siloam tower collapse) are not recorded outside Luke's Gospel but fit the known character of Pilate's brutal governance. The fig tree parable (vv. 6-9) raises questions about Israel's final chance — is the 'one more year' an offer of hope or a final warning? The narrow door saying (vv. 24-30) contains some of the most exclusive language in the Gospels, including 'I do not know where you come from' — a statement of relationship denial from the master, not merely ignorance.*

Connections: *The fig tree parable connects to Isaiah 5:1-7 (the Song of the Vineyard) and Micah 7:1. The Sabbath healing connects to Luke's pattern of Sabbath controversies (6:1-11, 14:1-6). The mustard seed and leaven parables parallel Matthew 13 and Mark 4. The narrow door teaching echoes Matthew 7:13-14 but with distinctive elements. The Jerusalem lament appears in Matthew 23:37-39 in a different narrative context. The Herod warning (vv. 31-33) is unique to Luke and continues the Herod thread from 9:7-9.*

¹At that very time some people came and reported to him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. ²He answered them, "Do you think these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered these things? ³No, I tell you! But unless you repent, you will all perish in the same way. ⁴Or those eighteen on whom

the tower in Siloam fell and killed them — do you think they were worse offenders than all the other people living in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you! But unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did." ⁶Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷He said to the gardener, 'Look, for three years now I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree and have found none. Cut it down! Why should it waste the soil?' ⁸But the gardener answered, 'Sir, leave it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put on fertilizer. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, fine. But if not, you can cut it down.'" ¹⁰He was teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath day. ¹¹A woman was there who had been disabled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your disability." ¹³Then he laid his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and began glorifying God. ¹⁴But the synagogue ruler, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, responded by saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work should be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." ¹⁵The Lord answered him, "Hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it? ¹⁶Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, be released from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" ¹⁷When he said these things, all his opponents were put to shame, and the entire crowd rejoiced at all the glorious things being done by him. ¹⁸He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like, and what shall I compare it to? ¹⁹It is like a mustard seed that a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the sky made nests in its branches." ²⁰Again he said, "What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? ²¹It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until the whole batch was leavened." ²²He went through town after town and village after village, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. ²³Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few being saved?" He said to them, ²⁴"Strive to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able. ²⁵Once the master of the house gets up and shuts the door, you will stand outside knocking and saying, 'Lord, open to us!' But he will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.' ²⁶Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' ²⁷But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of unrighteousness!' ²⁸There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. ²⁹People will come from east and west, from north and south, and recline at the table in the kingdom of God. ³⁰And indeed, some who are last will be first, and some who are first will be last." ³¹At that same hour, some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get out and leave here, because Herod wants to kill you." ³²He said to them, "Go tell that fox, 'Look, I am casting out demons and performing healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.' ³³But I must keep going today, tomorrow, and the next day, because it is impossible for a prophet to perish outside Jerusalem. ³⁴"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you — how often I have wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing! ³⁵Look, your house is abandoned. I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. This incident is unattested outside Luke but is consistent with Pilate's character as described by Josephus and Philo — he was notorious for violent suppression of perceived threats. The mixing of victims' blood 'with their sacrifices' (*meta tōn thysiōn autōn*) means Pilate's soldiers killed them in the act of offering temple sacrifices, a supreme desecration. The reporters likely expected Jesus to comment on the victims' sinfulness as an explanation for their fate.
2. Jesus directly challenges the assumption that suffering is proportional to sin (the retributive theology that Job's friends advocated). The comparative *hamartōloi para pantas* ('sinners beyond all') implies the question 'were they especially sinful?' Jesus's answer in the next verse is an emphatic no — but with a surprising turn.
3. Jesus refuses the theodicy question ('why did they suffer?') and redirects to repentance. The word *homoiōs* ('in the same way, likewise') is striking — it may mean 'similarly' (by violent, sudden death) rather than 'for the same reason.' Given that Jerusalem would be destroyed by Rome in AD 70, this warning may carry historical as well as spiritual weight. The verb *metanoēte* ('repent, change your mind and direction') is the fundamental demand of Jesus's ministry.
4. Jesus provides a second example, this time of accidental death rather than political violence, to make the same point from a different angle. The word *opheiletai* ('debtors, offenders, those who owe') frames sin as a debt — these eighteen did not owe God more than other Jerusalemites. The tower of

Siloam was likely part of the construction project associated with the Pool of Siloam in southeast Jerusalem.

5. The repetition of the repentance call with the variant *hōsautōs* ('just as, in the same way') instead of *homoiōs* (v. 3) reinforces the universal application. The double example (political violence, accidental disaster) covers every category of unexpected death and strips away any excuse for complacency.
6. The parable is unique to Luke and extends the repentance theme. A fig tree in a vineyard was common in Palestine — the tree would benefit from the vineyard's cultivated soil. The owner's expectation of fruit is entirely reasonable. The fig tree in Old Testament prophecy often symbolizes Israel (Jeremiah 8:13, Hosea 9:10, Micah 7:1), and the vineyard itself is Israel's classic symbol (Isaiah 5:1-7).
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 8:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Hosea 9:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Micah 7:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 5:1-7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Three years represents a full probationary period — fig trees typically bear fruit within three years of planting. The verb *katargei* ('renders useless, wastes, makes unproductive') suggests the tree is not merely barren but actively depletes the soil of nutrients that could benefit other plants. The owner's frustration is justified: the tree is not just unproductive but counterproductive.
8. The gardener's intercession introduces a note of grace into a judgment parable. He does not argue the tree is healthy or that the owner is wrong — he asks for one more year (*kai touto to etos*, 'this year also') and promises intensive care: digging around the roots (*skapsō*, to aerate the soil) and adding *kopria* ('manure, fertilizer'). If the gardener represents Jesus or the prophetic mission, the plea is for one final period of intensive ministry before judgment falls.
9. The parable leaves the outcome open — the tree may yet bear fruit. The conditional structure (*ean men... ei de mē ge*) creates genuine suspense: the reprieve is real but not permanent. The verb *ekkopseis* ('you will cut it down') remains the default outcome if repentance (fruit) does not come. The parable thus offers both hope and warning: there is still time, but not unlimited time.
10. This is the last recorded instance of Jesus teaching in a synagogue in Luke's Gospel. The Sabbath setting establishes the context for the controversy that follows — healing on the Sabbath was a persistent flashpoint between Jesus and religious authorities (cf. 6:6-11, 14:1-6).
11. The phrase *pneuma echousa astheneias* ('having a spirit of weakness') attributes her condition to a spiritual cause, which Jesus later identifies as Satanic bondage (v. 16). The condition described — chronic severe kyphosis (forward curvature of the spine) — left her unable to look up. The eighteen years of suffering parallel the eighteen killed by the Siloam tower (v. 4), possibly an intentional literary connection.
12. Jesus initiates the encounter — the woman does not approach or ask for healing. The perfect passive *apolelytai* ('you have been freed, you are released') uses liberation language: the same verb is used for releasing prisoners. The tense indicates a completed action with continuing results — her freedom is already accomplished in Jesus's declaration, even before the physical touch in v. 13.
13. The laying on of hands (*epethēken tas cheiras*) is Jesus's characteristic healing gesture, conveying physical contact and personal compassion. The word *parachrēma* ('immediately, at once') is a favorite Lukan term for the instantaneous nature of Jesus's healings. The verb *anōrthōthē* ('was straightened, was restored to upright') is the physical reversal of her eighteen-year condition. Her response — glorifying God (*edoxazen ton theon*) — is the model response to divine healing in Luke's Gospel.
14. The synagogue ruler's anger (*aganaktōn*, 'being indignant, being outraged') is directed at the crowd rather than at Jesus directly — a passive-aggressive approach that avoids direct confrontation with a popular teacher. His reasoning is based on Exodus 20:9 (six days for work) and classifies healing as 'work' that violates Sabbath rest. The irony is devastating: he sees no urgency in liberating a woman who has been bound for eighteen years.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 20:9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. Jesus's argument is from lesser to greater (*qal wahomer*): if the Sabbath permits untying an animal from a manger for basic care, it certainly permits untying a human from eighteen years of bondage. The verb *lyei* ('untie, loose, release') deliberately echoes the liberation language of v. 12 (*apolelytai*) and v. 16 (*lythēnai*). The address 'hypocrites' (plural) indicts not just the synagogue ruler but all who share his reasoning.
16. The title 'daughter of Abraham' (*thygatera Abraam*) is remarkable — the parallel 'son of Abraham' is used for Zacchaeus (19:9), but this is the only place in the Gospels where a woman is called 'daughter of Abraham.' It affirms her full membership in the covenant community. The framing of her illness as Satanic bondage (*edēsen ho satanas*, 'Satan bound') connects healing to spiritual liberation — the Sabbath, a day of rest and freedom, is the perfect day to break Satan's chains. The word *desmou* ('bond, chain, imprisonment') makes the metaphor explicit.
17. The contrast between the opponents' shame (*katēschynonto*, 'were put to shame, were humiliated') and the crowd's joy (*echairen*) creates a split response. The adjective *endoxois* ('glorious, splendid, honorable') is applied to all of Jesus's works — not just this healing but the full pattern of his ministry. Luke presents Jesus's ministry as a source of public delight that his opponents cannot suppress.

18. The double question (*tini homoia... tini homoiōsō*) is a standard rabbinic formula for introducing a parable: 'to what shall I liken X?' The word *oun* ('therefore') connects these parables to the preceding healing — the kingdom of God is at work in the liberation of the bent-over woman, and these parables describe its nature.
19. The mustard seed (*kokkō sinapeōs*) was proverbially the smallest seed known to Palestinian agriculture. Luke says it was planted in a garden (*kēpon*) rather than a field (Mark's version), reflecting a Gentile horticultural context. The tree image with birds nesting in its branches alludes to Daniel 4:12 and Ezekiel 17:23, where a great tree sheltering birds represents a kingdom that provides refuge for many nations. The point is disproportionate growth: the kingdom begins insignificantly but becomes vast.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 4:12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ezekiel 17:23. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The repeated question introduces a second parable that complements the first. Where the mustard seed illustrates visible, external growth, the leaven illustrates invisible, internal transformation.
21. Three sata of flour is approximately forty pounds — enough bread for a large feast or community gathering (cf. Genesis 18:6, where Sarah uses this amount for divine visitors). The verb *enekrypsen* ('hid, concealed') emphasizes the leaven's invisibility — once mixed in, it disappears but transforms everything. Leaven usually carries negative associations in Jewish thought (corruption, sin), making Jesus's positive use of it provocative. The kingdom works like leaven: hidden, pervasive, and transformative from within.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 18:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. This travel notice reminds the reader of the journey framework established in 9:51. Luke periodically reorients the reader to the Jerusalem destination (cf. 9:51, 13:22, 17:11, 18:31, 19:11, 19:28). The phrase *poreian poioumenos eis Ierousalēm* ('making his journey toward Jerusalem') keeps the shadow of the cross over all the intervening teaching.
23. The question about the number of the saved (*ei oligoi hoi sōzomenoi*) was debated among Jewish teachers. Jesus characteristically refuses to answer the speculative question directly and instead issues a practical command — the issue is not how many will be saved but whether you will respond now.
24. The verb *agōnizesthe* ('strive, struggle, agonize, fight') is an athletic term — it describes the intense exertion of a competitor in a contest (the English 'agonize' comes from it). The 'narrow door' (*stenēs thyras*) suggests a door that requires effort and intentionality to pass through. The warning that many will 'seek' (*zētēsousin*) but 'not be able' (*ouk ischysousin*) implies that casual interest is insufficient — the door requires determined effort.
25. The image shifts from a narrow door to a closed door. The verb *apokleisei* ('shuts, locks') indicates finality — once locked, the door does not reopen. The phrase *ouk oida hymas pothen este* ('I do not know where you come from') is not a statement of ignorance but of non-recognition — the master refuses to acknowledge a relationship. This echoes Matthew 7:23's 'I never knew you.'
26. The claims offered — eating together and hearing his teaching — represent proximity without commitment. They have been near Jesus but have not entered through the narrow door of genuine discipleship. Luke's version (eating in his presence, hearing his street teaching) is more concrete than Matthew's (prophesying and casting out demons in his name), focusing on passive proximity rather than active ministry.
27. The repeated denial and the command to depart (*apostēte ap' emou*) echoes Psalm 6:8 (LXX). The phrase *ergatai adikias* ('workers of unrighteousness, practitioners of injustice') identifies the excluded not as strangers but as people whose lives were characterized by injustice — their proximity to Jesus did not translate into righteous living.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 6:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The 'weeping and gnashing of teeth' (*klauthnos kai brygmōs tōn odontōn*) is a fixed formula for the anguish of exclusion that appears six times in Matthew but only here in Luke. The particular torment is not physical pain but the sight of the patriarchs and prophets inside the kingdom while the self-assured are 'thrown out' (*ekballomenous*) — the verb for casting out demons is used for casting out the presumptuous.
29. The four compass points (*anatolōn, dysmōn, borra, notou*) represent universal inclusion — people from all directions, meaning all nations. The verb *anaklithēsontai* ('will recline at table') indicates the messianic banquet, a well-established Jewish image for the kingdom's fulfillment (cf. Isaiah 25:6-8). The irony is that those who considered themselves insiders (v. 26) are excluded while outsiders from every direction take their places.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 25:6-8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. This great reversal saying summarizes the preceding teaching: those who assume priority (Israel's religious establishment) may find themselves displaced, while those considered last (Gentiles, sinners, the marginalized) may find themselves first. Luke's version is more balanced than some parallels — 'some' (*eisin*) in each category, not universal condemnation of 'the first' or universal elevation of 'the last.'
31. This episode is unique to Luke. Remarkably, it is Pharisees who warn Jesus — demonstrating that not all Pharisees were hostile (cf. Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea). Whether their warning was genuinely protective or an attempt to divert Jesus from his mission is debated. The threat from Herod Antipas continues the thread from 9:7-9.

32. Calling Herod 'that fox' (tē alōpeki tautē) is a pointed insult — in Jewish tradition, the fox was associated with cunning, destructiveness, and insignificance (as opposed to the lion's nobility and power). The phrase 'today and tomorrow and the third day' (sēmeron kai aurion kai tē tritē) is not a literal timetable but an idiom for 'a short, complete period.' The verb teleioumai ('I will be completed, I will reach my goal, I will be perfected') carries the sense of reaching the destined completion — the cross.
33. The word dei ('it is necessary, I must') again introduces divine necessity (cf. 9:22). The bitter irony of 'it is impossible for a prophet to perish outside Jerusalem' (ouk endechetai prophētēn apolesthai exō Ierousalēm) is devastating — Jerusalem, the holy city, is identified as the prophet-killing city. Herod cannot kill Jesus because that role belongs to Jerusalem. Jesus is not fleeing from death but walking toward it in the appointed place.
34. The double address 'Jerusalem, Jerusalem' echoes prophetic lament (cf. 'Martha, Martha' in 10:41; 'Simon, Simon' in 22:31). The hen image (ornis tēn heautēs nossian hypo tas pterygas) is strikingly maternal — Jesus expresses divine love through a mother-bird metaphor, echoing Deuteronomy 32:11 and Psalm 91:4, where God shelters Israel under protective wings. The tension between divine desire (ēthelēsa, 'I wanted') and human resistance (ouk ēthelēsate, 'you were not willing') preserves both God's initiative and human responsibility.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 32:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 91:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. The phrase 'your house' (ho oikos hymōn) likely refers to the temple, which is now 'abandoned' (aphietai, 'left, forsaken') — God's protective presence is departing. The SBLGNT does not include 'desolate' (erēmos), which appears in some manuscripts. The quotation from Psalm 118:26 ('Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord') will be fulfilled at the triumphal entry (Luke 19:38), though whether that fulfillment is genuine or ironic is debated. The statement 'you will not see me' frames Jesus's departure as both judgment and future hope.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 118:26 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

14

Summary: *Luke 14 takes place entirely at a Sabbath meal in the house of a prominent Pharisee, where Jesus heals a man with dropsy, then delivers a series of teachings on humility, hospitality, and the cost of following him. He tells the parable of the great banquet — where the invited guests refuse to come and the host fills the hall with the poor, the crippled, and outsiders from the highways. The chapter closes with three stark sayings about counting the cost of discipleship: the tower builder, the warring king, and the demand to renounce everything.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The entire chapter is structured as a symposium — a Greco-Roman literary form in which teaching occurs at a banquet. Jesus subverts every expectation of the dinner party: he heals on the Sabbath (violating the host's assumptions), critiques the guests' jockeying for honor, instructs the host to invite the uninvitable, and tells a parable in which the original guests are replaced by social outcasts. The progression from table manners to radical discipleship is seamless — Luke presents following Jesus as a total social reorientation. The three 'cannot be my disciple' statements (vv. 26, 27, 33) are among the most demanding sayings in the Gospels.*

Translation Friction: *The healing of the man with dropsy (hydrops, fluid retention) on the Sabbath follows a pattern of Sabbath controversies in Luke (6:1-11; 13:10-17). Jesus's argument from the lesser to the greater (if you rescue a son or an ox, surely you can heal a person) assumes a shared ethical framework. The saying about hating father and mother (v. 26) uses miseō in its Semitic comparative sense — 'love less by comparison' — not as a command to feel hatred. The parable of the great banquet has a parallel in Matthew 22:1-14 but differs significantly in details.*

Connections: *The Sabbath healing connects to Luke 6:6-11 and 13:10-17. The banquet parable echoes Isaiah 25:6-8 (the messianic feast) and anticipates the eschatological meal themes of Luke 22. The cost-of-discipleship sayings connect to Luke 9:23-26 (taking up the cross) and 18:18-30 (the rich ruler). The 'salt' saying at the end parallels Mark 9:50 and Matthew 5:13.*

1One Sabbath, when he went to eat at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him closely. 2And there in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy. 3Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" 4But they remained silent. So he took hold of the man, healed him, and sent him away. 5And he said to them, "Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well, will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?" 6And they could not reply to this. 7He told a parable to those who had been invited, when he noticed how they were choosing

the places of honor, saying to them, ⁸"When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not recline at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by him. ⁹Then the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then in disgrace you will begin to take the lowest place. ¹⁰But when you are invited, go and recline at the lowest place, so that when the one who invited you comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will have honor in the presence of all who are reclining at the table with you. ¹¹For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted." ¹²He also said to the one who had invited him, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, so that they may not invite you in return and you be repaid. ¹³But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴And you will be blessed, because they have nothing with which to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." ¹⁵When one of those reclining at the table with him heard these things, he said to him, "Blessed is the one who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" ¹⁶But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. ¹⁷At the time of the banquet, he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' ¹⁸But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' ¹⁹Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to examine them. Please have me excused.' ²⁰And therefore I cannot come, another said, I have married a wife. ²¹So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' ²²And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' ²³Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the roads and hedgerows and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled. ²⁴For I tell you, none of those men who were invited will taste my banquet.'" ²⁵Now large crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and said to them, ²⁶"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸For which of you, wanting to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to mock him, ³⁰And was not able to finish, and declared, This man began to build. ³¹Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not first sit down and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³²If not, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. ³³So therefore, any of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. ³⁴"Salt is good, but if even salt has lost its taste, with what will it be seasoned? ³⁵It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. The one who has ears to hear, let him hear."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *paraterēmenoi auton* ('watching him closely') carries the sense of hostile surveillance. The Sabbath meal was a formal occasion, and Jesus's presence at a Pharisee's table shows that he maintained social engagement with his critics even while challenging them. The 'ruler of the Pharisees' (*archontōn tōn Pharisaion*) was likely a synagogue leader who belonged to the Pharisaic party.
2. *Hydrops* (*δρωπικός*, 'dropsical') refers to edema — abnormal fluid retention causing visible swelling. This is the only occurrence of this condition in the New Testament. Whether the man was a guest or was placed there as a test is left ambiguous by Luke.
3. Jesus takes the initiative, addressing the tension directly. The *nomikoi* ('lawyers, experts in the Torah') and *Pharisaioi* ('Pharisees') represent the religious establishment's interpretive authority. The question forces them to articulate their position openly rather than hiding behind passive observation.
4. Their silence (*hēsychasan*) is telling — they cannot say healing is unlawful without appearing callous, nor can they affirm it without conceding Jesus's point. Jesus acts physically (*epilabomenos*, 'taking hold of') and then releases the man, removing him from the charged atmosphere.
5. The SBLGNT reads *huios* ('son') rather than *onos* ('donkey') — a textual variant with significant implications. If 'son,' the argument moves from human compassion; if 'donkey,' from animal husbandry. Either way, the *qal wahomer* ('lesser to greater') reasoning is clear: if emergency rescue is permissible, how much more healing? The Sabbath debates assume that saving life overrides Sabbath rest.

6. The verb *antapokrithēnai* ('to answer back, respond in opposition') implies they had no counter-argument. Jesus's logic has left them unable to defend their position without contradicting their own practice.
7. The *prōtoklisias* ('first couches, places of honor') were the reclining positions nearest the host at a formal meal. Jockeying for these positions was a visible display of social ambition. Jesus observes the behavior and uses it as a teaching occasion — the parable arises from direct observation of human vanity.
8. The wedding feast (*gamous*) setting raises the social stakes — weddings were the most public and hierarchical of ancient meals. The verb *katakliths* ('recline') reflects the ancient practice of reclining on couches rather than sitting at tables. The advice echoes Proverbs 25:6-7.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Proverbs 25:6-7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The public humiliation (*meta aischnēs*, 'with shame') of being demoted would be devastating in an honor-shame culture. The scenario is socially realistic — hosts managed seating hierarchies carefully, and miscalculating one's status had real consequences.
10. The strategy of deliberate self-lowering leads to public elevation — a pattern that mirrors the theological principle stated in the next verse. The address 'Friend' (*Phile*) adds warmth to the public honor. The word *doxa* ('glory, honor') is the same used for God's glory — here applied to social standing, but pointing toward a deeper reality.
11. This axiom appears multiple times in Luke (1:52; 18:14) and throughout the Gospels. The passive voice ('will be humbled... will be exalted') is the divine passive — God is the implied agent. What appears as social advice becomes a statement about God's eschatological reversal of human hierarchies.
12. Jesus now turns from the guests to the host. The four categories — friends, brothers, relatives, rich neighbors — represent the entire network of reciprocal obligation in ancient Mediterranean society. The verb *antikalessōsin* ('invite in return') and the noun *antapodoma* ('repayment') expose the economy of social exchange: hospitality given to peers is an investment, not generosity.
13. The four categories — poor, crippled, lame, blind — are the same groups who will fill the banquet hall in the parable that follows (v. 21). These are people who cannot reciprocate, making the invitation pure grace. In the Qumran community (Dead Sea Scrolls), these same groups were explicitly excluded from the messianic banquet; Jesus inverts that exclusion.
14. The promise of repayment at 'the resurrection of the righteous' (*tē anastasei tōn dikaiōn*) shifts the reward from social reciprocity to eschatological recompense. The Pharisees believed in resurrection (unlike the Sadducees), so this appeal meets them on their own theological ground. True generosity is not unrewarded — it is rewarded by God, not by social peers.
15. This exclamation, perhaps pious but self-satisfied, triggers the parable of the great banquet. The speaker assumes he will be among those eating at the messianic feast. Jesus's parable will challenge exactly that assumption — the originally invited guests may find themselves excluded.
16. The 'great banquet' (*deipnon mega*) evokes the messianic feast of Isaiah 25:6. In ancient practice, a formal banquet involved two invitations: the initial announcement and a second summons when the meal was ready. The 'many' (*pollous*) who are invited represent Israel, the covenant people.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 25:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The second summons ('Come, for everything is now ready') represents the present moment of Jesus's ministry — the kingdom feast is being prepared and the invitation is going out. The single servant (*doulon*, 'slave') contrasts with Matthew's version, which has multiple servants.
18. The phrase *apo mias* ('with one accord, unanimously') emphasizes the collective nature of the refusal. The excuse is transparently absurd — no one buys a field without first inspecting it. The polite formula 'have me excused' (*eche me parētimenon*) masks the insult of rejecting a prepared feast.
19. Five yoke of oxen (ten animals) represents significant wealth — this is a man of means. Again, the excuse is implausible: one tests oxen before purchasing. The pattern of three excuses follows the rule of three in ancient storytelling.
20. This third excuse echoes Deuteronomy 24:5, where a newly married man is exempt from military service for one year. But a banquet is not military service, and this excuse — the most blunt of the three, without even asking to be excused — reveals that the refusals escalate in rudeness. Property, possessions, and family relationships all become obstacles to accepting the invitation.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 24:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The master's anger (*orgistheis*) is justified — to refuse a prepared banquet was a grave social insult. The four groups summoned — poor, crippled, blind, lame — are the same groups from verse 13, now given narrative embodiment. These are the people who cannot repay the invitation, making this the feast of pure grace that Jesus commanded.
22. The report that 'still there is room' (*eti topos estin*) is theologically charged — the feast has capacity for more. God's banquet is not a zero-sum table. The inclusion of the marginalized does not fill the hall to capacity; grace expands to accommodate all who will come.
23. The movement extends beyond the city to 'roads and hedgerows' (*hodos kai phragmous*) — the places where travelers and the homeless would be found. The verb *anankason* ('compel, urge strongly') does not imply violence but the insistence needed to overcome the resistance of those who would never imagine themselves invited to such a feast. This second sending likely represents the Gentile mission.

24. The shift from 'his' banquet to 'my' banquet (mou tou deipnou) is striking — the master of the parable speaks in a way that bleeds into Jesus's own voice. The exclusion is self-imposed: the original guests chose not to come. The door remains open to the unexpected guests who did accept.
25. The scene shifts from the Pharisee's house to the open road. Jesus 'turned' (strapheis) — a deliberate, confrontational gesture directed at those who were following casually. What follows are the most stringent discipleship demands in the Gospels.
26. The verb misēi ('hate') must be understood in its Semitic sense of 'love less by comparison' (cf. Genesis 29:31, where Leah is 'hated' meaning 'less loved'; Malachi 1:2-3). Matthew's parallel (10:37) clarifies: 'loves father or mother more than me.' The demand is not emotional hostility but absolute priority — when loyalties conflict, Jesus claims first allegiance over every human bond, including self-preservation (tēn psychēn heautou, 'his own life/soul').
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 29:31. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Malachi 1:2-3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The stauros ('cross') was not a religious symbol in Jesus's time but an instrument of Roman execution — the most shameful and painful death available. To 'carry one's cross' meant to walk to one's own execution. The image would have been shocking and literal for Jesus's audience. This is the second 'cannot be my disciple' statement.
28. The tower (pyrgon) could be a farm watchtower or a defensive structure. The verb psēphizei ('calculate, count with pebbles') gives us the concept of 'counting the cost.' Jesus is not discouraging discipleship but demanding informed commitment — the parable warns against starting what one cannot finish.
29. The abandoned foundation becomes a permanent monument to failed ambition. The verb empaizein ('to mock, ridicule') carries the sting of public shame — the same word used for the mocking of Jesus at his trial (Luke 22:63; 23:11).
30. The mockers' words are devastating in their simplicity. The verb ērxato ('began') paired with ouk ischysen ('was not able') creates a stark contrast between aspiration and failure.
31. The second parable escalates from personal construction to national warfare. The odds are two-to-one against — the question is whether the king can realistically prevail. Like the tower builder, the king must assess his resources before committing. The parallel to discipleship is clear: following Jesus is a total commitment with opposition guaranteed.
32. The word presbeian ('delegation, embassy') is the root of 'presbyter' and 'ambassador.' The wise king who cannot win negotiates — but Jesus does not offer a negotiation option for discipleship. The parable's logic demands total commitment because there is no middle ground with God.
33. The third 'cannot be my disciple' statement specifies the cost: apotassetai pasin tois heautou hyparchousin ('renounce all his own possessions'). The verb apotassomai means 'to say farewell to, take leave of, renounce.' This is not merely spiritual detachment but literal willingness to release everything. Luke's Gospel consistently highlights the danger of wealth (6:20-26; 12:13-21; 16:19-31; 18:18-25).
34. The salt saying (also in Matthew 5:13 and Mark 9:50) serves as a warning metaphor following the discipleship demands. Salt that has lost its saltiness (mōranthē, literally 'become foolish' — the same root as 'moron') is useless. A disciple who will not pay the cost is like flavorless salt — purposeless. Chemically, pure sodium chloride cannot lose its salinity, but the impure salt from the Dead Sea region could leach and lose effectiveness.
35. Useless salt cannot even serve as fertilizer (eis gēn, 'for the land') or as a catalyst in a compost heap (eis koprian, 'for the manure pile'). It has absolutely no remaining function. The chapter closes with the same formula that concluded the Sower parable in chapter 8: 'The one who has ears to hear, let him hear' — an urgent call to active listening and obedience.

15

Summary: Luke 15 is the Lost Chapter — three parables of loss, search, and joyful recovery, told in response to Pharisees and scribes who grumble that Jesus 'welcomes sinners and eats with them.' A shepherd leaves ninety-nine sheep to find one lost lamb. A woman tears her house apart to find one lost coin. A father watches the horizon for a son who squandered his inheritance in a far country. Each parable culminates in extravagant celebration, and together they form Jesus's most sustained defense of his scandalous welcome of outcasts. The Parable of the Prodigal Son (15:11-32) is widely regarded as the greatest short story ever told — a narrative that moves from ruin to restoration, from death to life, and closes with an unanswered question to the older brother standing outside the party.

What Makes This Remarkable: *The three parables form a deliberate progression: a shepherd (male, outdoors, one of a hundred), a woman (female, indoors, one of ten), and a father (domestic, one of two). The ratio of lost to found intensifies — one percent, ten percent, fifty percent — making the stakes increasingly personal. The Prodigal Son parable is unique to Luke and contains some of the most psychologically complex characterization in ancient literature. The father's running (v. 20) would have been considered undignified for an elder in Middle Eastern culture — a deliberate humiliation undertaken for love. The older brother's refusal to enter the feast mirrors the Pharisees' refusal to celebrate Jesus's ministry to sinners. The parable has no resolution: we never learn whether the older brother enters.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'righteous persons who need no repentance' (v. 7) may be ironic — Jesus may be describing the Pharisees as they see themselves rather than as they truly are. The younger son's descent to feeding pigs (v. 15) represents the ultimate defilement for a Jewish audience, as pigs were unclean animals. The 'far country' (chōran makran) symbolizes moral and spiritual distance from the father. The father's statement 'this son of mine was dead and is alive again' (v. 24) uses resurrection language for a spiritual restoration — the same death-to-life pattern that defines Christian conversion.*

Connections: *The parables respond to the Pharisees' complaint in verse 2, which echoes Luke 5:30 and 19:7. The joy-in-heaven theme connects to Luke 10:20. The Prodigal Son anticipates the Zacchaeus story (19:1-10) and Jesus's declaration that 'the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost' (19:10). The father's compassion (splanchnistheis, v. 20) uses the same word applied to Jesus in Luke 7:13. The older brother's anger mirrors Jonah's anger at God's mercy toward Nineveh (Jonah 4).*

¹Now all the tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to him to hear him. ²And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." ³So he told them this parable: ⁴"What man among you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵Rejoicing, when he has found it, he layeth it on his shoulders. ⁶Rejoice with me, when he comes home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, and declared to them. For I have found my sheep which was lost. ⁷I tell you, in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. ⁸"Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost!' ¹⁰In the same way, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents." ¹¹And he said, "A man had two sons. ¹²The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that is coming to me.' So he divided his livelihood between them. ¹³Not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴When he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶And he was longing to be fed with the carob pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I am perishing here with hunger! ¹⁸I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" ²⁰And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. ²¹Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²²But the father said to his servants, 'Quickly, bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. ²³And bring the fattened calf and slaughter it, and let us eat and celebrate. ²⁴For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate. ²⁵He heard musick and dancing, and now his elder son was in the field — and as he arrived and drew nigh to the house. ²⁶And asked what these things meant, and he called one of the servants. ²⁷The servant said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' ²⁸But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and was pleading with him, ²⁹He answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve you, neither transgressed I at any time your

commandment — and yet you never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:. ³⁰But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him!" ³¹But he said to him, 'Child, you are always with me, and everything that is mine is yours. ³²But it was necessary to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive, and was lost and is found.'"

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word *pantes* ('all') is hyperbolic but emphasizes that Jesus attracted the very people the religious establishment avoided. 'Tax collectors' (*telōnai*) were despised as collaborators with Rome and assumed to be corrupt. 'Sinners' (*hamartōloi*) was a catch-all term for those who did not observe the Torah as the Pharisees defined it. That they came 'to hear him' (*akouein autou*) shows they were drawn to his message, not merely his miracles.
2. The verb *diegongyzon* ('were grumbling') echoes Israel's grumbling in the wilderness (Exodus 16:7-8; Numbers 14:27) — Luke draws a deliberate parallel between the Pharisees and rebellious Israel. Table fellowship (*synesthiein*, 'eats with') in ancient Judaism implied acceptance and equality; eating with sinners was not merely socializing but a theological statement. This complaint provides the occasion for all three parables that follow.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 16:7-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 14:27. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. Luke introduces all three stories as one parable (*tēn parabolēn tautēn*, singular), suggesting they form a unified literary whole — three variations on one theme of loss, search, and celebration.
4. The opening 'What man among you' (*tis anthrōpos ex hymōn*) invites the audience to place themselves in the shepherd's role. The expected answer is 'Of course you would go.' Leaving ninety-nine in the *erēmō* ('wilderness, open country') is risky — the argument is that the lost sheep's value justifies the risk. A hundred sheep represented substantial wealth in first-century Palestine.
5. The image of the shepherd carrying the sheep on his shoulders (*epi tous ōmous*) became one of the earliest Christian artistic motifs. The lost sheep does not walk back on its own — the shepherd carries it. The participle *chairōn* ('rejoicing') is emphatic: this is not dutiful retrieval but exuberant recovery. The image echoes Isaiah 40:11 and Ezekiel 34:11-16, where God himself is the shepherd who seeks the lost.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 40:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ezekiel 34:11-16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The verb *syncharēte* ('rejoice together with') demands communal celebration — joy over recovery cannot be experienced alone. This detail sets up the application in verse 7: heaven itself celebrates communally over one repentant sinner. The shepherd does not scold the sheep; he throws a party.
7. The phrase 'righteous persons who need no repentance' (*dikaiois hoitines ou chreian echousin metanoias*) may be gently ironic — Jesus may be describing the Pharisees as they perceive themselves. Alternatively, it may acknowledge genuinely faithful people while insisting that recovery of the lost produces a particular kind of joy. The word *metanoēō* ('to repent, change one's mind') involves a complete reorientation of life, not merely feeling sorry.
8. The drachma was a Greek silver coin roughly equivalent to a day's wage. Ten drachmas may represent her entire savings, or they may have been sewn into a headband worn as a marriage token (similar to coins on a Palestinian bridal headdress). Losing one-tenth of her wealth warrants a thorough search. The lamp, sweeping, and diligent searching reflect the dark, windowless interior of a typical Palestinian peasant home with a packed-earth floor.
9. The exact same pattern as the shepherd's celebration: communal joy over recovery. The feminine forms (*tas philas kai geitonas*, 'her female friends and neighbors') reflect the social world of women in a gender-segregated society. Jesus's willingness to cast God in a female role (a woman searching for what is precious) is remarkable in its cultural context.
10. The phrase 'joy before the angels' (*chara enōpion tōn angelōn*) is a reverential circumlocution — the joy is God's own, expressed 'in the presence of' his angels. This second application reinforces the first: heaven's economy values the recovery of the lost above all else.
11. The opening is deceptively simple. 'Two sons' immediately signals a story about contrasting responses — a familiar pattern in the Hebrew Bible (Cain/Abel, Esau/Jacob, Joseph and his brothers). The father, not either son, is the central character — some scholars prefer the title 'The Parable of the Prodigal Father' (prodigal in the sense of extravagantly generous).
12. The request is culturally outrageous — asking for one's inheritance while the father is still alive is tantamount to wishing the father dead. Under Jewish law (Deuteronomy 21:17), the younger son would receive one-third of the estate. The father's compliance (*dieilen*, 'he divided') without argument or rebuke is the first sign of his extraordinary character. The word *bion* ('livelihood, means of living') emphasizes that the father is giving away his actual resources, not merely liquid assets.

12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 21:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The phrase *chōran makran* ('distant country') represents both geographic and spiritual distance from the father. The adverb *asōtōs* ('dissolutely, wastefully') gives us the English word 'prodigal' — it means reckless extravagance. The verb *dieskorpisen* ('scattered, squandered') is vivid: he did not merely spend his inheritance but scattered it like seed on barren ground.
14. The convergence of personal bankruptcy and natural disaster creates complete destitution. The verb *hystereisthai* ('to be in need, lack, fall short') is the same word Paul uses for the human condition in Romans 3:23 ('all have sinned and fall short'). The son's self-inflicted poverty is compounded by circumstances beyond his control.
15. The verb *ekollēthē* ('joined himself to, attached himself to') suggests desperation rather than genuine employment — he clung to this foreigner for survival. For a Jewish audience, feeding pigs (choirous) represents the absolute nadir of defilement. Pigs were unclean (Leviticus 11:7), and tending them placed the son in daily contact with what the Torah forbade. He has reached the furthest possible point from his father's house.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 11:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The *keratia* ('carob pods') were used as animal feed — long, dark pods from the carob tree, sometimes called 'St. John's bread.' The son is now lower than the pigs: they eat while he goes hungry. The phrase 'no one gave him anything' (*oudeis edidou autō*) underscores his total abandonment — in the far country, there is no community, no compassion, no father.
17. The phrase *eis heauton elthōn* ('coming to himself') is a turning point — it implies he had been 'beside himself,' alienated from his true identity. This is the moment of self-awareness that precedes repentance. His reasoning is initially pragmatic rather than spiritual: the hired servants (*misthioi*, day laborers with no family status) eat better than he does. Whether his motive is genuine contrition or strategic self-interest, the movement toward the father begins.
18. The verb *anastas* ('rising up') is the same root as 'resurrection' (*anastasis*) — the son's return begins with rising from his degradation. His prepared speech echoes David's confession in Psalm 51:4 ('Against you, you only, have I sinned'). 'Against heaven' (*eis ton ouranon*) is a reverential circumlocution for 'against God' — the sin is not merely against the father but against the divine order.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 51:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The son's planned demotion from son to hired servant (*misthios*) shows he understands he has forfeited his status. A hired servant had no family rights but received wages and food. The son's self-assessment is accurate — he has squandered everything — but the father's response will overturn this calculation entirely.
20. This is the emotional center of the parable. That the father 'saw him while still far off' implies he had been watching — scanning the road, waiting. The verb *esplanchnisthē* ('was moved with compassion') describes a visceral, gut-level response (from *splanchna*, 'intestines, inward parts'). The father's running (*dramōn*) would have required him to lift his robes, exposing his legs — an act considered deeply undignified for an elder in Middle Eastern culture. He humiliates himself to reach his son before the village can shame him. The verb *katephilēsen* ('kissed fervently, kissed repeatedly') is intensive — not a formal greeting but an outpouring of affection.
21. The son delivers his rehearsed speech (from vv. 18-19) but never gets to finish — the crucial last line ('make me as one of your hired servants') is cut off by the father's instructions to the servants. The father does not allow the demotion to be spoken. The confession is received; the proposed terms are overridden by grace.
22. Every item is a symbol of restored sonship, not servanthood. The 'best robe' (*stolēn tēn prōtēn*, literally 'the first robe') is the father's own finest garment — clothing him in the father's honor. The ring (*daktylion*) signifies authority, likely a signet ring used for sealing documents and transacting business. The sandals (*hypodēmata*) distinguish a free son from a slave, who went barefoot. The father does not negotiate or set conditions — he restores fully and immediately.
23. The 'fattened calf' (*ton moschon ton siteuton*) was grain-fed and reserved for the most significant occasions — its slaughter would feed the entire village. This is not a private family meal but a community feast, paralleling the communal celebrations of the lost sheep and lost coin parables. The verb *euphranthōmen* ('let us celebrate, be glad') is the same word used in the Septuagint for feasting in God's presence.
24. The father uses resurrection language: *nekros ēn kai anezēsen* ('was dead and has come alive'). The son's departure was a kind of death; his return is a kind of resurrection. The parallel 'lost and found' (*apolōlōs kai heurethē*) connects this parable to the lost sheep and lost coin — all three stories culminate in the same recovery and the same celebration. The verb *ērξαντο* ('they began') implies the celebration is just getting started — setting up the older brother's arrival.
25. The older son enters the story for the first time, and he enters from the outside — he has been working in the field, dutifully serving his father. The *symphōnias* ('music,' literally 'sounds together') and *chorōn* ('dancing') indicate a major celebration. He approaches the party as an outsider, which is precisely the Pharisees' position relative to Jesus's welcome of sinners.
26. That the older son must ask a servant what is happening reveals his emotional distance from his father's household — he is physically present but relationally absent. The verb *epynthaneto* ('was inquiring') is in the imperfect, suggesting ongoing questioning.

- 27.** The servant's report is matter-of-fact: 'your brother' (ho adelphos sou) and 'your father' (ho patēr sou) — family language that the older son will shortly reject. The word *hygiainonta* ('healthy, safe and sound') is the root of 'hygiene' — the father is celebrating not just the son's return but his physical survival.
- 28.** The older son's anger (*ōrgisthē*) and refusal to enter parallels the Pharisees' anger at Jesus's table fellowship with sinners. His refusal to enter is as much an insult as the younger son's departure — in both cases, a son rejects the father's household. And in both cases, the father goes out: he ran to meet the younger son, and now he comes out to plead with the older. The verb *parekalei* ('was pleading, urging, entreating') is in the imperfect — sustained, patient appeal.
- 29.** The older son's complaint reveals a servile mentality: *douleuō soi* ('I have slaved for you') — he sees himself as a servant, not a son. He has obeyed commands (*entolēn*, 'commandment') but missed the relationship. The contrast between a young goat (*eriphon*, the cheapest animal for a feast) and the fattened calf underscores his sense of injustice. His complaint is factually plausible but spiritually blind — he has had access to everything his father owned (v. 31) and never realized it.
- 30.** The older son refuses to say 'my brother,' using instead the distancing 'this son of yours' (ho huios sou houtos) — a deliberate disowning. He adds the detail 'with prostitutes' (*meta pornōn*), which the narrative never mentioned — he either knows more than the story tells or is embellishing to strengthen his case. The verb *kataphagōn* ('devoured, consumed') is contemptuous. His resentment is directed as much at the father's generosity as at the brother's sin.
- 31.** The father's response begins with *teknon* ('child') — an intimate, affectionate address. The statement 'you are always with me' (*sy pantote met' emou ei*) is both reassurance and gentle rebuke: the older son has always had access to the father's presence and possessions but has experienced neither as gift. 'Everything that is mine is yours' (*panta ta ema sa estin*) is a staggering declaration — the father withholds nothing. The older son's poverty is not material but relational.
- 32.** The father gently corrects the older son's language: where the son said 'this son of yours' (v. 30), the father says 'this brother of yours' (ho adelphos sou houtos) — insisting on the fraternal bond. The verb *edei* ('it was necessary') carries divine compulsion — the celebration is not optional but morally required by the nature of what has happened. The parable ends without resolution: we do not know whether the older brother enters the feast. The open ending forces the Pharisees — and every reader — to decide: will you join the celebration or remain outside in your resentment? The repeated death-to-life, lost-to-found formula seals the chapter's theology: God's joy over the recovery of the lost is the heartbeat of the kingdom.

16

Summary: *Luke 16 contains two of Jesus's most provocative teachings about wealth. The Parable of the Shrewd Manager (16:1-13) presents a dishonest steward who, facing termination, reduces his master's debtors' bills to secure future friendships — and is commended for his shrewdness. Jesus draws the paradoxical lesson that worldly people are more strategic than 'children of light' and urges his followers to use wealth to gain eternal friends. A series of sayings on faithfulness, the impossibility of serving both God and money, and the enduring authority of the Law follows. The chapter culminates in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31), where a wealthy man who ignored a beggar at his gate finds their positions reversed in the afterlife — and Abraham refuses to send a warning to the rich man's brothers, declaring that Moses and the Prophets are sufficient.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Parable of the Shrewd Manager is perhaps the most debated parable in the Gospels. Jesus appears to commend dishonesty, but the commendation is for shrewdness (*phronimōs*), not for the fraud itself — the steward's cleverness in using present resources to secure a future relationship becomes an analogy for how disciples should use material wealth to secure eternal outcomes. The Rich Man and Lazarus is the only parable in which a character is named (Lazarus), and it provides the most detailed picture of the afterlife in Jesus's teaching. The rich man is never condemned for a specific sin — his offense is indifference to suffering at his own gate. The final line ('neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead') is deeply ironic in light of Jesus's own resurrection and the continued unbelief it met.*

Translation Friction: *The Shrewd Manager parable's moral logic has troubled interpreters for centuries. The manager may have been removing his own commission from the bills (making his action honest), or he may have been canceling usurious interest forbidden by Torah (making his action just), or he may simply be a rogue whose worldly cleverness Jesus repurposes as a spiritual lesson. We render the Greek as given and let the translator notes present the interpretive options. The word 'Hades' (*hadēs*) in verse 23 is the Greek equivalent of Hebrew Sheol — the realm of the dead — not the later Christian concept of hell. The 'great chasm' (*chasma mega*) is unique to this passage.*

Connections: The Shrewd Manager continues Luke's sustained focus on wealth and discipleship (12:13-34; 14:33; 18:18-30; 19:1-10). The Pharisees' love of money (v. 14) connects to their role throughout Luke as opponents who misunderstand the kingdom. The Rich Man and Lazarus echoes the Magnificat's reversal theme (1:52-53) and the Beatitudes/Woes of 6:20-26. Abraham's refusal to send Lazarus back foreshadows the resurrection appearances and the persistent unbelief of Acts. The 'Law and Prophets' (v. 16) connects to Luke 24:27, 44.

¹He also said to his disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and this manager was reported to him as squandering his possessions. ²So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' ³The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴I know what I will do, so that when I am removed from the management, people will receive me into their homes.' ⁵So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁶He said, 'A hundred measures of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and write fifty.' ⁷Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and write eighty.' ⁸The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the children of light. ⁹And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. ¹⁰The one who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and the one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹If then you have not been faithful with unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹²And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." ¹⁴The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. ¹⁵He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before people, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among people is an abomination in the sight of God. ¹⁶The Law and the Prophets were until John; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is being proclaimed, and everyone is urged forcefully into it. ¹⁷But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fall. ¹⁸Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and the one who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery. ¹⁹"There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, feasting sumptuously every day. ²⁰And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, ²¹Longing to be nourished with the scraps that fell from the rich man's table — moreover the dogs arrived and licked his sores. ²²The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³And in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off, and Lazarus at his side. ²⁴And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.' ²⁵But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you received your good things during your life, and Lazarus likewise bad things. But now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. ²⁶And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to cross from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross from there to us.' ²⁷He said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, ²⁸For I have five brothers and sisters. That he may testify to them, lest they also come into this location of torment. ²⁹But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' ³⁰He said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' ³¹He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The *oikonomos* ('manager, steward') was responsible for administering the master's estate — a position of significant trust and authority. The verb *diaskorpizōn* ('squandering, scattering') is the same word used for the prodigal son's waste in 15:13, creating a verbal link between the two parables. The passive *dieblēthē* ('was reported, was accused') does not confirm whether the accusation was true.
2. The demand *apodos ton logon* ('give the account, render the reckoning') uses commercial language for a financial audit. The phrase *ou dynē eti oikonomein* ('you are no longer able to manage') is a termination notice. The manager is given a brief window to close the books — a window he will exploit.

3. The internal monologue (eipen en heautō, 'said within himself') parallels the prodigal son's self-reflection in 15:17. The manager's self-assessment is brutally honest: he cannot do manual labor (skaptein, 'to dig') and will not beg (epaitein). He is a white-collar worker facing unemployment with no fallback skills. His dilemma forces the creative — if ethically questionable — solution that follows.
4. The verb egnōn ('I know, I have realized') marks the eureka moment. His strategy is to create a network of obligation: by reducing the debtors' bills, he will have friends who owe him favors when he loses his position. The phrase dexōntai me eis tous oikous autōn ('they will receive me into their houses') will be echoed in verse 9 with 'eternal dwellings.'
5. The chreopheiletōn ('debtors') were likely tenant farmers or merchants who owed the master commodities as rent or payment. The manager acts individually with each debtor (hena hekaston, 'one by one'), creating personal obligation rather than a collective arrangement.
6. A batos was approximately eight to nine gallons; a hundred batous of olive oil was a substantial debt — roughly 800-900 gallons, the yield of about 150 olive trees. The reduction of fifty percent is enormous. The urgency (tacheōs, 'quickly') reflects the need to act before the termination takes effect. Whether the reduction represents the manager's commission, the master's usurious interest, or outright fraud is debated.
7. A koros was approximately ten to twelve bushels; a hundred koroi of wheat equaled roughly 1,000-1,200 bushels — a very large commercial quantity. The reduction here is only twenty percent, compared to fifty percent for the oil. The different percentages may reflect different commission rates or interest structures on different commodities.
8. The crucial question: does 'the master' (ho kyrios) refer to the rich man in the parable or to Jesus? Most interpreters read it as the rich man, who grudgingly admires the manager's cleverness even though it cost him money. The commendation is for phronimōs ('shrewdly, wisely') — strategic thinking about the future — not for the dishonesty (adikias). The contrast between 'children of this age' (huioi tou aiōnos toutou) and 'children of light' (huios tou phōtos) is a wisdom observation: worldly people invest more strategic effort in their temporal futures than God's people invest in their eternal ones.
9. Jesus now applies the parable. The mamōna tēs adikias ('mammon of unrighteousness') is Aramaic mammon ('wealth, property') modified by a genitive of quality — 'wealth characterized by its worldly nature.' The instruction is: use material resources to build relationships that have eternal significance. The 'eternal dwellings' (aiōnious skēnas, literally 'eternal tents') contrast with the temporary shelters of this life. The identity of 'they' (dexōntai) is debated — the poor who benefit from generosity, the angels, or God himself.
10. This proverb establishes the principle that character is consistent across scale. Small responsibilities reveal the character that will govern large ones. The adjective elachistō ('very little, least') applied to wealth frames material possessions as the smallest arena of faithfulness — preparation for greater spiritual responsibilities.
11. The contrast between adikō mamōna ('unrighteous wealth') and to alēthinon ('the true, genuine thing') is sharp. Material wealth is not the 'real' treasure — it is a test, a proving ground. Failure in this lesser arena disqualifies one from receiving the greater spiritual treasure. The question format (tis hymin pisteusei, 'who will entrust to you?') implies God as the one who evaluates and entrusts.
12. The word allotriō ('another's, belonging to someone else') reframes all material wealth as borrowed — it belongs to God, and humans are stewards, not owners. The 'your own' (to hymeteron) refers to spiritual inheritance that becomes genuinely one's own. The implication is radical: everything material is on loan; only the spiritual treasure is truly yours.
13. Luke adds oiketēs ('household servant') to the saying found also in Matthew 6:24. The word douleuein ('to serve as a slave') implies total ownership — a slave cannot divide loyalty. The personification of mamōna as a competing kyrios ('master') is the climax of the wealth teaching: money is not neutral but a power that demands allegiance. The final statement is absolute: ou dynasthe ('you are not able') — this is not a recommendation but a declaration of impossibility.
14. Luke's editorial comment — philargyroi ('lovers of money,' literally 'lovers of silver') — is pointed. The verb exemyktērizon ('ridiculed, sneered at,' literally 'turned up their noses') suggests contemptuous dismissal. Their mockery reveals that Jesus's teaching about wealth has struck a nerve.
15. The phrase dikaiousantes heautous ('justifying yourselves') means constructing a public reputation of righteousness. The word bdelygma ('abomination') is the strongest term of revulsion in biblical Greek — the same word used for the 'abomination of desolation' in Daniel 9:27 and Mark 13:14. What humans celebrate (wealth, status, prestige), God may find detestable. The reversal is total.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 9:27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. This compressed saying divides salvation history: the era of 'the Law and the Prophets' extends to John the Baptist, after which the kingdom of God is actively proclaimed. The verb biazetai is ambiguous — it can mean 'everyone forces their way in' (middle voice) or 'everyone is being urged/pressed in' (passive). We render the passive sense, which fits Luke's theology of God's initiative, but the middle sense ('everyone is pressing into it eagerly') is also possible.
17. The keraia ('horn, stroke, serif') refers to the tiny decorative marks distinguishing similar Hebrew letters (such as beth and kaph). Jesus affirms the Law's enduring authority in the strongest possible terms — the cosmos will dissolve before the smallest detail of Torah fails. This statement prevents the previous verse from being read as abrogation of the Law.
18. This saying, placed between statements about the Law's permanence and the Rich Man and Lazarus parable, may serve as a concrete example of the Law's enduring moral authority. The prohibition is absolute in Luke's version — no exception clause appears as in Matthew 19:9. The verb moicheuei ('commits adultery') applies to both scenarios.

- 19.** The porphyran ('purple') was the most expensive dye in the ancient world, extracted from murex sea snails. The bysson ('fine linen') was imported Egyptian fabric. Together they represent extreme luxury. The phrase *euphrainomenos kath' hēmeran lamprōs* ('celebrating splendidly every day') means his entire life was one continuous feast — while Lazarus starved at his gate. The rich man is traditionally called 'Dives' (Latin for 'rich'), but the text never names him.
- 20.** Lazarus (Lazaros) is the Greek form of the Hebrew Eleazar ('God helps') — the name itself is ironic, as no human helps him. He is the only named character in any of Jesus's parables, which may suggest a historical basis or may serve to personalize the poor man in contrast to the unnamed rich man. The passive *ebeblēto* ('had been placed, was lying') suggests he was too weak to position himself. The *pylōna* ('gate, entrance') implies a large, wealthy estate.
- 21.** The parallel with the prodigal son's hunger is deliberate (*epithymōn chortasthēnai*, 'longing to be fed' — cf. 15:16). But whereas the prodigal chose his degradation, Lazarus's suffering is involuntary. The dogs (*kynes*) are unclean street scavengers, not pets — their licking adds humiliation to misery. Whether Lazarus actually received the fallen scraps is left unclear; the text says he 'longed' for them.
- 22.** The contrast in death is stark: Lazarus is escorted by angels to 'Abraham's bosom' (*ton kolpon Abraam*) — the place of honor at the patriarchal feast, the position of the beloved guest reclining next to the host. The rich man simply 'died and was buried' (*etaphē*) — his funeral was presumably grand, but no angels attend him. The reversal from their earthly conditions has begun.
- 23.** The Greek *hadēs* corresponds to the Hebrew *Sheol* — the realm of the dead, not the later Christian concept of hell as a place of final punishment. In Jewish thought of this period, Hades contained both the righteous and the unrighteous in separate compartments. The rich man can see Abraham and Lazarus but cannot cross to them — proximity without access. The word *basanois* ('torments') originally referred to a touchstone for testing metals, then came to mean torture or torment.
- 24.** Even in Hades, the rich man treats Lazarus as a servant to be dispatched on errands — 'send Lazarus' (*pempson Lazaron*). He has learned Lazarus's name (he always knew who was at his gate) but has not grasped the reversal. The request for a finger-dip of water is pathetically minimal, measuring the depth of his suffering. The address 'Father Abraham' claims covenant identity — he considers himself Abraham's heir despite his behavior.
- 25.** Abraham addresses him as *teknon* ('child') — acknowledging the covenant relationship while denying the request. The principle is reversal: *ta agatha sou* ('your good things') in life are spent; Lazarus's suffering is now compensated. The verb *parakaleitai* ('is comforted') is the same root as *paraklētos* ('comforter, advocate'). The reversal echoes the Beatitudes and Woes of Luke 6:20-26.
- 26.** The *chasma mega* ('great chasm') represents the irreversible finality of the afterlife condition. The perfect passive *estēriktai* ('has been fixed, established') indicates a permanent divine arrangement, not a temporary boundary. The impossibility of crossing in either direction means there is no post-mortem remedy — choices made in life determine one's eternal state.
- 27.** The rich man's second request is to send Lazarus as a messenger — still treating him as an errand-runner. But the request also reveals that the rich man now understands something he failed to grasp in life: his choices had consequences, and his brothers are making the same ones.
- 28.** The five brothers suggest a large, wealthy family. The verb *diamartyrētai* ('warn, solemnly testify') is a compound verb intensifying the urgency. The 'place of torment' (*topon touton tēs basanou*) is the first time the rich man names his location. His compassion for his brothers, absent for Lazarus in life, arrives too late.
- 29.** Abraham's response is that the existing revelation — the Torah ('Moses') and the Prophets — is sufficient. The Hebrew Scriptures already command justice for the poor, generosity to the needy, and compassion for the suffering (Deuteronomy 15:7-11; Isaiah 58:6-7; Amos 2:6-7). No additional supernatural sign is needed. The imperative *akousatōsan* ('let them hear, let them listen') echoes the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4) and the repeated refrain 'let him hear' from the parables.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 15:7-11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 58:6-7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Amos 2:6-7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 6:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 30.** The rich man contradicts Abraham — *ouchi* ('No!') — insisting that a supernatural visitor from the dead would succeed where Scripture has failed. His assumption is that the problem is insufficient evidence, not hardness of heart. The verb *metanoēsousin* ('they will repent') is confident but mistaken, as the next verse will make clear.
- 31.** Abraham's final word is devastating in its irony. The verb *anastē* ('rises,' from *anistēmi*, the standard word for resurrection) points beyond the parable to Jesus's own resurrection — and the fact that many still did not believe even after it occurred (cf. Acts 4:1-2; 17:32). The verb *peisthēsontai* ('they will be convinced, persuaded') suggests that the problem is not evidence but willingness. Those who ignore the witness of Scripture will not be moved by miracles. The parable ends on this note of solemn warning: no sign can substitute for listening to what God has already spoken.

17

Summary: *Luke 17 contains a collection of Jesus's teachings on stumbling blocks, forgiveness, faith, and duty, followed by the healing of ten lepers (only the Samaritan returns to give thanks), and a discourse on the coming of the kingdom of God. Jesus teaches that the kingdom does not come with observable signs but is 'in your midst,' then warns of the sudden, visible nature of the Son of Man's coming, comparing it to the days of Noah and Lot.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The healing of the ten lepers is unique to Luke and highlights his recurring theme of Samaritan faithfulness contrasted with Jewish ingratitude. The phrase 'the kingdom of God is among you' (entos hymōn) is one of the most debated sayings in the Gospels — does it mean 'within you' (interior/spiritual) or 'in your midst' (present in Jesus's person)? The discourse on the Son of Man's coming blends language from Daniel 7 with flood and fire imagery from Genesis, creating an eschatological tapestry that resists neat systematization.*

Translation Friction: *Verse 21's entos hymōn is genuinely ambiguous — 'within you' and 'in your midst' are both linguistically defensible. We render 'in your midst' as the more contextually appropriate reading (Jesus is addressing Pharisees, to whom 'within you' seems unlikely), but note the alternative. The servant parable in verses 7-10 uses the language of slavery, which we render transparently.*

Connections: *The ten lepers narrative connects to 2 Kings 5 (Naaman the Syrian leper) — another foreigner healed when Israelites were not. The Noah and Lot comparisons draw from Genesis 6-7 and 19. The 'days of the Son of Man' language echoes Daniel 7:13-14. The faith-as-mustard-seed saying appears also in Matthew 17:20, though in a different context.*

¹He said to his disciples, "It is inevitable that causes of stumbling will come, but woe to the one through whom they come. ²It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea than for him to cause one of these little ones to stumble. ³Watch yourselves. If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. ⁴Even if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times turns back to you saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." ⁵The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" ⁶The Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. ⁷"Which of you, having a slave who is plowing or tending sheep, would say to him when he comes in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at the table'? ⁸Instead, would he not say to him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, and dress yourself for service and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that, you may eat and drink'? ⁹Does he thank the slave because he did what was commanded? ¹⁰So you also, when you have done everything you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have only done what was our duty.'" ¹¹While traveling to Jerusalem, Jesus passed along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²As he entered a village, ten men with a skin disease met him. They stood at a distance ¹³They raised up their voices, and stated, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. ¹⁴When he saw them, he said, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. ¹⁵One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶He fell facedown at Jesus's feet, thanking him — and he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Jesus responded, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸Was no one found to return and give glory to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way. Your faith has saved you." ²⁰When asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus answered them, "The kingdom of God does not come with signs to be observed. ²¹Nor will people say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For the kingdom of God is in your midst." ²²Then he said to the disciples, "The days are coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³People will say to you, 'Look, there!' or 'Look, here!' Do not go out or chase after them. ²⁴For just as lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. ²⁵And he rejected of this generation, and but first must he suffer many things. ²⁶Just as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷They were eating, drinking, marrying, and being given in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸It was the same in the days of Lot: they were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building. ²⁹But on the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all. ³

◦It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹On that day, the one who is on the housetop with his belongings in the house must not go down to get them. Likewise, the one who is in the field must not turn back. ³²Remember what happened to Lot's wife. ³³Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will keep it alive. ³⁴I tell you, on that night two will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. ³⁵Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left. ³⁶Two will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left." ³⁷They asked him, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "Where the body is, there the vultures will gather."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek anendekton ('impossible not to happen, inevitable') is stronger than a mere prediction — it acknowledges the fallen reality of the world. The word skandala ('stumbling blocks, snares') refers to anything that causes someone to fall away from faith, not merely 'offenses' in the modern sense.
2. The lithos mylikos ('millstone') refers to the large upper stone of a donkey-driven mill — heavy enough to guarantee drowning. The 'little ones' (mikrōn) likely refers to new or vulnerable believers, not only children. The hyperbolic comparison — drowning is preferable to leading others astray — underscores the gravity of spiritual harm.
3. The Greek prosechete heautois ('watch yourselves, be on guard') shifts the focus from the one who causes stumbling to the disciples' own responsibility. The verb epitimēson ('rebuke') carries the sense of a corrective confrontation, not mere criticism. The sequence — rebuke, repentance, forgiveness — presents reconciliation as a structured process, not an automatic response.
4. The number 'seven' (heptakis) represents completeness and fullness in biblical numerology — the point is not a literal count but an unlimited willingness to forgive. The verb epistrepēsē ('turns back') carries the same turning/returning imagery as the Hebrew teshuvah. The command aphēseis ('you will forgive') is a future indicative used as an imperative, making forgiveness not optional but obligatory.
5. This is one of only six times Luke uses the term apostoloi ('apostles') rather than mathētai ('disciples') during the ministry narrative. Their request reveals that they recognize the demands of verses 3-4 as exceeding their current capacity. The verb prosthes ('add to, increase') suggests they view faith as something quantifiable — a misunderstanding Jesus corrects in the next verse.
6. The sykaminō ('mulberry tree') is distinct from the sykomorea ('sycamore-fig') of 19:4. Luke's version uses a mulberry tree rather than Matthew's mountain (17:20), but the point is identical: the issue is not the quantity of faith but its genuine presence. A mustard seed (kokkon sinapeōs) was proverbially the smallest seed known in Palestine. The conditional ei echete ('if you had') is a contrary-to-fact condition, implying they do not yet possess even this minimal faith.
7. The Greek doulos means 'slave,' not merely 'servant' — the parable depends on the absolute obligation of a slave to his master. The verb anapese ('recline') refers to the Greco-Roman dining posture of reclining on a couch, the standard position for meals in Jesus's context.
8. The verb perizōsamenos ('having girded yourself') refers to tucking up the outer garment into a belt for active work — a practical preparation for serving. The sequence is clear: the master's needs come first, the slave's needs second. This is not an endorsement of slavery but a parable using a familiar social structure to make a theological point about duty.
9. The expected answer is 'no.' The Greek charin echei ('have gratitude toward') implies that obedience to clear commands does not earn special recognition. The KJV's 'I trow not' is an addition — the Greek simply asks the rhetorical question and moves on.
10. The word achreioi ('unworthy, useless, unprofitable') is striking — Jesus instructs his followers to consider themselves 'useless' even after full obedience. This counters any theology of merit: complete obedience is the baseline, not an achievement deserving reward. The verb ōpheilomen ('we were obligated') frames service as debt, not generosity.
11. The phrase dia meson Samareias kai Galilaias ('through the middle of Samaria and Galilee') is geographically unusual — traveling south to Jerusalem, one would pass through Galilee first, then Samaria. 'Along the border between' captures the sense that Jesus was traveling the boundary region where the two territories met, which is the most coherent geographical reading.
12. The Greek leproi ('lepers') covers a range of skin conditions beyond what modern medicine calls leprosy (Hansen's disease). Levitical law (Leviticus 13-14) required those with such conditions to remain isolated. Their standing 'at a distance' (porrōthen) reflects the social and ritual separation required by the Torah.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 13-14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The title epistata ('master, commander') is used exclusively in Luke among the Gospels and always by disciples or those seeking help — it implies recognized authority. Their loud cry from a distance reflects both their desperation and the physical separation their condition imposed.
14. The command to show themselves to the priests follows the Levitical procedure for certifying a healed skin condition (Leviticus 14:1-32). The healing occurs en route — 'as they went' (en tō hypagein) — requiring them to act in faith before seeing results. This is the only mass healing of lepers recorded in the Gospels.

14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 14:1-32. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The verb *hypestrepsen* ('turned back, returned') contrasts with the obedient departure of the nine — this one interrupts his journey to the priest in order to give thanks. His loud praise (*phōnēs megalēs*, 'great voice') echoes the loud cry of verse 13, transforming a plea for mercy into a shout of gratitude.
16. Luke delays the revelation that the man is a Samaritēs ('Samaritan') until the end of the verse for dramatic effect. The Samaritans were despised by Jews as religious and ethnic outsiders (cf. John 4:9). The posture — falling on his face at Jesus's feet — is the posture of worship. The verb *eucharistōn* ('giving thanks') is the root of 'Eucharist,' linking gratitude to the deepest form of worship.
17. Jesus's two rhetorical questions expose the ingratitude of the nine — they received healing but did not return to give glory to God. The verb *ekatharisthēsan* ('were cleansed') recalls the Levitical language of ritual purification, connecting physical healing with spiritual restoration.
18. The word *allogēnēs* ('foreigner, one of another race') is a loaded term — it was inscribed on the warning stones in the Jerusalem temple prohibiting non-Jews from entering the inner courts. Jesus uses it to highlight the irony: the one deemed unfit for God's temple is the only one who returns to glorify God.
19. The phrase *hē pistis sou sesōken se* ('your faith has saved you') uses *sōzō*, which means both 'to heal' and 'to save.' All ten were cleansed (*katharizō*, v. 14), but only this one is 'saved' (*sōzō*). Luke distinguishes between physical healing (which all ten received) and the deeper salvation that comes through faith and gratitude. This same phrase appears in 7:50 (the sinful woman) and 8:48 (the hemorrhaging woman).
20. The word *paratērseōs* ('observation, watching') suggests watching for visible, datable signs — the kind of apocalyptic timetable the Pharisees were seeking. Jesus rejects the premise: the kingdom cannot be tracked like a military campaign or astronomical event.
21. The phrase *entos hymōn estin* is one of the most debated in the Gospels. *Entos* can mean 'within' (interior, spiritual) or 'among/in the midst of' (present in the community). Since Jesus is addressing Pharisees hostile to his message, 'within you' seems unlikely as a commendation of their spiritual state. 'In your midst' better captures the idea that the kingdom is present in Jesus's own person and activity, standing right before them whether they recognize it or not. The alternative reading 'within you' is noted for completeness.
22. Jesus shifts from addressing the Pharisees to the disciples. The phrase 'one of the days of the Son of Man' is unusual — it may mean 'even a single day' of the messianic age, suggesting a period of absence or suffering during which the disciples will yearn for his visible presence. The title 'Son of Man' (*huios tou anthrōpou*) draws from Daniel 7:13.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The warning against following false messianic claims echoes the Pharisees' question in verse 20. The verbs *apelthēte* ('go out') and *diōxēte* ('pursue, chase') suggest an active and potentially dangerous quest that Jesus forbids.
24. The simile of lightning (*astrapē*) makes two points: the Son of Man's coming will be sudden (no time to prepare) and universally visible (no need to search for it). This directly answers both the Pharisees' question about timing and the warning against localized messianic claims. Some manuscripts omit 'in his day' (*en tē hēmera autou*), but the SBLGNT retains it.
25. The word *dei* ('it is necessary, must') indicates divine necessity — the suffering is not accidental but part of God's plan. The verb *apodokimasthēnai* ('to be rejected after examination') implies a deliberate evaluation and verdict: this generation examines Jesus and officially declares him unfit. This passion prediction interrupts the eschatological discourse to anchor future glory in present suffering.
26. The comparison to Noah's days (Genesis 6-7) emphasizes not the wickedness of that generation but their obliviousness — they were living normally, unaware of impending judgment. The Greek *Nōe* is the Septuagint spelling of the Hebrew Noah.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 6-7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The four imperfect verbs (*ēsthion*, *epinon*, *egamoun*, *egamizonto*) describe ongoing, routine activities — the emphasis is on normalcy, not depravity. The shift to the aorist 'came' (*ēlthen*) and 'destroyed' (*apōlesen*) marks the sudden, decisive interruption of judgment. The *kibōton* ('ark, chest') is the same word used for the ark of the covenant in the Septuagint.
28. The Lot comparison (unique to Luke's version) adds commercial and agricultural activities to the list — buying, selling, planting, building. These are not sinful activities but routine preoccupations that blinded people to coming judgment. Six imperfect verbs create a rhythm of uninterrupted normalcy.
29. The reference is to Genesis 19:24-25. The Greek *theion* ('sulfur, brimstone') combined with fire from heaven represents total divine judgment. As with Noah, the transition from imperfect (routine activity) to aorist (sudden destruction) is abrupt and decisive.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 19:24-25. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. The verb *apokalyptetai* ('is revealed') is a present tense used for future certainty. The passive voice implies that God is the one doing the revealing — the Son of Man does not simply appear but is unveiled by divine action. This is the theological climax of the Noah-Lot comparison.

31. The flat rooftops of Palestinian houses were used as living and working spaces, accessed by an external staircase. The instruction not to go back inside emphasizes the urgency and suddenness of the coming judgment. The parallel with Lot's escape (Genesis 19:17, 'Do not look back') is explicit.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 19:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The shortest verse in this discourse — three words in Greek (mnēmoneuete tēs gynaikos Lōt). Lot's wife looked back at Sodom and became a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26). She serves as the paradigmatic example of attachment to what is being left behind. The imperative 'remember' (mnēmoneuete) is plural, addressed to all disciples.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 19:26. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. The Greek psychē means both 'life' and 'soul,' creating a deliberate double meaning. The verb peripoiēsasthai ('to preserve, to acquire for oneself') suggests self-protective hoarding. The contrasting verb zōgonōsei ('will give life to, will keep alive') is vivid — it means to generate life, to bring to life. The paradox: grasping at life kills it; releasing it generates it.
34. The Greek does not specify 'men' — the masculine form is generic, and the reference to sharing a bed could apply to any two people in a household. The verbs paralēmphthēsetai ('will be taken') and aphethēsetai ('will be left') are both passive — the agent of separation is not specified, leaving the meaning deliberately open: taken in judgment or taken in rescue? The text does not resolve this.
35. The participle alēthousai ('grinding') is feminine, so 'women' is explicit in the Greek here. Grinding grain with a hand mill was a daily domestic task typically done by women. The imagery pairs with the previous verse: whether in rest (bed) or work (grinding), the separation is sudden and total.
36. This verse is absent from many early manuscripts and is likely assimilated from Matthew 24:40. The SBLGNT includes it in brackets. We include it here following the SBLGNT text but note its disputed status. The pattern of three pairs (bed, mill, field) creates a comprehensive picture: judgment reaches into every sphere of life.
37. The Greek aetoi can mean either 'eagles' or 'vultures.' Since eagles do not typically feed on carrion while vultures do, and the saying describes gathering around a corpse (sōma, 'body'), 'vultures' is the more accurate zoological rendering. The proverb is enigmatic — it may mean that judgment, like vultures, finds its target inevitably, or that the signs of the end will be as unmistakable as vultures circling over death. Jesus answers the 'where' question with a riddle rather than a map coordinate.

18

Summary: *Luke 18 opens with two parables on prayer — the persistent widow and the unjust judge, followed by the Pharisee and the tax collector — then moves through Jesus's teaching on children and the kingdom, the encounter with the rich ruler, a third passion prediction, and the healing of a blind man near Jericho. The chapter traces a thematic arc from persistent, humble prayer to radical surrender of wealth and status, culminating in faith-driven healing.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (unique to Luke) is a masterclass in reversal: the righteous man leaves unjustified while the sinner goes home right with God. The rich ruler episode reveals that salvation is 'impossible' for humans but 'possible with God' — a statement that redefines the entire framework of religious achievement. Peter's question about the disciples' own sacrifice and Jesus's response promise both present-age restoration and eternal life.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'justified rather than the other' (v. 14) uses dikaiōtheis in a way that anticipates Pauline theology — we render it without importing later theological systems. The 'camel through the eye of a needle' (v. 25) is rendered literally; we do not adopt the later medieval legend about a small gate called 'The Needle's Eye,' as there is no historical evidence for it.*

Connections: *The persistent widow connects to the eschatological discourse of chapter 17 — God will vindicate his elect. The Pharisee-tax collector parable connects to Luke's programmatic concern with reversal (1:52-53, 14:11, 16:15). The rich ruler parallels Mark 10:17-31 and Matthew 19:16-30. The blind man's healing (paralleling Mark 10:46-52) serves as the final healing miracle before the Jerusalem entry.*

¹Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not give up, ²Declaring, There was in a city a pass judgment on, which feared not God, neither regarded man. ³There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' ⁴For a time he refused. But afterward he said to himself, 'Even though I do not fear God or respect anyone, ⁵Yet because this widow troubles me, I will give justice to her, so that not by her continual

coming she wear out me. ⁶And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸I tell you, he will bring about justice for them quickly. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" ⁹He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and looked down on everyone else: ¹⁰"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people — swindlers, the unjust, adulterers — or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I acquire.' ¹³But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift his eyes toward heaven, but beat his chest, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' ¹⁴I tell you, this man went home justified rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted." ¹⁵People were also bringing infants to him so that he might touch them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. ¹⁶But Jesus called them to himself, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁷Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." ¹⁸A certain ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁹Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. ²⁰You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honor your father and mother.'" ²¹He said, "I have kept all these since my youth." ²²When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and distribute it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." ²³When he heard this, he became deeply grieved, because he was extremely wealthy. ²⁴Jesus, seeing his grief, said, "How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶Those who heard this said, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷He said, "What is impossible with people is possible with God." ²⁸Peter said, "Look, we have left what we had and followed you." ²⁹He said to them, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God ³⁰Indeed, who will not accept manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting. ³¹Taking the Twelve aside, he said to them, "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³²For he will be handed over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon. ³³After flogging him, they will kill him. And on the third day he will rise." ³⁴But the disciples understood none of this. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was being said. ³⁵As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting beside the road, begging. ³⁶Hearing a crowd passing by, he asked what was happening. ³⁷They told him, "Jesus the Nazarene is passing by." ³⁸He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ³⁹Those in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁰Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked him, ⁴¹"What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me see again." ⁴²Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight. Your faith has saved you." ⁴³Gave praise to god, immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God — and all the people, when they saw it.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Luke provides the interpretive key before the parable itself — an unusual technique. The verb *enkakein* ('to lose heart, to give up, to grow weary') suggests the temptation to stop praying when answers are delayed. The infinitive *dein* ('it is necessary') frames persistent prayer as a divine requirement, not merely a recommendation.
2. The judge is characterized by two negatives: no fear of God (the vertical relationship) and no respect for people (the horizontal relationship). The verb *entrepomenos* ('regarding, respecting, having shame before') implies a complete absence of social conscience. This is not a model of God but a foil — if even this judge eventually responds, how much more will a just God?
3. The imperfect *ērchetō* ('she kept coming') indicates repeated, persistent visits — not a single request. The verb *ekdikēson* ('vindicate, grant justice to') does not mean 'avenge' in the modern sense of retaliation but rather 'render a just verdict.' A widow in the ancient world had no male advocate and was legally vulnerable — her persistence was her only leverage.
4. The phrase *epi chronon* ('for a time') indicates a significant delay, not a brief pause. The judge's internal monologue (*eipen en heautō*, 'said within himself') reveals that his eventual action is motivated entirely by self-interest, not justice — making the a fortiori argument of verses 6-8 even more powerful.

5. The verb hypopiazē ('wear out, strike under the eye, give a black eye') is a boxing metaphor — the judge fears the widow will figuratively beat him into submission. The coarse humor is deliberate: a powerful judge is being pummeled by a powerless widow's persistence. The word kopon ('trouble, weariness') reinforces that her persistence is her only weapon.
6. Luke calls Jesus 'the Lord' (ho kyrios), his characteristic title for Jesus in the narrative framework. The phrase ho kritēs tēs adikias ('the judge of unrighteousness') is a Semitic genitive construction meaning 'the unrighteous judge.' Jesus draws attention to the judge's own words as the basis for the argument from lesser to greater.
7. The phrase eklektōn autou ('his chosen ones, his elect') carries covenantal weight — these are people God has specifically chosen and bound himself to. The verb makrothymeī ('is patient, delays') is ambiguous: is God patient with the elect (sustaining them during the wait) or patient regarding their enemies (delaying judgment)? We render as a second rhetorical question to preserve the ambiguity.
8. The phrase en tachei ('quickly, speedily, without delay') creates a tension with the parable's emphasis on prolonged waiting — 'quickly' is from God's perspective, not the petitioner's. The final question (ara heurēsei tēn pistin, 'will he indeed find the faith?') is haunting and unanswered. The article tēn before pistin ('the faith') may specify the kind of faith described in this parable — persistent, trusting prayer. Jesus leaves the question open, challenging the listener.
9. Luke again provides the interpretive key before the parable. The perfect participle pepoithotas ('having trusted, being confident') indicates a settled, ongoing self-assurance. The verb exouthenountas ('despising, treating as nothing') is strong — it means to regard others as utterly worthless. The combination of self-righteousness and contempt for others is the target of what follows.
10. The verb anebēsan ('went up') reflects Jerusalem's topography — the temple was on the highest point. The pairing of a Pharisee (the religious elite, known for scrupulous Torah observance) with a telōnēs ('tax collector,' despised as a collaborator with Rome and assumed to be corrupt) creates the maximum possible social and moral contrast for a Jewish audience.
11. The phrase pros heauton ('to himself' or 'about himself') is ambiguous — it could mean he prayed silently or that his prayer was self-directed rather than God-directed. His prayer is technically a thanksgiving (eucharisteō) but functions as self-congratulation. Every comparison is negative: he defines himself by what he is not rather than by who God is. The climactic 'or even like this tax collector' (ē kai hōs houtos ho telōnēs) drips with contempt — he has noticed the man and judged him.
12. The Torah required fasting only on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:29-31). Fasting twice weekly (Monday and Thursday, the traditional days) was a voluntary Pharisaic practice that exceeded the law's requirements. Similarly, tithing 'everything I acquire' (panta hosa ktōmai) goes beyond the Torah's agricultural tithe — he tithes even purchased goods, in case the seller had not tithed. His claims are probably truthful, which makes the parable's verdict all the more startling.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 16:29-31. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Every detail contrasts with the Pharisee: the tax collector stands 'far off' (makrothen) rather than prominently, refuses to raise his eyes (the normal posture of prayer), and beats his chest (etypon to stēthos, a gesture of grief and self-condemnation). The verb hilasthēti ('be merciful, be propitiated') is related to hilastērion ('mercy seat, place of atonement') — he is essentially asking God to do for him what the Day of Atonement sacrifice does: to cover his sin. The article tō hamartōlō ('the sinner') is significant — he does not say 'a sinner' but 'the sinner,' as though he is the only one.
14. The perfect participle dedikaiōmenos ('having been justified, declared righteous') is a divine passive — God is the one who justifies. This is startling: the tax collector, who offered nothing but confession, leaves in right standing with God, while the Pharisee, who exceeded every requirement, does not. The concluding proverb (repeated from 14:11) is Luke's signature reversal theme. The verb katebē ('went down') contrasts with anebēsan ('went up') in verse 10 — the physical descent from the temple mirrors the spiritual descent of humility.
15. Luke uses brephē ('infants, babies') rather than Mark's paidia ('children'), emphasizing that these were very young — too young to come on their own. The verb haptētai ('to touch') implies a blessing through physical contact. The disciples' rebuke (epetimōn) uses the same word used for rebuking demons and storms, suggesting they viewed the interruption as inappropriate and beneath Jesus's dignity.
16. Jesus shifts from brephē ('infants') to paidia ('children') — a broader term that includes the infants but extends the principle. The present imperative with mē (mē kōlyete, 'stop hindering') implies the disciples are currently doing something that must cease. The phrase tōn toioutōn ('of such as these, to such ones') clarifies that the kingdom belongs not to children per se but to those who share their characteristics — dependence, receptivity, lack of status.
17. The double negative ou mē ('never, by no means') is the strongest form of negation in Greek — there are no exceptions. The comparison 'like a child' (hōs paidion) is about how one receives, not about innocence or purity. Children in the ancient world had no legal standing, no achievements to present, no leverage — they could only receive what was given. This connects directly to the Pharisee-tax collector parable: the one who receives God's mercy without presenting credentials is the one who enters.
18. Luke identifies the man as an archōn ('ruler, official') — Matthew calls him 'young' (neaniskos) and Mark simply 'a man.' The title 'Good Teacher' (didaskale agathe) is unusual and becomes the basis for Jesus's response. The question itself contains a tension: 'inherit' (klēronomēsō) implies receiving a gift, while 'what must I do' (ti poiēsas) implies earning it.

19. Jesus's response does not deny his own goodness but challenges the ruler's casual use of the term. The statement 'No one is good except God alone' (oudeis agathos ei mē heis ho theos) establishes an absolute standard that will prove relevant: if only God is truly good, then human moral achievement alone cannot secure eternal life. The implicit question is whether the ruler understands the full weight of calling someone 'good.'
20. Jesus cites five of the Ten Commandments — all from the second table (duties toward other people) — but conspicuously omits the tenth: 'You shall not covet.' Given the story's outcome, this omission may be deliberate. The order differs from the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 20) but follows the Septuagint order in some manuscripts (Deuteronomy 5:17-18 LXX places adultery before murder).
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 20 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 5:17-18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The verb ephylaxa ('I have guarded, kept, observed') implies careful, watchful obedience. The phrase ek neotētos ('from youth') refers to the age of accountability (around twelve or thirteen in Jewish practice). Jesus does not dispute his claim — this man may genuinely have lived an outwardly commandment-keeping life. The problem lies elsewhere.
22. The phrase eti hen soi leipei ('one thing still remains lacking for you') pierces through the ruler's self-assessment. The command is fourfold: sell (pōlēson), distribute (diados), come (deuro), follow (akolouthēi). Luke's version specifies 'everything' (panta hosa echeis) and 'distribute to the poor' (diados ptōchois), making the demand as radical as possible. The promise of 'treasure in heaven' (thēsauros en tois ouranois) reframes wealth: true riches are stored elsewhere.
23. The adjective perilypos ('deeply grieved, exceedingly sorrowful') is the same word used of Jesus in Gethsemane (Mark 14:34). Luke adds sphodra ('exceedingly, extremely') to plousios ('rich'), emphasizing the magnitude of what is being asked. The man's sorrow confirms both his genuine desire and his inability to pay the cost. Luke does not record him leaving — a subtle openness that Mark's account resolves more definitively (Mark 10:22).
24. The adverb dyskōlōs ('with difficulty, hardly') is the key word — entering the kingdom is not impossible for the wealthy (as verse 27 will clarify) but extremely difficult. The phrase ta chrēmata echontes ('those having possessions') describes not merely the rich but those who hold onto their possessions as defining possessions.
25. The image is deliberately absurd — a kamēlon ('camel'), the largest animal in Palestine, through a trēmatis belonēs ('eye of a needle'), the smallest opening. There is no historical evidence for a medieval legend about a small gate called 'The Needle's Eye' in Jerusalem. Some manuscripts read kamilon ('rope') instead of kamēlon ('camel'), which would create a more logical comparison (rope through needle), but the harder reading (camel) is almost certainly original. The hyperbole underscores the impossibility of wealth-based entry into the kingdom.
26. The question reveals the audience's assumption: if the wealthy — who were commonly viewed as blessed by God — cannot enter the kingdom, then salvation seems impossible for anyone. The verb sōthēnai ('to be saved') broadens the discussion from kingdom entry to salvation itself. Their shock is genuine and theologically significant.
27. This is the theological center of the passage. The adjective adynata ('impossible things') is unqualified — Jesus does not soften it to 'difficult.' Human effort cannot achieve salvation; only divine power can accomplish it. This echoes the angel's word to Mary in 1:37: 'Nothing will be impossible with God' (ouk adynatēsei para tou theou pan rhēma).
28. Peter's statement is an implicit question: if the rich ruler failed to give up everything, what about those who did? The phrase ta idia ('our own things, what belonged to us') is more modest than Mark's panta ('everything') — Luke's Peter does not claim to have left 'everything' but rather 'what was ours.' The aorist verbs aphentes ('having left') and ēkolouthēsamen ('we followed') present the decision as completed and definitive.
29. Luke's list of what might be left behind includes 'wife' (gynaika), which is unique among the Synoptic parallels and provocative — it does not necessarily advocate abandoning a spouse but recognizes that discipleship may require separation (cf. 14:26). The phrase heneken tēs basileias tou theou ('for the sake of the kingdom of God') replaces Mark's 'for my sake and the gospel's,' focusing on the kingdom rather than Jesus personally.
30. The promise is twofold: pollaplasiona ('many times more, manifold') in this present age (en tō kairō toutō), plus eternal life (zōēn aiōnion) in the age to come. Luke omits Mark's specification of 'houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields' as well as 'with persecutions,' offering a more streamlined promise. The two-age framework (this age/the coming age) reflects standard Jewish eschatology.
31. This is Jesus's third and most detailed passion prediction in Luke (cf. 9:22, 9:44). The phrase telesthēsetai panta ta gegrammena ('everything written will be completed/fulfilled') frames the passion as the fulfillment of scripture, not a tragic accident. Luke's version uniquely emphasizes prophetic fulfillment — Mark and Matthew focus more on the events themselves.
32. The sequence of passive verbs (paradothēsetai, empaichthēsetai, hybristhēsetai, emptysthēsetai) creates a crescendo of humiliation. The 'Gentiles' (ethnesin) refers to the Roman authorities — Jesus specifies that his death will involve both Jewish and Roman agency. The verb hybristhēsetai ('to be treated with hubris, outrageously mistreated') implies deliberate degradation.
33. The verb mastigōsantes ('having flogged') refers to the Roman flagellum — a whip with embedded bone and metal that tore flesh. The prediction moves from humiliation through death to resurrection in a single sentence. The phrase tē hēmera tē tritē ('on the third day') is the standard early Christian formula for the resurrection (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:4).
34. Luke's threefold emphasis on incomprehension is unique and emphatic: they did not understand (synēkan), the meaning was hidden (kekrymmenon) from them, and they did not know (eginōskon) what was said. The passive kekrymmenon ('having been hidden') suggests divine

concealment — God deliberately veiled the meaning until after the resurrection (cf. 24:45, where the risen Jesus 'opens their minds'). This is not merely intellectual failure but a divinely imposed limitation.

35. Luke places the healing as Jesus approaches Jericho, while Mark 10:46 places it as Jesus leaves Jericho — a well-known discrepancy. Various harmonizations have been proposed (two Jerichos, two healings), but we render Luke's text as written. Mark names the man Bartimaeus; Luke does not. The blind beggar sat beside the road (para tēn hodon), the only location where a beggar could access passing travelers.
36. The imperfect epythnato ('he was asking, he kept asking') suggests repeated inquiry — the blind man could hear but not see the commotion and persistently sought information. The optative eiē ('might be') indicates indirect discourse in a formal literary style characteristic of Luke.
37. The designation Nazōraios ('Nazarene') identifies Jesus by his hometown of Nazareth. The present tense parerchetai ('is passing by') conveys immediacy — the opportunity is now and will not last. The crowd serves as intermediary between the blind man and Jesus.
38. The title 'Son of David' (huie Daid) is a messianic title — the blind man confesses Jesus as the expected Davidic Messiah. This is remarkable: a blind beggar sees what the disciples cannot (v. 34). The plea eleēson me ('have mercy on me') uses the same verb as the tax collector's prayer in 18:13, connecting the two stories thematically.
39. As with the parents bringing children (v. 15), the crowd tries to prevent access to Jesus, and as with the persistent widow (vv. 1-8), refusal only intensifies the plea. The imperfect ekrazen ('he kept crying out') paired with pollō mallon ('much more, all the more') shows an escalation — he refuses to be silenced. His persistence mirrors the parable that opened this chapter.
40. The verb statheis ('having stood still, having stopped') is significant — Jesus halts his journey to Jerusalem for this one man. The verb ekeleusen ('commanded, ordered') shows authority — Jesus directs the same crowd that tried to silence the man to now bring him forward. The question that follows (v. 41) is not for information but for the man's own confession of need.
41. Jesus asks the same question he implicitly asked the rich ruler — 'What do you want?' The blind man's answer is direct and humble: anablepsō ('to see again, to look up') implies he was not born blind but had lost his sight. His address kyrie ('Lord') may be simple respect ('sir') or a deeper confession, given his use of 'Son of David' earlier.
42. The imperative anablepsō ('see again!') is a command, not a prayer — Jesus speaks healing into existence with a word. The phrase hē pistis sou sesōken se ('your faith has saved you') is identical to 17:19 (the grateful leper), again using sōzō to indicate that physical healing and spiritual salvation are bound together. The blind man's faith was demonstrated in his persistent refusal to be silenced.
43. The adverb parachrēma ('immediately, at once') is a Lukan favorite for emphasizing the instantaneous nature of divine action. The healed man ēkolouthēi ('was following') Jesus — the imperfect tense suggests ongoing discipleship, not a one-time response. Unlike the rich ruler who went away grieving, the blind man follows. The chapter ends with communal praise (pas ho laos, 'all the people'), a characteristic Lukan conclusion that frames the miracle as a public revelation of God's power.

19

Summary: *Luke 19 narrates Zacchaeus's conversion in Jericho, the parable of the ten minas (pounds), Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, his weeping over the city, and the cleansing of the temple. The chapter marks the decisive transition from the travel narrative (9:51-19:27) to Jesus's Jerusalem ministry. Themes of wealth, repentance, judgment, and kingship converge as Jesus enters his final week.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Zacchaeus story (unique to Luke) is the counterexample to the rich ruler of chapter 18 — another wealthy man who, unlike the ruler, actually surrenders his wealth and receives salvation. The parable of the minas differs from Matthew's parable of the talents (25:14-30) in key details: the nobleman goes to 'receive a kingdom,' and his citizens send a delegation rejecting his rule — likely an allusion to Archelaus's contested succession in 4 BC, an event the original audience would have recognized. Jesus's weeping over Jerusalem (unique to Luke) is one of only two recorded instances of Jesus weeping, the other being at Lazarus's tomb (John 11:35).*

Translation Friction: *The parable of the minas and Matthew's parable of the talents share significant overlap but differ enough to be treated as separate traditions. We render Luke's version on its own terms without harmonizing. The 'cleansing of the temple' is placed differently in John (2:13-22); we follow Luke's chronology. The phrase 'today salvation has come to this house' (v. 9) is rendered without importing later systematic theology about the mechanism of salvation.*

Connections: Zacchaeus connects to the theme of tax collectors throughout Luke (3:12, 5:27-32, 7:29, 15:1, 18:10-14). The parable of the minas echoes the parable of the talents (Matthew 25) but with distinctive political overtones. The triumphal entry fulfills Zechariah 9:9 (though Luke does not quote it explicitly, unlike Matthew 21:5). Jesus's weeping connects to the prophetic lament tradition (Jeremiah 8:18-9:1). The temple cleansing quotes Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11.

¹Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. ²A man was there named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he could not because of the crowd, since he was short in stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore-fig tree to see him, because Jesus was about to pass that way. ⁵When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." ⁶He hurried down and welcomed Jesus joyfully. ⁷When the people saw this, they all grumbled, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." ⁸But Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I am giving half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone of anything, I am paying back four times as much." ⁹Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." ¹¹While they were listening to this, he went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and they supposed that the kingdom of God was about to appear immediately. ¹²He said, "A man of noble birth went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself and then return. ¹³He called ten of his slaves and gave them ten minas, saying, 'Conduct business with this until I come back.' ¹⁴But his citizens hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to rule over us.' ¹⁵When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered the slaves to whom he had given the money to be called to him so that he could find out what they had earned by conducting business. ¹⁶The first came forward, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas more.' ¹⁷He said to him, 'Well done, good slave! Because you have been faithful in a very small matter, you shall have authority over ten cities.' ¹⁸The second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has produced five minas.' ¹⁹He said to this one also, 'You shall be over five cities.' ²⁰Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina. I kept it stored away in a cloth. ²¹For I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man. You take out what you did not put in, and reap what you did not sow.' ²²He said to him, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked slave! You knew that I am a harsh man, taking out what I did not put in and reaping what I did not sow? ²³Then why did you not put my money in the bank? At least when I returned, I could have collected it with interest.' ²⁴Then he said to those standing by, 'Take the mina from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.' ²⁵They said to him, 'Master, he already has ten minas!' ²⁶I tell you, to everyone who has, more will be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. ²⁷But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to rule over them — bring them here and slaughter them in front of me.'" ²⁸After saying this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹As he approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰Declaring, Go you into the village over opposed to you. In the which at your entering you will find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat — loose him, and bring him hither. ³¹If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you are to say, 'The Lord has need of it.'" ³²Those who were sent went and found everything just as he had told them. ³³As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" ³⁴They said, "The Lord has need of it." ³⁵They brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they put Jesus on it. ³⁶As he rode along, people spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷As he was now approaching the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, ³⁸Declaring, Blessed be the King that comes by the authority of the Lord — peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. ³⁹Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." ⁴⁰He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would cry out." ⁴¹As he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, ⁴²Declaring, If you hadst known, even you, at least in this your day, the things which belong to your peace! but now they are hid from your eyes. ⁴³For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and surround you and hem you in on every side. ⁴⁴They will dash you to the ground — you and your children within you. They will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation." ⁴⁵Then he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling, ⁴⁶Declaring to them, It is written, My home is the home of petition — but you have made it a den of thieves. ⁴⁷He was teaching daily in

the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leading men of the people were seeking to destroy him, ⁴⁸Could not find what they might do — for all the people were very eager to listen to him.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The imperfect *diērcheto* ('was passing through') suggests Jesus intended to travel through Jericho without stopping — the encounter with Zacchaeus will interrupt his transit. Jericho was a prosperous city near the Jordan River, a major customs and taxation center on the trade route from the east.
2. The name *Zakchaïos* is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Zakkai* ('pure, innocent, righteous') — an ironic name for a man whose profession made him ritually and socially impure. The title *architelōnēs* ('chief tax collector') appears only here in the New Testament and indicates he supervised other tax collectors in the Jericho district, profiting from their collections. The detail 'he was wealthy' (*autos plousios*) immediately connects him to the rich ruler of 18:18-23.
3. The imperfect *ežētei* ('he was seeking, he kept trying') indicates persistent effort. The phrase *tē hēlikia mikros* ('small in stature/height') is stated without judgment — Luke simply explains the physical obstacle. The detail is practical: the crowd would not have made way for a despised tax collector, so his short stature compounded his social exclusion.
4. The verb *prodramōn* ('having run ahead') shows undignified haste — a wealthy man running was socially inappropriate in the ancient Near East (cf. the father in 15:20). The *sykomorea* ('sycamore-fig') is a distinct species from the *sykaminō* ('mulberry') of 17:6 — it has a short trunk with wide, low branches, making it easy to climb. Luke specifies that Jesus was going to pass by that exact spot, setting up the 'chance' encounter that is anything but accidental.
5. Jesus calls Zacchaeus by name — unexplained by the narrative, suggesting either prior knowledge or supernatural perception. The verb *dei* ('it is necessary, I must') indicates divine compulsion, the same word used for the necessity of the passion (9:22, 18:31). The word *sēmeron* ('today') is a theologically loaded term in Luke, always marking the present moment of salvation (2:11, 4:21, 23:43). Jesus does not ask permission but announces his intention.
6. Zacchaeus's response mirrors Jesus's urgency: *speusas* ('having hurried') echoes Jesus's *speusas* in verse 5. The verb *hypedexato* ('welcomed, received as a guest') implies formal hospitality. The participle *chairōn* ('rejoicing') shows that the encounter is received as gift, not imposition. The contrast with the rich ruler's grief (18:23) is stark — same demand for radical surrender, opposite emotional response.
7. The verb *diegongyzon* ('they were grumbling, murmuring') echoes Israel's wilderness complaints and is a recurring response to Jesus's association with sinners in Luke (5:30, 15:2). The word *pantes* ('all') indicates universal disapproval — not just Pharisees but the entire crowd. The verb *katalysai* ('to find lodging, to be a guest') means Jesus accepted the full hospitality of the house, sharing table and shelter with a 'sinner' (*hamartōlō*).
8. The verb *statheis* ('having stood') indicates a formal, public declaration. The present tense *didōmi* ('I am giving') and *apodidōmi* ('I am paying back') may indicate a new resolution or may describe an existing practice — the Greek is ambiguous. The fourfold restitution (*tetraploun*) exceeds the Torah's requirement (Numbers 5:7 requires the principal plus one-fifth) and matches the penalty for stealing and slaughtering a sheep (Exodus 22:1). The verb *esykophantēsa* ('extorted, defrauded') is the same word used for the soldiers' question in 3:14.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 5:7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 22:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The word *sēmeron* ('today') echoes verse 5 and is the fulfillment of the divine necessity announced there. 'Salvation' (*sōtēria*) comes to the 'house' (*oikō*) — extending beyond Zacchaeus to his entire household. The phrase 'son of Abraham' (*huios Abraam*) reclaims Zacchaeus's identity: despite his profession and reputation, he belongs to the covenant people. Jesus does not say Zacchaeus has become a son of Abraham but that he is one — his covenant identity was never lost, only obscured.
10. This verse functions as a mission statement for Jesus in Luke's Gospel, summarizing the theology of chapter 15 (the lost sheep, lost coin, lost son) in a single sentence. The two infinitives *zētēsai* ('to seek') and *sōsai* ('to save') present Jesus as active searcher, not passive recipient — he goes to the lost, not the other way around. The neuter participle *to apolōlos* ('the lost thing, that which has been destroyed') encompasses anyone in the state of lostness. This verse directly answers the crowd's grumbling in verse 7.
11. Luke explicitly states the parable's purpose: to correct the expectation that the kingdom would arrive instantly (*parachrēma*, 'immediately') upon Jesus's entry into Jerusalem. The proximity to Jerusalem (*engys einai Ierousalēm*) and the crowd's eschatological excitement provide the interpretive context. The verb *anaphainesthai* ('to appear, to be revealed') suggests they expected a dramatic, visible manifestation of God's rule.
12. The scenario closely mirrors the historical precedent of Archelaus, son of Herod the Great, who traveled to Rome in 4 BC to receive confirmation of his kingship from Augustus. The Jericho audience would have recognized the allusion immediately, as Herod had built a winter palace near Jericho. The verb *hypostrepsai* ('to return') foreshadows the return of the Son of Man.
13. A *mna* ('mina') was a Greek unit of currency worth about 100 denarii — roughly three to four months' wages for a laborer. Unlike Matthew's parable of the talents (where different amounts are given to different servants), here each slave receives one mina each, making the different outcomes purely a matter of effort and skill. The verb *pragmateusasthe* ('do business, trade, conduct commerce') is a clear commercial term.

14. This detail is unique to Luke's parable and has no parallel in Matthew's version. Historically, a Jewish delegation of fifty traveled to Rome to oppose Archelaus's appointment (Josephus, *Antiquities* 17.11.1). In the parable, the citizens (*politai*, those who owe civic allegiance) represent those who reject the nobleman's — and by extension, Jesus's — kingship. The verb *basileuein* ('to rule as king') makes the political and theological stakes explicit.
15. The nobleman returns with the kingdom secured — his authority is now confirmed. The verb *diepragmateusanto* ('they had gained by trading') is a compound form of the commercial verb from verse 13. The accounting scene represents final judgment: the absent king returns and demands an account.
16. A tenfold return (1,000 percent) represents extraordinary stewardship. The slave attributes the success to 'your mina' (*hē mna sou*), acknowledging that the capital belonged to the master. The address *kyrie* ('master, lord') maintains the master-slave relationship.
17. The exclamation *euge* ('well done, excellent') is rare in the New Testament. The phrase *en elachistō* ('in a very small thing') is startling — a mina was not an insignificant sum, yet compared to ruling ten cities it is tiny. The principle: faithfulness with small trust leads to responsibility over much greater things. The reward is authority (*exousian*), not rest — kingdom service expands rather than ends.
18. A fivefold return is still excellent, though less than the first slave's tenfold. The verb *epoiēsen* ('made, produced') differs from the first slave's *prosērgasato* ('earned in addition'), perhaps reflecting a slight narrative variation without theological significance.
19. The reward is proportional: ten minas earned yields authority over ten cities; five minas earned yields five cities. This proportionality distinguishes Luke's parable from Matthew's, where both the five-talent and two-talent servants receive the same commendation. The brevity of the response — no 'well done' or 'good slave' — may reflect the proportional nature of the reward.
20. The *soudarion* ('cloth, face-cloth, handkerchief') was a small piece of fabric — storing money in it rather than investing it represents the deliberate choice to do nothing. The slave returns exactly what was given, with no increase. The verb *apokeimenēn* ('stored away, laid aside') suggests hiding rather than protecting.
21. The adjective *austēros* ('harsh, strict, exacting') is the slave's characterization of the master, not the narrator's. The accusations — taking what he did not deposit and reaping what he did not sow — portray the master as exploitative. Whether this reflects the slave's genuine perception or a self-serving excuse is left to the reader. In the parabolic context, it represents a distorted view of God that produces paralysis rather than faithful action.
22. The master turns the slave's own characterization against him: 'Out of your own mouth' (*ek tou stomatos sou*) means 'by your own testimony.' The address *ponēre doule* ('wicked slave') contrasts sharply with 'good slave' (*agathe doule*) in verse 17. The master does not deny being *austēros* but uses the slave's own assessment to condemn his inaction: if you believed I was demanding, you should have been more motivated, not less.
23. The *trapezan* ('table, bank') refers to a money-changer's table where deposits could earn interest (*tokos*, 'interest, offspring'). Even the minimal action of depositing the money would have produced some return. The Torah prohibited charging interest to fellow Israelites (Deuteronomy 23:19-20) but allowed it with foreigners — Jesus uses banking as a parabolic illustration, not an endorsement of lending practices.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 23:19-20 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. The redistribution is counterintuitive: the mina goes to the one who already has the most, not to the one with five. The 'those standing by' (*tois parestōsin*) are courtiers or attendants, emphasizing the king's authority to command. The principle of compounding faithfulness — more is given to those who have used what they were given — is made explicit in the next verse.
25. This interjection by the bystanders (or possibly the other slaves) expresses surprise at what seems unfair — giving more to the one who has the most. The protest highlights the counterintuitive logic of the kingdom, which defies human expectations of equal distribution.
26. This saying appears in multiple contexts across the Gospels (Matthew 13:12, 25:29; Mark 4:25), always articulating the same principle: faithfulness increases capacity while unfaithfulness diminishes it. 'The one who has' refers not to material wealth but to productive use of what has been entrusted. The passive verbs (*dothēsetai*, *arthēsetai*) are divine passives — God is the agent of both giving and taking.
27. This is the most violent conclusion to any of Jesus's parables. The verb *kataspaxate* ('slaughter, butcher') is graphic — it was used for killing sacrificial animals. Historically, Archelaus did execute his opponents upon receiving his kingdom. Within the parable, this represents the fate of those who actively oppose the king's rule (v. 14). Whether this maps directly onto eschatological judgment or functions as a warning within the parabolic world is a matter of interpretation. We render the Greek as stated.
28. The imperfect *eporeueto* ('he was going') resumes the travel narrative, and *anabainōn* ('going up') reflects Jerusalem's elevation — all roads to Jerusalem ascend. The phrase 'went on ahead' (*emprosthen*) shows Jesus leading, with the crowd and disciples following. The transition from parable to narrative is abrupt: the warning about rejected kingship gives way to the very journey that will lead to its fulfillment.
29. Bethphage ('house of unripe figs') and Bethany ('house of affliction' or 'house of dates') were villages on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem. The Mount of Olives (to *oros* to *kaloumenon Elaiōn*) held eschatological significance: Zechariah 14:4 prophesied that the LORD would stand on it in the last days. Jesus's approach from this direction is symbolically charged.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Zechariah 14:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

30. The pōlon ('colt, young animal') in Luke is not specified as a donkey's colt (Matthew and John make this explicit). The detail that no one had ever sat on it (oudeis pōpote anthrōpōn ekathisen) indicates a ritually unused animal — in the Old Testament, animals dedicated to sacred purposes were to be unworked (Numbers 19:2, Deuteronomy 21:3, 1 Samuel 6:7). Jesus's foreknowledge of the colt's presence and status is either prophetic or pre-arranged.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 19:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 21:3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Samuel 6:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. The phrase ho kyrios autou chreian echei ('the Lord has need of it') is ambiguous: kyrios could mean 'the Lord' (Jesus, making a divine claim), 'the master' (the colt's owner, who has authorized the borrowing), or 'its owner' (explaining the action). In context, 'the Lord' as a reference to Jesus seems most likely, as the phrase serves as a password of sorts that the disciples are told will be sufficient.
32. The phrase kathōs eipen autois ('just as he had told them') emphasizes Jesus's prophetic accuracy and sovereign knowledge. The narrative moves briskly through the fulfillment of his instructions.
33. The plural hoi kyrioi autou ('its owners') is noteworthy — the colt was jointly owned, perhaps by a family. The question matches Jesus's prediction exactly (v. 31), further confirming his foreknowledge.
34. The disciples repeat Jesus's exact words, and the response is apparently sufficient — the owners do not object further. This suggests either that Jesus was known to the owners, that 'the Lord' functioned as an agreed-upon authorization, or that the narrative compresses a longer exchange.
35. The casting of garments (himatia, 'outer cloaks') over the animal serves as an improvised saddle but also echoes the coronation of Jehu, where supporters threw their cloaks under him on the steps (2 Kings 9:13). The verb epebibasan ('they set upon, they mounted') indicates the disciples physically helped Jesus onto the animal — a formal enthronement gesture.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Kings 9:13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The imperfect hypestrōnnyon ('they were spreading') indicates a continuous action as the procession moved — people kept laying cloaks in his path. This echoes 2 Kings 9:13 more directly. Luke omits the palm branches mentioned in John 12:13 and the 'branches from the fields' in Mark 11:8.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Kings 9:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. Luke specifies the location precisely: the katabasei ('descent, downward slope') of the Mount of Olives, where the panoramic view of Jerusalem and the temple would have come into full sight. Luke's version attributes the praise to 'the whole crowd of disciples' (hapan to plēthos tōn mathētōn) rather than the general crowd. The dynameis ('mighty works, miracles') they had witnessed become the basis for their praise.
38. The acclamation quotes Psalm 118:26 but Luke inserts 'the king' (ho basileus) into the psalm citation — making the royal claim explicit where the original psalm was more general. The phrase 'peace in heaven and glory in the highest' (en ouranō eirēnē kai doxa en hypsistois) echoes the angels' song at Jesus's birth (2:14) but reverses the direction: at the nativity, peace was proclaimed on earth; here, peace is proclaimed in heaven. The inclusio (literary bookend) connecting birth and entry into Jerusalem is deliberate.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 118:26 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. The Pharisees are 'in the crowd' (apo tou ochlou), not separate from it — they are witnesses to the procession. Their demand that Jesus silence the disciples reveals their alarm at the messianic implications of the acclamation. The address 'Teacher' (didaskale) rather than 'Lord' reflects their refusal to acknowledge Jesus's royal claim.
40. Jesus's response is among his most memorable sayings (unique to Luke). The imagery of stones crying out may echo Habakkuk 2:11 ('the stone will cry out from the wall'). The declaration implies that the praise is cosmically necessary — creation itself would testify if humans fell silent. The conditional ean ... siōpēsousin ('if they should be silent') uses a future indicative in a conditional clause, expressing a vivid, almost impossible hypothetical.
40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Habakkuk 2:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The verb eklausen ('he wept') indicates audible weeping or sobbing, not silent tears (for which dakryō would be used, as in John 11:35). This is unique to Luke and profoundly ironic: the crowd is celebrating while Jesus mourns. He weeps at the moment of his greatest public triumph because he sees what the crowd cannot — the city's coming destruction.
42. The sentence breaks off — an anacoluthon (grammatically incomplete sentence) that mimics the emotion of the speaker. The phrase kai sy ('even you') is emphatic: Jerusalem, of all cities, should have recognized the moment. The ta pros eirēnēn ('the things pertaining to peace') echoes the city's name (Yerushalayim, traditionally connected to shalom). The passive ekrybē ('they have been hidden') is a divine passive — God has concealed from Jerusalem what it needed to see, a judicial act of divine hardening.

43. The military language precisely describes a Roman siege: *charaka* ('palisade, siege embankment') refers to the wooden and earthen rampart that encircled a besieged city. The verb *perikyklōsousin* ('will encircle') and *synexousin* ('will press in, constrict') describe progressive tightening of the siege. This was fulfilled literally in AD 70 when Titus's forces built a circumvallation wall around Jerusalem (Josephus, War 5.12.1-2).
44. The verb *edaphiousin* ('dash to the ground, level, raze') is violent — it includes the image of smashing against the ground. The inclusion of 'your children within you' (*ta tekna sou en soi*) makes the prophecy personal and devastating. The phrase *ton kairon tēs episkopēs sou* ('the time of your visitation') is the theological crux: *episkopē* means 'visitation, inspection' — God has come to inspect his city and found it wanting. The *kairos* ('appointed time, decisive moment') is distinguished from *chronos* ('ordinary time'); this was the unique, unrepeatable moment of divine visitation that Jerusalem missed.
45. Luke's account of the temple cleansing is the most compressed of all four Gospels — he mentions only sellers (*pōlountas*), not buyers, money changers, or dove sellers. The verb *ekballein* ('to drive out, to throw out') is the same word used for casting out demons, giving the action a purging quality. The temple commerce, though necessary for sacrifice, had apparently expanded beyond appropriate bounds, commercializing sacred space.
46. Jesus combines two prophetic texts: Isaiah 56:7 ('my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations') and Jeremiah 7:11 ('Has this house become a den of robbers in your eyes?'). Luke omits Isaiah's 'for all nations' (which Mark 11:17 includes). The word *lēstōn* ('robbers, bandits') is stronger than 'thieves' — it implies violent, predatory exploitation. Jeremiah's original context was a warning that the first temple's destruction was imminent because the people treated it as a safe haven for injustice; Jesus implies the same fate for the second temple.
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 56:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 7:11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
47. The imperfect *ēn didaskōn* ('he was teaching') and *ezētoun* ('they were seeking') establish two ongoing, simultaneous activities: Jesus teaches publicly while the authorities plot privately. Luke adds *hoi prōtoi tou laou* ('the leading men of the people') to Mark's chief priests and scribes, broadening the opposition to include the lay aristocracy. The verb *apolesai* ('to destroy, to kill') is the same word used for what the flood did to Noah's generation (17:27).
48. The verb *exekremeto* ('hung upon, was suspended from') is a vivid metaphor — the people literally 'hung from him listening.' It appears only here in the New Testament. The popular support for Jesus creates a political obstacle that forces the authorities to seek covert means, which they eventually find through Judas (22:1-6). This verse sets up the tension that drives the passion narrative: the leaders want Jesus dead, but the people's devotion makes open action impossible.

20

Summary: *Luke 20 records a series of confrontations between Jesus and the Jerusalem authorities during his final week of teaching in the temple. The chapter moves through the question of Jesus's authority, the parable of the wicked tenants, the question about paying taxes to Caesar, the Sadducees' question about the resurrection, and Jesus's counter-question about David's son. Each encounter escalates the conflict that will lead to his arrest.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The parable of the wicked tenants is one of the clearest allegorical parables in the Synoptic tradition, with the vineyard owner representing God, the tenants representing Israel's leaders, the servants representing the prophets, and the beloved son representing Jesus. The 'render to Caesar' saying is one of the most cited and debated pronouncements in Christian political theology. The Sadducees' resurrection question provides rare insight into an intra-Jewish theological dispute that Jesus adjudicates by appealing to the Torah itself — the only scripture the Sadducees accepted.*

Translation Friction: *The parable of the wicked tenants has been historically misused to justify antisemitism. The parable targets the leadership class, not the Jewish people as a whole. We render the Greek as written and note the parable's allegorical dimensions without importing supersessionist theology. The 'render to Caesar' passage is deliberately ambiguous — Jesus does not resolve the tension between divine and imperial claims, and we do not resolve it either.*

Connections: *The vineyard parable draws on Isaiah 5:1-7 (the Song of the Vineyard). The rejected cornerstone quotation comes from Psalm 118:22, the same psalm quoted during the triumphal entry (19:38). The resurrection argument cites Exodus 3:6 (the burning bush). The 'David's son' question quotes Psalm 110:1, the most frequently cited Old Testament text in the New Testament.*

¹One day, as he was teaching the people in the temple and proclaiming the good news, the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted him. ²Spoke to him and stated, Tell us, by what authority doest you these things? or who is he that offered you this authority? ³He answered them, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me: ⁴Was the baptism of John from heaven, or from human origin?" ⁵They discussed it among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why did you not believe him?' ⁶But if we say, 'From human origin,' all the people will stone us, because they are convinced that John was a prophet." ⁷So they answered that they did not know where it came from. ⁸Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." ⁹He began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, leased it to tenant farmers, and went away for a long time. ¹⁰At harvest time he sent a slave to the tenants so they would give him his share of the vineyard's fruit. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. ¹¹He sent yet another slave, and they beat that one too, dishonored him, and sent him away empty-handed. ¹²He sent still a third, and they wounded this one too and threw him out. ¹³Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Perhaps they will respect him.' ¹⁴But when the tenants saw him, they discussed it among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance will be ours.' ¹⁵They threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? ¹⁶He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others." When they heard this, they said, "May it never be!" ¹⁷But Jesus looked directly at them and said, "Then what is the meaning of this scripture: 'The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone'? ¹⁸Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and the one on whom it falls — it will crush him." ¹⁹The scribes and the chief priests wanted to seize him at that very hour, but they feared the people, for they knew he had told this parable against them. ²⁰Watching for an opportunity, they sent spies who pretended to be sincere, so that they might catch him in something he said, in order to hand him over to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor. ²¹They questioned him, saying, "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach correctly and show no partiality, but teach the way of God truthfully. ²²Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" ²³But he saw through their craftiness and said to them, ²⁴"Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it bear?" They said, "Caesar's." ²⁵He said to them, "Then give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God." ²⁶They were unable to catch him in anything he said in front of the people, and amazed by his answer, they fell silent. ²⁷Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked, ²⁸"Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies leaving a wife but no children, the man should marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. ²⁹Now there were seven brothers. The first married a wife and died childless. ³⁰The second ³¹The third picked up her. And in like manner the seven also — then they departed no children, and died. ³²Finally, the woman also died. ³³In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For all seven had her as wife." ³⁴Jesus said to them, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. ³⁵But those who are considered worthy to attain that age and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. ³⁶For they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. ³⁷But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.' ³⁸He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all are alive to him." ³⁹Some of the scribes responded, "Teacher, you have spoken well." ⁴⁰For they no longer dared to ask him anything. ⁴¹Then he said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is David's son? ⁴²For David himself says in the Book of Psalms, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, ⁴³Till I make your enemies your footstool. ⁴⁴David thus calls him 'Lord' — so how can he be his son?" ⁴⁵While all the people were listening, he said to his disciples, ⁴⁶"Watch out for the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the places of honor at banquets. ⁴⁷They devour the houses of widows and make long prayers for appearance's sake. These will receive a more severe judgment."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Luke uses the verb *euangelizomenou* ('proclaiming good news, preaching the gospel'), unique to his version of this scene. The three groups — chief priests (*archiereis*), scribes (*grammateis*), and elders (*presbyteroi*) — constitute the Sanhedrin, the supreme Jewish governing council. Their approach is described as *epestēsan* ('stood upon, confronted'), implying an official and possibly hostile approach.

2. The double question targets both the nature ('what kind of authority') and the source ('who authorized you') of Jesus's actions. The word *exousia* ('authority, right, power') is a legal and religious term — they are demanding his credentials. The phrase *tauta poieis* ('you are doing these things') refers to the temple cleansing and the teaching; both require rabbinic or priestly authorization that Jesus has not sought.
3. Jesus's counter-question is a standard rabbinic technique — answering a question with a question was not evasion but a recognized form of argumentation. By establishing that they must answer first, Jesus shifts the power dynamic of the exchange.
4. The dichotomy is absolute: *ex ouranou* ('from heaven,' meaning 'from God') or *ex anthrōpōn* ('from humans,' meaning 'of merely human invention'). There is no middle ground. The question is strategically brilliant because the authorities' answer to this question will logically determine the answer to their own question about Jesus's authority — since John endorsed Jesus.
5. The verb *synlogisanto* ('they reasoned together, calculated together') reveals that their deliberation is political calculation, not theological inquiry. They evaluate each possible answer not for its truth but for its consequences. If John's baptism was from God, their failure to submit to it indicts them.
6. The verb *katalithasei* ('will stone') may be literal or hyperbolic — stoning was the Torah-prescribed punishment for blasphemy and false prophecy, and denying a true prophet could be perceived as blasphemous. The perfect participle *pepeismenos* ('having been convinced, firmly persuaded') indicates a settled, unshakeable popular conviction about John's prophetic status.
7. Their answer *mē eidenai pothen* ('not to know from where') is an admission of either ignorance or cowardice — the religious leaders of Israel profess inability to evaluate a major prophetic movement. The admission damages their own credibility: if they cannot assess John, how can they assess Jesus?
8. Jesus does not refuse to answer because he cannot but because they have refused to engage honestly. The logical implication is clear to the audience: if they had acknowledged John's divine authority, the answer about Jesus's authority would follow naturally. Their dishonesty forfeits their right to a direct answer.
9. The parable draws directly on Isaiah 5:1-7, where the vineyard represents Israel and the owner represents God. The *geōrgois* ('farmers, vine-dressers, tenants') are those entrusted with caring for what belongs to another. The detail *apedēmēsen chronous hikanous* ('went away for a considerable time') explains why the tenants might grow presumptuous — the owner's long absence leads them to act as though the vineyard were their own.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 5:1-7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The *kairō* ('at the appointed time, at the season') refers to the harvest — the owner sends for what is rightfully his. The verb *deirantes* ('having beaten, having flayed') indicates a physical assault. The slave represents the prophets sent to Israel's leaders demanding the fruit of faithful obedience. Being sent away *kenon* ('empty') means the owner received nothing of what was owed.
11. The verb *prosetheto* ('he added, he proceeded') is a Septuagintalism — a Hebrew idiom (*vayosef*, 'he added again') rendered literally in Greek. Each subsequent sending represents another prophetic mission. The addition of *atimasantes* ('having dishonored, having treated shamefully') escalates the violence beyond the first episode.
12. The escalation continues: the first slave was beaten, the second beaten and dishonored, the third *traumatisantes* ('wounded') and *exebalon* ('thrown out, expelled'). Luke uses three slaves (Mark has multiple unnamed servants); the threefold pattern creates a climactic buildup to the sending of the son. The history of Israel's treatment of the prophets (cf. Nehemiah 9:26, 2 Chronicles 36:15-16) is compressed into three episodes.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Nehemiah 9:26. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Chronicles 36:15-16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The phrase *ton huion mou ton agapēton* ('my beloved son') is identical to the divine voice at Jesus's baptism (3:22) and transfiguration (9:35), making the allegorical identification unmistakable. The word *isōs* ('perhaps') reveals the owner's vulnerability — he sends his most precious envoy without certainty of success, an astonishing portrayal of divine risk-taking. The question *ti poiēsō* ('what shall I do?') humanizes the owner's deliberation.
14. The tenants' reasoning reflects first-century land law: if an owner died without clear succession and the land was unclaimed, those working it could potentially claim it by possession. Their calculation is both logical and monstrous. The word *klēronomos* ('heir') and *klēronomia* ('inheritance') are covenantal terms — the inheritance of Israel's promises is at stake. The verb *apokteinōmen* ('let us kill') is a deliberative subjunctive expressing a cold, calculated decision.
15. Luke reverses Mark's order: in Mark 12:8, they kill the son first and then throw the body out; in Luke, they throw him out first and then kill him. Luke's order may reflect Jesus's actual death outside the walls of Jerusalem (Hebrews 13:12). The question *ti oun poiēsei* ('what then will he do?') turns the audience into judges of their own case — they must pronounce the verdict before realizing it applies to them.
16. In Luke (unlike Mark and Matthew), Jesus answers his own question rather than letting the audience answer. The phrase *allois* ('to others') is deliberately unspecified — it could refer to Gentiles, to new leaders, or to a renewed community. The audience's response *mē genoito* ('may it never happen!') is a strong deprecation indicating they understood the parable's implication and recoiled from it. This phrase is Paul's characteristic expression of horror (Romans 6:2, 9:14, etc.).

- 17.** The verb *emblepsas* ('having looked intently at, having fixed his gaze upon') conveys a penetrating, searching look. Jesus quotes Psalm 118:22, which was already a messianic text in Jewish interpretation. The 'builders' (*oikodomountes*) are the temple authorities — those responsible for constructing God's house. The *kephalēn gōnias* ('head of the corner, cornerstone') is the stone that determines the alignment of the entire structure. The rejected stone becomes the most important one.
- 17.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 118:22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 18.** This expansion of the stone imagery draws on Isaiah 8:14-15 (a stone of stumbling) and Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45 (the stone that crushes the statue). Two fates are described: those who stumble over the stone are 'shattered' (*synthlasthēsetai*), and those the stone falls upon are 'winnowed to dust' (*likmēsei*). The verb *likmēsei* ('will winnow, will scatter like chaff') is agricultural imagery — total pulverization. There is no neutral response to the cornerstone.
- 18.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 8:14-15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 18.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 2:34-35 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 19.** The phrase *en autē tē hōra* ('at that very hour') indicates an immediate, rage-driven impulse. The verb *epibalein tas cheiras* ('to lay hands upon, to seize') is a technical term for arrest. Their recognition that the parable was *pros autous* ('against them, directed at them') confirms the allegorical reading: they are the wicked tenants. Fear of the people (*ephobēthēsan ton laon*) is the only restraint, not conscience or uncertainty.
- 20.** The word *enkathetous* ('spies, secret agents, persons planted in ambush') appears only here in the New Testament. The verb *hypokrinomenous* ('pretending, play-acting') is the root of 'hypocrite' — they perform sincerity. The ultimate goal is *paradounai* ('to hand over, to betray') Jesus to the Roman governor (*hēgemonos*, Pontius Pilate). The authorities have moved from wanting to kill him (19:47) to a concrete strategy for using Roman power to accomplish it.
- 21.** The flattery is elaborate and calculated. The phrase *ou lambaneis prosōpon* ('you do not receive a face, you show no partiality') is a Septuagintalism translating the Hebrew *nasa panim*, a judicial term meaning to judge without favoritism. By praising Jesus's impartiality, the spies set up a question designed to force a politically compromising answer regardless of which side he takes.
- 22.** The word *phoron* ('tribute, tax') refers specifically to the Roman poll tax (*tributum capitis*), which was deeply resented as a symbol of subjugation. The question *exestin* ('is it lawful/permitted?') frames the issue in terms of Torah compliance. If Jesus says 'yes,' he alienates Jewish nationalists; if 'no,' he can be reported to Rome as a seditious revolutionary. The trap is a masterpiece of political engineering.
- 23.** The verb *katanoēsas* ('having perceived, having seen through') implies thorough understanding. The noun *panourgian* ('craftiness, cunning, trickery') is a strong word — it suggests malicious cleverness. Luke omits Jesus's counter-accusation 'Why are you testing me?' (found in Mark 12:15 and Matthew 22:18), moving directly to his response.
- 24.** The *dēnariou* ('denarius') was a Roman silver coin worth a day's wage, bearing the image (*eikona*) of the emperor (likely Tiberius) and an inscription (*epigraphēn*) reading 'Tiberius Caesar, Son of the Divine Augustus.' The word *eikōn* ('image') is the same word used in Genesis 1:26-27 (Septuagint) for humanity made in God's 'image' — a connection Jesus will exploit in the next verse. The fact that the spies can produce a Roman coin in the temple precincts is itself ironic.
- 24.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 1:26-27. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 25.** The verb *apodote* ('give back, return, repay') implies returning what already belongs to someone — the coin bears Caesar's image and therefore is already his. The parallel structure (*ta Kaisaros Kaisari ... ta tou theou tō theō*) creates an apparent equivalence, but the second clause subverts the first: if the coin bearing Caesar's image belongs to Caesar, then human beings bearing God's image belong to God. The claim of God is total and ultimate; the claim of Caesar is derivative and limited. Jesus neither endorses nor condemns Roman taxation but reframes the entire question.
- 26.** The verb *ischysan* ('they were able, they had the strength') with the negative *ouk* indicates complete failure of their strategy. The verb *thaumasantes* ('having been amazed, astonished') indicates genuine surprise — even his enemies recognize the brilliance of his response. The verb *esigēsān* ('they became silent, they held their peace') marks the end of this confrontation: the spies withdraw, speechless.
- 27.** Luke explains the Sadducees' theological position (*antilegontes anastasin mē einai*, 'denying that there is a resurrection') for his predominantly Gentile audience. The Sadducees were the priestly aristocracy who accepted only the Torah (five books of Moses) as authoritative and rejected the oral tradition, angels, spirits, and bodily resurrection — doctrines they considered innovations without Pentateuchal support.
- 28.** The Sadducees cite the levirate marriage law from Deuteronomy 25:5-6, which required a surviving brother to marry his deceased brother's widow and produce an heir in the dead brother's name. The verb *exanastēsē* ('raise up') is ironic — they use 'resurrection' language (*anastasis*) in the context of procreation while denying actual resurrection. The law's purpose was to preserve the deceased brother's name and inheritance in Israel.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 25:5-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** The number seven represents completeness — seven brothers ensures the scenario is exhaustive. The hypothetical case is likely a stock argument the Sadducees used regularly in debates with Pharisees about the resurrection.

30. Luke compresses the narrative here. The SBLGNT has only *kai ho deuteros* ('and the second') with the remaining details implied from context. Some manuscripts expand the verse, but the critical text is remarkably terse.
31. The phrase *hōsautōs de kai hoi hepta* ('likewise also the seven') telescopes the remaining four brothers into a single statement. The cumulative effect — seven marriages, seven deaths, no children — is designed to make the resurrection scenario seem absurd: whose wife would she be if all seven rise?
32. The word *hysteron* ('lastly, finally') closes the scenario. All eight parties are now dead, setting up the question in the next verse. The woman's death is mentioned without comment — she is the silent center of a legal puzzle constructed entirely by men.
33. The question assumes that resurrected life is simply a continuation of earthly life with all its social structures intact. The Sadducees consider this *reductio ad absurdum* proof that resurrection is logically impossible. Their error, as Jesus will show, lies in their assumption about the nature of the resurrected state.
34. The phrase *hoi huiōi tou aiōnos toutou* ('the sons of this age') is a Semitism meaning 'those who belong to the present age' — people living in the current world order. The two verbs *gamousin* ('marry,' active, typically of men) and *gamiskontai* ('are given in marriage,' passive, typically of women) reflect the ancient social reality of arranged marriages.
35. The phrase *hoi kataxiōthentes* ('those considered worthy, those deemed deserving') raises the question of who determines worthiness — the passive voice suggests God makes this determination. 'That age' (*tou aiōnos ekeinou*) is the age to come, the new creation. Jesus's answer demolishes the Sadducees' premise: resurrected life is qualitatively different from present life, not merely a continuation of it. Marriage, as a social institution tied to procreation and mortality, is unnecessary in a state where death no longer exists.
36. The word *isangeloi* ('equal to angels, angel-like') appears only here in the New Testament. The comparison is specific: like angels, the resurrected do not die and do not procreate — it does not mean they become angels. The chain of logic: no death no need for marriage (which exists partly to replace the dying) the Sadducees' question is based on a false premise. The phrase *huiōi theou* ('children of God') is defined by the following phrase: they are God's children precisely because they are *huiōi tēs anastaseōs* ('children of the resurrection').
37. Jesus's brilliance lies in citing the Torah itself — the only scripture the Sadducees accepted. The phrase *epi tēs batou* ('at the bush') uses a common method of scriptural reference (naming a passage by its prominent feature), referring to Exodus 3:6. The argument: God identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob long after their deaths. If they no longer exist, the statement is meaningless — God would be the God of nothing.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 3:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. The concluding statement is devastating to the Sadducean position: if God is the God of the living, and if he identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, then Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob must be alive. The phrase *pantes gar autō zōsin* ('for all are alive to him') is unique to Luke and extends the principle beyond the three patriarchs: from God's perspective, all the covenant dead are living. This is not a proof of bodily resurrection *per se* but of continued personal existence after death — which is the necessary precondition for resurrection.
39. The scribes who commend Jesus here are likely Pharisees, who affirmed the resurrection and would have been delighted to see the Sadducees' argument dismantled. The phrase *kalōs eipas* ('you have spoken well, you have answered beautifully') is a genuine academic compliment from theological allies on this particular point.
40. The verb *etolmōn* ('they dared, they had the courage') with the negative *ouketi* ('no longer') indicates that Jesus's series of responses has silenced all challengers. The progression through the chapter — Pharisees, Herodians (via spies), Sadducees — represents every major faction, and all have been defeated. The intellectual conflict is over; only political violence remains as their option.
41. Having silenced all challengers, Jesus now poses his own question. The 'they' (*legousin*) is impersonal — 'how is it said?' The question does not deny Davidic descent (which Matthew and Luke's genealogies affirm) but challenges whether 'son of David' adequately describes the Messiah's identity. The question introduces a christological riddle that the audience cannot resolve.
42. Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1, the most frequently cited Old Testament text in the New Testament. The Greek has *kyrios* ('Lord') for both the Hebrew *YHWH* and *Adonai*, creating an ambiguity that the Hebrew original distinguishes: 'YHWH said to my lord (adoni).' The psalm is attributed to David, and Jesus accepts Davidic authorship as the basis for his argument. The 'right hand' position (*ek dexiōn*) is the position of supreme honor and shared authority.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 110:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. The image of enemies as a footstool (*hypopodion tōn podōn*) derives from the ancient Near Eastern practice of a conqueror placing his foot on the neck of a defeated king (cf. Joshua 10:24). The 'until' (*heōs an*) does not imply a time limit on the enthronement but marks the completion of the conquest.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 110:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Joshua 10:24 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

44. The argument is straightforward: in the culture of the ancient Near East, a father never calls his son 'lord' — the honor flows upward, from son to father. If David calls the Messiah 'my Lord,' the Messiah must be greater than David, not merely his descendant. Jesus does not deny that the Messiah is David's son but implies that he is also something more — a claim the audience must work out for themselves. The question is left unanswered, hovering over the narrative.
45. The phrase *akouontos pantos tou laou* ('all the people listening') specifies that Jesus's warning about the scribes is delivered publicly, not privately. The people hear his critique of their religious leaders, adding to the leaders' humiliation and rage.
46. The *stolais* ('long robes') were distinctive garments that marked the wearer as a person of learning and status. Four desires are listed in ascending order of social privilege: public recognition in the streets (greetings), public honor in commerce (marketplaces), religious honor (synagogue seats), and social honor (banquet positions). The verb *philountōn* ('loving, desiring') reveals that these are not incidental perks but actively sought status markers.
47. The verb *katesthousin* ('they devour, they consume') is visceral — the metaphor of eating someone's house evokes predatory exploitation. Widows (*chērōn*) were the most vulnerable members of society, the very people the Torah commanded to protect (Exodus 22:22, Deuteronomy 10:18). The phrase *prophasei* ('for a pretext, for appearance') exposes their prayers as performance. The 'greater judgment' (*perissoteron krima*) implies degrees of accountability — those who exploit the vulnerable while performing piety face the most severe divine reckoning.
47. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 22:22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
47. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 10:18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

21

Summary: *Luke 21 opens with the widow's offering, transitions to Jesus's prediction of the temple's destruction, and then delivers the extended eschatological discourse — sometimes called the Olivet Discourse, though Luke does not locate it on the Mount of Olives. Jesus describes the signs preceding Jerusalem's fall and the coming of the Son of Man: wars, earthquakes, persecution, the siege of Jerusalem, cosmic disturbances, and the command to watch and pray. The chapter concludes with a summary of Jesus's daily teaching routine during his final week.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Luke's version of the eschatological discourse is notably more specific about the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70) than Mark's or Matthew's versions. Verse 20's reference to 'Jerusalem surrounded by armies' replaces Mark's more cryptic 'abomination of desolation' (Mark 13:14), suggesting Luke writes for an audience that either witnessed or is aware of the Roman siege. The parable of the fig tree and the declaration that 'this generation will not pass away' create one of the most debated interpretive puzzles in the Gospels.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between the destruction of Jerusalem and the coming of the Son of Man is ambiguous — whether Jesus describes one event, two events separated by time, or two aspects of one reality is debated. We render the text without harmonizing or imposing a particular eschatological framework. 'This generation' (v. 32) is rendered literally; its referent (Jesus's contemporaries, or the generation that sees the signs) is left to the reader.*

Connections: *The widow's offering connects thematically to 20:47 (scribes who devour widows' houses). The temple destruction prophecy fulfills 19:44. The persecution predictions anticipate Acts (where they are fulfilled in detail). The cosmic signs draw on Isaiah 13:10, Joel 2:30-31, and Daniel 7:13-14. The fig tree parable echoes the cursed fig tree of Mark 11 (which Luke omits). The command to 'watch and pray' prepares for Gethsemane (22:40-46).*

1He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. 2He also saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. 3He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. 4For all these others contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood she had." 5When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and dedicated gifts, he said, 6"As for these things you are looking at, the days will come when not one stone will be left on another — every one will be torn down." 7They asked him, "Teacher, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?" 8He said, "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. 9When

you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be terrified. These things must happen first, but the end will not come immediately." ¹ Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. ¹¹ There will be great earthquakes, and famines and plagues in various places, and there will be terrifying events and great signs from heaven. ¹² But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you, handing you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. ¹³ This will be your opportunity to testify. ¹⁴ So resolve in your hearts not to prepare your defense in advance, ¹⁵ For I will provide you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries will not be able to oppose nor resist. ¹⁶ You will be handed over even by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends, and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷ You will be hated by everyone because of my name. ¹⁸ But not a hair of your head will perish. ¹⁹ By your endurance you will gain your lives. ²⁰ "When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has drawn near. ²¹ Then let those in Judea flee to the mountains, let those inside the city get out, and let those in the countryside not enter it. ²² For these are days of vengeance, so that everything that has been written will be fulfilled. ²³ How terrible it will be for those who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the land and wrath against this people. ²⁴ They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led away as captives to all the nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. ²⁵ "There will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars, and on the earth distress among nations, bewildered by the roaring and surging of the sea. ²⁶ People will faint from fear and dread of what is coming upon the inhabited world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then will they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with authority and remarkable glory. ²⁸ When these things begin to happen, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." ²⁹ He told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. ³⁰ When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹ In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. ³⁴ "Watch yourselves, so that your hearts are not weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and the worries of this life, and that day closes on you suddenly ³⁵ Because as a snare will it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Stay alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." ³⁷ During the day he was teaching in the temple, but at night he would go out and spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives. ³⁸ And all the people would come to him early in the morning in the temple to listen to him.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The gazophylakion ('treasury') was located in the Court of the Women, where thirteen trumpet-shaped collection boxes lined the wall, each designated for a specific type of offering. The verb *ballontas* ('throwing, casting') suggests the coins made audible noise as they fell — the rich would have made a conspicuous display.
2. The adjective *penichran* ('needy, poor') is stronger than the usual word for poor (*ptōchos*); it implies destitution. The *lepta* ('small coins') were the smallest denomination in circulation — each worth about one-128th of a denarius. Two *lepta* made a *quadran*, the Roman minimum for a transaction. She gives the absolute smallest possible offering.
3. The phrase *pleion pantōn* ('more than all') is a comparative that reverses human arithmetic: by every measurable standard, her gift is the smallest, yet Jesus declares it the largest. The adverb *alēthōs* ('truly') emphasizes the counterintuitive nature of the claim. Jesus measures giving not by amount but by cost to the giver.
4. The contrast is between *perisseuontos* ('surplus, abundance, what overflows') and *hysterēmatos* ('deficit, lack, poverty'). The phrase *panta ton bion hon eichen* ('all the life/livelihood she had') uses *bios*, which means both 'life' and 'livelihood' — she gave not just her money but her means of survival. This connects directly to 20:47's denunciation of scribes who devour widows' houses: the temple system that should protect her consumes her last resources.
5. Herod's temple was one of the ancient world's architectural wonders. The *lithois kalois* ('beautiful stones') likely refers to the massive white limestone blocks (some weighing over 500 tons) that formed the walls. The *anathēmasin* ('dedicated gifts, votive offerings') included golden vine decorations and shields donated by wealthy patrons. Josephus describes the temple as covered in gold plates that blazed in the morning sun.
6. The prophecy *lithos epi lithō* ('stone upon stone') predicts total destruction. This was fulfilled in AD 70 when Titus's legions dismantled the temple, reportedly prying apart stones to recover gold that had melted into the crevices during the fire. The verb *katalythēsetai* ('will be torn down, demolished') is emphatic. The double negative construction (*ouk ... hos ou*) means 'there will not be a single stone left standing upon another that is not torn down' — comprehensive destruction without exception.

7. The two questions — 'when?' (pote) and 'what sign?' (ti to sēmeion) — shape the rest of the discourse. Luke's version has only two questions (unlike Matthew's three in 24:3, which adds 'and of the end of the age'). This gives Luke's discourse a tighter focus on the destruction of Jerusalem rather than the end of the world.
8. The first warning is against deception (planēthēte, 'be led astray'). The phrase ego eimi ('I am he') echoes the divine self-revelation formula (Exodus 3:14; Isaiah 43:10), suggesting false messiahs who claim divine status. Luke uniquely adds ho kairos ēngiken ('the time has drawn near'), warning against those who claim the end is imminent. The command mē poreuthēte opisō autōn ('do not go after them') prohibits joining their movements.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 3:14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 43:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Luke uses akatastasias ('disorders, instabilities, uprisings') instead of Mark's 'rumors of wars,' a term that better fits the political turbulence of the 60s AD in Judea. The verb ptoēthēte ('be terrified, be startled') implies a visceral, panicked fear. The phrase ouk eutheōs to telos ('not immediately the end') is another distinctly Lukan addition, tempering eschatological urgency: wars are not the end itself but precursors.
10. The formula ethnos ep' ethnos kai basileia epi basileian ('nation against nation and kingdom against kingdom') echoes Isaiah 19:2 and 2 Chronicles 15:6, drawing on prophetic language for catastrophic upheaval. The scope is international, not merely local — the entire political order will be convulsed.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 19:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Chronicles 15:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. Luke combines seismoi ('earthquakes'), limoi ('famines'), and loimoi ('plagues, pestilences') — the last two form a near-rhyme in Greek (limoi kai loimoi), which may be a mnemonic device. The phobētra ('terrifying things, terrors') and sēmeia megala ('great signs') from heaven are unique to Luke and expand the catalog of portents beyond the natural to the cosmic.
12. The phrase pro de toutōn pantōn ('but before all these things') establishes a chronological marker: persecution of the disciples precedes the cosmic upheavals. The progression from synagogue trials to prison to royal courts mirrors exactly what happens in Acts: apostles before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4-5), Stephen's synagogue trial (Acts 6-7), James and Peter in prison (Acts 12), Paul before governors Felix and Festus and King Agrippa (Acts 24-26). Luke's Jesus prophesies what Luke the historian later narrates.
13. The phrase apobēsetai hymin eis martyron ('it will result for you in testimony') reframes persecution as opportunity. The word martyron ('testimony, witness') is the root of 'martyrdom' — in early Christianity, the two concepts were inseparable. What the persecutors intend as silencing becomes a platform for proclamation.
14. The phrase thete en tais kardiais hymōn ('set in your hearts, settle it firmly') indicates a decided commitment. The verb promeletān ('to practice beforehand, to rehearse') was used for rehearsing speeches — Jesus forbids the kind of anxious preparation that suggests reliance on human eloquence rather than divine provision.
15. Unlike Mark 13:11, which attributes the words to the Holy Spirit, Luke has Jesus say 'I will give' (egō dōsō) — a first-person divine promise. The pair stoma kai sophian ('a mouth and wisdom') means both the content of speech and the skill to deliver it. The two verbs antistēnai ('to resist, withstand') and anteipein ('to contradict, speak against') cover both physical intimidation and intellectual rebuttal — opponents will fail on both fronts. This is fulfilled in Acts: Stephen's opponents 'could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking' (Acts 6:10).
16. The verb paradothēsethe ('you will be handed over, betrayed') is the same word used for Judas's betrayal of Jesus (22:4, 6). The escalating list — parents, brothers, relatives, friends — describes the disintegration of the most intimate bonds. The phrase thanatōsousin ex hymōn ('they will kill some of you') is blunt: following Jesus will cost some disciples their lives. This is fulfilled in Acts with the deaths of Stephen (Acts 7) and James (Acts 12:2).
17. The phrase hypo pantōn ('by all') is hyperbolic but communicates the universality of the hostility — opposition will come from every direction. The phrase dia to onoma mou ('because of my name') identifies Jesus's name as the cause of hatred, connecting back to verse 12. Bearing his name marks the disciples as targets.
18. This creates an apparent paradox with verse 16 ('some of you will be put to death'): how can not a hair perish if some will die? The resolution lies in the eschatological perspective — physical death does not represent ultimate loss for those who belong to Christ. The double negative ou mē ('by no means, absolutely not') is the strongest Greek negation, expressing absolute divine protection of the disciples' ultimate destiny, even through martyrdom.
19. The word hypomonē ('endurance, steadfast persistence, patient endurance under suffering') is a key virtue in early Christianity. The verb ktēsasthe can be either imperative ('gain!') or future indicative ('you will gain') — the ambiguity may be intentional, functioning as both command and promise. The psychas ('souls, lives') echoes 17:33: the way to preserve one's life is not through self-protection but through faithful endurance.
20. This is Luke's most distinctive departure from the Markan parallel: where Mark 13:14 has the cryptic 'abomination of desolation standing where it should not,' Luke has the concrete image of Jerusalem surrounded by armies (stratopedōn, 'military camps'). The word erēmōsis ('desolation,

devastation, depopulation') echoes Daniel 9:27 and 12:11, connecting Jesus's prophecy to the Danielic tradition. This verse is often cited as evidence that Luke wrote after AD 70, though prophetic specificity does not require post-event composition.

20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 9:27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Three groups receive three commands: those in Judea (flee to mountains), those inside Jerusalem (leave immediately), those in the surrounding countryside (do not seek refuge in the city). According to Eusebius (Church History 3.5.3), the Jerusalem Christians did flee to Pella in Transjordan before the Roman siege, possibly in response to this prophecy. The verb *ekchōreitōsan* ('let them depart, withdraw') is unique to Luke among the Synoptics.
22. The phrase *hēmerai ekdikēseōs* ('days of vengeance/retribution') echoes Hosea 9:7 and Isaiah 63:4 — prophetic language for divine judgment on a faithless people. The phrase *panta ta gegrammena* ('everything written') refers to the prophetic warnings in the Hebrew Bible about judgment on Jerusalem (cf. Deuteronomy 28:49-57, Daniel 9:26-27). Luke frames the destruction not as a Roman political action but as the fulfillment of prophetic scripture.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Hosea 9:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 63:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 28:49-57. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 9:26-27. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The 'woe' (*ouai*) is an expression of grief, not a curse — Jesus mourns the suffering of the most vulnerable. Pregnant women and nursing mothers would be the least able to flee. The phrase *anankē megalē* ('great distress, dire necessity') describes the extreme suffering of the siege. Luke adds *orgē tō laō toutō* ('wrath against this people'), making explicit what is implicit in Mark — the siege is an expression of divine judgment.
24. This verse is unique to Luke and describes the post-destruction fate of Jerusalem with remarkable precision: *stomati machairēs* ('by the mouth/edge of the sword') — Josephus reports that 1.1 million Jews died in the siege; *aichmalōtisthēsontai* ('will be taken captive') — Josephus reports 97,000 taken prisoner. The phrase *kairoi ethnōn* ('times of the Gentiles') introduces a mysterious period of Gentile domination over Jerusalem with a definite end (*achri hou*, 'until'). This implies eventual restoration, but the timeline is deliberately unspecified.
25. The discourse shifts from Jerusalem's destruction to cosmic upheaval, drawing on prophetic imagery from Isaiah 13:10, Joel 2:30-31, and Amos 8:9. Whether these cosmic signs are literal or metaphorical for political upheaval is debated — in Old Testament prophetic literature, cosmic language often describes the fall of political powers (cf. Isaiah 13:10 about Babylon, Ezekiel 32:7 about Egypt). The word *synochē* ('distress, anguish, constriction') suggests a tightening, suffocating fear. The *aporia* ('bewilderment, perplexity, helplessness') adds cognitive paralysis to the emotional distress.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 13:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joel 2:30-31 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Amos 8:9 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ezekiel 32:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The verb *apopsychontōn* ('fainting, breathing out, expiring from fear') is unique to the New Testament — literally 'breathing away,' suggesting people will be so terrified they lose consciousness or die of fright. The *oikoumenē* ('inhabited world') is the entire civilized world, not merely Judea. The *dynameis tōn ouranōn* ('powers of the heavens') may refer to celestial bodies (sun, moon, stars as cosmic forces), angelic powers, or both — the shaking (*saleuthēsontai*) of these powers represents the dissolution of the created order itself.
27. This alludes directly to Daniel 7:13-14, where 'one like a son of man' comes 'with the clouds of heaven' to receive dominion from the Ancient of Days. Luke uses the singular *nephelē* ('a cloud,' not 'clouds'), emphasizing the theophanic quality — in the Old Testament, the cloud is associated with God's presence (Exodus 13:21, 40:34). The combination of *dynamis* ('power') and *doxa* ('glory') marks this as a divine appearance. The verb *opsontai* ('they will see') indicates universal visibility — this is not a secret or spiritual event.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:13-14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 13:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. While the world faints from terror (v. 26), the disciples are told to stand up (*anakypsate*, 'straighten up, look up with confidence') and raise their heads (*eparate tas kephalas*, 'lift your heads') — postures of hope, not fear. The word *apolytrōsis* ('redemption, liberation, ransom') is a commercial term for buying a slave's freedom. The same events that terrify the world signal liberation for believers. This verse is the emotional heart of the discourse: the coming of the Son of Man is not a threat but a rescue.

- 29.** Luke adds 'and all the trees' (kai panta ta dendra) to Mark's 'fig tree,' universalizing the analogy — any deciduous tree demonstrates the same principle. In Palestine, the fig tree's leaf cycle was a particularly reliable seasonal marker because it was one of the last trees to leaf out in spring.
- 30.** The verb probalōsin ('put forth, sprout') refers to the visible budding of leaves. The phrase aph' heautōn ('from yourselves, on your own') emphasizes that this is observable common sense — no special revelation is needed. The analogy is simple: just as natural signs indicate coming seasons, the events described in this discourse will indicate the coming of the kingdom.
- 31.** Luke has 'the kingdom of God' (hē basileia tou theou) where Mark 13:29 has simply 'he is near' or 'it is near' — Luke makes the referent explicit. The signs described in this discourse do not predict the kingdom's arrival but signal its proximity. The present imperative ginōskete ('know, recognize') demands ongoing awareness.
- 32.** The phrase hē genea hautē ('this generation') is among the most debated expressions in the Gospels. It could mean: (1) Jesus's contemporaries (fulfilled if 'all these things' refers to AD 70), (2) the generation alive when the signs begin (making it future-referential), (3) 'this kind of people' (the faithless generation, making it a moral category). The double negative ou mē ('certainly not, by no means') expresses absolute certainty. We render the Greek literally and leave the interpretive question to the reader.
- 33.** The claim is extraordinary: the most permanent things in human experience — heaven and earth — are declared temporary, while Jesus's words are declared eternal. The same verb pareulesetai ('will pass away') is used for both, creating a direct contrast. This is an implicit claim to divine authority — only God's word endures forever (Isaiah 40:8). Jesus places his own words on par with the word of God.
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 40:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 34.** The warnings are uniquely Lukan. The verb barēthōsin ('be weighed down, be made heavy') echoes the Gethsemane scene (22:45, where the disciples are 'weighed down with grief'). Three dangers are listed: kraipale ('carousing, hangover, dissipation'), methē ('drunkenness'), and merimnais biōtikais ('worries of daily life, anxieties about livelihood'). The third is as dangerous as the first two — ordinary anxieties can dull spiritual alertness as effectively as excess.
- 35.** The word pagis ('trap, snare') describes something that springs shut suddenly and inescapably. The scope is universal: epi pantas tous kathēmenous epi prosōpon pasēs tēs gēs ('upon all who sit/dwell upon the face of all the earth'). No one is exempt. The imagery connects to the Noah and Lot comparisons of 17:26-30 — the day catches people in the midst of ordinary life.
- 36.** The verb agrypneite ('stay awake, be vigilant, be sleepless') is stronger than the usual grēgoreite ('watch') — it implies a state of constant wakefulness. The verb katischysēte ('have strength, prevail, be able') emphasizes that escaping the coming tribulations and standing before the Son of Man requires divine empowerment obtained through prayer. The goal is dual: ekphygein ('to escape') the coming calamities and stathēnai ('to stand') — to be found standing rather than fallen when the Son of Man appears. This verse bookends the discourse with verse 8's opening warning: the proper response to eschatological expectation is not calculation but prayer.
- 37.** This summary verse establishes Jesus's routine during his final week: temple teaching by day, withdrawal to the Mount of Olives by night. The verb ēlizeto ('lodged, spent the night, bivouacked') suggests sleeping outdoors rather than in a house — possibly at the garden of Gethsemane on the olive-tree-covered hillside. This pattern explains how Judas knew where to find Jesus at night (22:39).
- 38.** The verb ōrthrizen ('came early, rose at dawn') indicates the people's eagerness — they arrived at the temple at first light to hear Jesus teach. This popular devotion explains the authorities' dilemma (19:47-48, 20:19): the people's intense attachment to Jesus makes a public arrest politically impossible, forcing the leaders to seek a covert opportunity, which Judas will provide.

22

Summary: *Luke 22 narrates the final hours before Jesus's arrest: Judas's conspiracy with the chief priests, preparations for the Passover meal, the institution of the Lord's Supper, the dispute about greatness among the disciples, the prediction of Peter's denial, the agony in Gethsemane, the arrest, Peter's denial, the mocking and beating of Jesus, and his appearance before the Sanhedrin at dawn. This is the longest chapter in Luke and the most theologically dense, encompassing the transition from ministry to passion.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Luke's Last Supper account contains unique material not found in the other Gospels: the dispute about greatness occurring during the meal (not earlier as in Mark/Matthew), Jesus's declaration that he has earnestly desired to eat this Passover, the two-cup structure, and the extended farewell discourse. The Gethsemane account includes the textually disputed verses 43-44 (the angel strengthening Jesus and his sweat becoming like drops of blood), which are among the most famous textual variants in the New Testament. Luke alone records Jesus healing the ear of the high priest's servant during the arrest.*

Translation Friction: Verses 43-44 (the strengthening angel and the bloody sweat) are absent from important early manuscripts (P75, Aleph, A, B, T, W) but present in others (Aleph-2, D, L, Theta, family 13, and most Byzantine manuscripts). Their authenticity is disputed. We include them following the SBLGNT's double-bracketed text but note the manuscript evidence. The two-cup structure (vv. 17-18 and v. 20) is debated — some scholars see it as a Passover seder with its multiple cups, while others view it as a textual issue.*

Connections: The Passover setting connects to Exodus 12 (the original Passover). The words of institution ('this is my body... this cup is the new covenant in my blood') connect to Jeremiah 31:31-34 (the new covenant promise) and Exodus 24:8 (the blood of the covenant). Peter's denial fulfills Jesus's prediction. The Sanhedrin trial fulfills the passion predictions of 9:22, 18:31-33. Jesus's prayer in Gethsemane connects to the Lord's Prayer (11:2-4) and the teaching on persistent prayer (18:1-8).

¹Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching. ²The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to put him to death, for they feared the people. ³Then Satan entered into Judas, the one called Iscariot, who was numbered among the Twelve. ⁴He went and discussed with the chief priests and temple officers how he might hand Jesus over to them. ⁵They were delighted and agreed to give him money. ⁶He agreed and began looking for an opportunity to hand him over to them when no crowd was present. ⁷Then the day of Unleavened Bread came, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, so that we may eat it." ⁹They asked him, "Where do you want us to prepare it?" ¹⁰He said to them, "When you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house he enters, ¹¹You will say to the goodman of the house, The Master says to you, Where is the guestchamber, where I will eat the passover with my followers? ¹²He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations there." ¹³They went and found everything just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover. ¹⁴When the hour came, he reclined at the table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." ¹⁷Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸For I tell you, from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." ¹⁹Then he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁰In the same way, after the meal he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. ²¹But look — the hand of the one who betrays me is with me on the table. ²²For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" ²³They began to question among themselves which of them it could be who was going to do this. ²⁴A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered the greatest. ²⁵He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' ²⁶But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should become like the youngest, and the leader like the one who serves. ²⁷For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one reclining? Yet I am among you as the one who serves. ²⁸You are those who have stood by me in my trials. ²⁹And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, ³⁰And sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. ³¹"Simon, Simon, look — Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." ³³Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." ³⁴Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today before you have denied three times that you know me." ³⁵Then he said to them, "When I sent you out without a money bag, a traveler's bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." ³⁶He said to them, "But now, the one who has a money bag should take it, and likewise a traveler's bag. And the one who has no sword should sell his cloak and buy one. ³⁷For I tell you, this scripture must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was counted among the lawless.' Indeed, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment." ³⁸They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." He said to them, "It is enough." ³⁹He went out and made his way to the Mount of Olives, as was his custom, and the disciples followed him. ⁴⁰When he arrived at the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." ⁴¹He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, ⁴²"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me. Yet not my will but yours be done." ⁴³An angel from heaven appeared to him,

strengthening him. ⁴⁴And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground. ⁴⁵When he rose from prayer and went to the disciples, he found them sleeping from grief. ⁴⁶He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray, so that you will not fall into temptation." ⁴⁷While he was still speaking, a crowd appeared, and the one called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, ⁴⁸However, Jesus stated to him, Judas, betrayest you the Son of Man with a kiss? ⁴⁹When those around him saw what was about to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with the sword?" ⁵⁰And one of them struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹But Jesus responded, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him. ⁵²Then Jesus said to the chief priests, temple officers, and elders who had come for him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as if against a revolutionary? ⁵³When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour — and the power of darkness." ⁵⁴They seized him and led him away, bringing him to the high priest's house. Peter was following at a distance. ⁵⁵When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. ⁵⁶A servant girl saw him sitting in the firelight and, staring at him, said, "This man was with him too." ⁵⁷But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." ⁵⁸A little later, someone else saw him and said, "You are one of them too." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." ⁵⁹About an hour later, another person insisted, saying, "Certainly this man was with him too, for he is a Galilean." ⁶⁰Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. ⁶¹The Lord turned and looked at Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had told him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." ⁶²And he went outside and wept bitterly. ⁶³The men who were holding Jesus in custody began mocking and beating him. ⁶⁴They blindfolded him and kept asking, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" ⁶⁵And they said many other blasphemous things against him. ⁶⁶When day came, the council of the elders of the people assembled — both chief priests and scribes — and they led him before their Sanhedrin. ⁶⁷Art you the Christ? tell us. Then he stated to them, If I tell you, you will not trust:. ⁶⁸If I as well ask you, you will not answer me, nor let me depart. ⁶⁹But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." ⁷⁰They all said, "Are you then the Son of God?" He said to them, "You say that I am." ⁷¹They said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own mouth."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Technically, the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were distinct celebrations (Passover on Nisan 14, Unleavened Bread from Nisan 15-21), but by the first century, the terms were used interchangeably in popular speech. Luke's phrase *hē legomenē pascha* ('which is called Passover') reflects this common usage. The imperfect *ēngizen* ('was approaching') creates narrative tension — the reader knows what the festival will bring.
2. The imperfect *ezētoun* ('they were seeking') indicates ongoing, frustrated plotting. The verb *anelōsin* ('to destroy, to kill, to do away with') is a euphemism for execution. Their fear of the people (*ephobountos ton laon*) has been the obstacle since 19:47-48 and 20:19. What changes the equation is Judas's offer in the next verses.
3. Luke and John (13:27) are the only Gospels that attribute Judas's betrayal to Satan's direct intervention. Luke last mentioned Satan in 4:13, where the devil departed from Jesus 'until an opportune time' (*achri kairou*) — this is that opportune time. The epithet 'Iscariot' (*Iskariōtēs*) may mean 'man of Keriōth' (a Judean town) or may derive from the Latin *sicarius* ('dagger-man, assassin'). The phrase *onta ek tou arithmou tōn dōdeka* ('being from the number of the twelve') underscores the horror: the betrayer comes from within the innermost circle.
4. Luke uniquely includes *stratēgois* ('temple officers, captains of the temple guard'), the security force that controlled the temple precincts. Their involvement is practical — any arrest in or near the temple would require their cooperation. The verb *paradō* ('hand over, betray') is the same word used for Jesus being 'handed over' to the Gentiles (18:32) and for God 'handing over' his Son — the word carries multiple theological layers.
5. The verb *echarēsan* ('they rejoiced, were delighted') reveals the authorities' emotional state — they are pleased to have found their solution. The verb *synēthento* ('they agreed, covenanted together') is a formal term for making an agreement. Luke does not specify the amount (Matthew 26:15 names 'thirty pieces of silver'). The word *argyron* ('silver, money') is generic.
6. The verb *exōmologēsen* ('he consented, agreed, confessed') here means 'he assented to the arrangement.' The phrase *ater ochlou* ('without a crowd, in the absence of the multitude') is the crucial tactical detail — Judas's value to the authorities is his ability to deliver Jesus at a time and place where public reaction cannot interfere. This solves the problem identified in 19:48, 20:19, and 22:2.
7. The phrase *edei thyesthai to pascha* ('it was necessary to sacrifice the Passover') refers to the afternoon of Nisan 14, when the Passover lambs were slaughtered in the temple. The verb *dei* ('it was necessary') indicates Torah requirement (Exodus 12:6). The chronological relationship between Luke's account and John's (where Jesus dies at the hour the lambs are slaughtered) is a well-known harmonization challenge that we do not attempt to resolve.

7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 12:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Luke alone names the two disciples sent — Peter and John, the inner circle. Preparing the Passover involved acquiring a lamb, having it sacrificed at the temple, roasting it, and preparing the accompanying elements (unleavened bread, bitter herbs, wine, charoset). This was a substantial task requiring several hours.
9. The question is practical — Jerusalem would have been packed with pilgrims for the festival, and securing a suitable room for the meal was not trivial. The subjunctive *hetoimasōmen* ('should we prepare') expresses deference to Jesus's choice.
10. A man carrying a *keramion* ('earthenware jar') of water would have been conspicuous — water-carrying was typically women's work, and men used leather skins rather than clay jars. This detail would make the man easy to identify in a crowded city. Whether this was a prearranged signal or prophetic knowledge is debated; Luke's narrative implies the latter.
11. The title *ho didaskalos* ('the Teacher') functions as a recognized identifier, suggesting an existing relationship between Jesus and the homeowner. The word *katalyma* ('guest room, lodging place') is the same word used for the place where there was 'no room' at Jesus's birth (2:7) — creating a subtle literary connection between the beginning and end of Luke's narrative.
12. The *anagaion* ('upper room') was a second-story room, typically the best room in the house, used for important gatherings. The participle *estrōmenon* ('furnished, spread out, arranged') indicates the room already has the necessary carpets, cushions, and dining arrangements for a Passover meal. This level of preparation suggests prior arrangement.
13. The phrase *kathōs eirēkei autois* ('just as he had told them') echoes the preparation for the triumphal entry (19:32) — the same pattern of prophetic instruction followed by exact fulfillment. The verb *hetoimasan* ('they prepared') covers the extensive work of Passover preparation, compressed into a single word.
14. The phrase *hē hōra* ('the hour') carries theological weight beyond mere clock time — this is the appointed hour, the *kairos* toward which the entire Gospel has been moving. The verb *anepesen* ('he reclined') describes the dining posture: reclining on the left side on cushions around a low table, the standard practice for formal meals and required for the Passover seder. Luke uses 'apostles' (*apostoloi*) rather than 'disciples,' emphasizing their commissioned role.
15. The phrase *epithymia epethymēsa* ('with desire I have desired') is a Semitic intensifying construction (cognate accusative) that expresses the deepest possible longing. This statement is unique to Luke and reveals Jesus's emotional state — he has longed for this meal. The phrase *pro tou me pathein* ('before I suffer') shows Jesus's full awareness of what lies ahead.
16. The double negative *ou mē* ('I will by no means eat') is emphatic — this is Jesus's last Passover. The word *plērōthē* ('is fulfilled, completed') implies that the Passover itself is a type that points forward to a greater reality to be consummated in the kingdom. The Passover lamb, the exodus from Egypt, the covenant meal — all find their fulfillment in what Jesus is about to accomplish through his death.
17. This is the first of two cups in Luke's account (the second appears in v. 20). The Passover seder traditionally included four cups of wine. This first cup likely corresponds to one of the earlier seder cups. The verb *eucharistēsas* ('having given thanks') is the root of 'Eucharist' and refers to the Jewish blessing over wine (likely the *kiddush*: 'Blessed are you, LORD our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine').
18. The phrase *genēmatos tēs ampelou* ('fruit of the vine') is the traditional liturgical term for wine in Jewish blessings. The eschatological vow — not drinking wine until the kingdom comes — mirrors the Nazirite vow's abstinence from wine as a sign of consecration. Jesus consecrates himself for his coming sacrifice. The phrase 'until the kingdom of God comes' (*heōs hou hē basileia tou theou elthē*) holds the future open — this is not the end of fellowship but a temporary suspension until its consummation.
19. The four actions — took (*labōn*), gave thanks (*eucharistēsas*), broke (*eklasen*), gave (*edōken*) — become the foundational pattern of Christian worship. The phrase *to hyper hymōn didomenon* ('which is being given for you') uses the present participle, indicating an ongoing action — Jesus's body is being given in the very act of the meal. The command *touto poieite eis tēn emēn anamnēsin* ('do this in remembrance of me') establishes the meal as a repeated memorial. The word *anamnēsis* ('remembrance, memorial') in Jewish thought means not merely mental recall but active re-presentation — making the past event present again.
20. The phrase *meta to deipnēsai* ('after having eaten the meal') places this second cup after the main course, likely corresponding to the third cup of the Passover seder (the 'cup of blessing,' cf. 1 Corinthians 10:16). The phrase *hē kainē diathēkē* ('the new covenant') explicitly invokes Jeremiah 31:31-34, the only Old Testament passage that uses 'new covenant.' The *diathēkē* ('covenant, testament') is not a contract between equals but God's sovereign arrangement. The phrase *en tō haimati mou* ('in my blood') echoes Exodus 24:8 ('This is the blood of the covenant'), where Moses sealed the Sinai covenant with sacrificial blood.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 24:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. In Luke's arrangement (unlike Matthew and Mark), the betrayal announcement comes after the institution of the supper, not before. This means Judas participates in the covenant meal, intensifying the horror of the betrayal. The phrase *hē cheir tou paradidontos me* ('the hand of the one handing me over') places the betraying hand literally on the same table where Jesus has just given his body and blood. Psalm 41:9 (quoted in John 13:18) provides the background: 'Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.'

21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 41:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The phrase *kata to hōrismenon* ('according to what has been determined, decreed') uses the same root as *horizō* ('to fix, to decree, to appoint'), which Luke uses elsewhere for God's sovereign plan (Acts 2:23, 10:42, 17:26, 31). The tension between divine determination and human responsibility is held without resolution: the Son of Man's death is God's plan (*kata to hōrismenon*), yet the betrayer bears full moral culpability (*ouai*). Luke does not collapse either side of this tension.
23. The verb *syzētein* ('to discuss, to dispute, to investigate') indicates animated debate rather than quiet reflection. The optative *eiē* ('might be') expresses uncertainty and speculation. Their inability to identify the betrayer reveals both their self-awareness (each apparently considers himself capable) and their ignorance (no one suspects Judas specifically).
24. The word *philoneikia* ('rivalry, love of strife, contentiousness') appears only here in the New Testament. The timing is staggering — at the very meal where Jesus gives his body and blood and announces his betrayal, the disciples argue about rank. In Mark and Matthew, this dispute occurs earlier in the ministry; Luke's placement at the Last Supper maximizes the contrast between Jesus's self-giving and the disciples' self-seeking.
25. The verb *kyrieuousin* ('exercise lordship, dominate') describes coercive, top-down power. The title *euergetai* ('Benefactors') was an actual honorific title given to Hellenistic rulers — Ptolemy III and VIII of Egypt were both called 'Euergetes.' The irony: those who dominate are called 'benefactors,' wrapping exploitation in the language of generosity. Jesus exposes the fundamental dishonesty of power structures.
26. The 'youngest' (*neōteros*) held the lowest status in ancient households — they served the eldest. The 'one who serves' (*ho diakonōn*) is literally 'the one who waits tables.' Jesus inverts the hierarchy completely: greatness is defined by service, leadership by the willingness to take the lowest position. The word *diakonōn* is the root of 'deacon,' later institutionalized as a church office.
27. Jesus asks a question with an obvious cultural answer — the one reclining is always greater than the one serving — and then claims the server's role for himself. The phrase *egō de en mesō hymōn eimi hōs ho diakonōn* ('I am among you as the one serving') is the most radical leadership statement in the Gospels. The present tense *eimi* ('I am') makes this a permanent identity, not a temporary condescension. John's Gospel dramatizes this with the foot-washing scene (John 13:1-17).
28. The perfect participle *diamemenēkotes* ('having remained throughout, having continued steadfastly') acknowledges the disciples' loyalty despite everything. The word *peiramois* ('trials, testings, temptations') encompasses the full range of opposition Jesus has faced. Despite their failures (which will become more apparent in the hours ahead), Jesus credits them with faithfulness.
29. The verb *diatithēmai* ('I confer, I covenant, I bequeath') is related to *diathēkē* ('covenant') — Jesus is making a covenant grant of royal authority. The chain of conferral runs from the Father to Jesus to the disciples, establishing a succession of delegated authority. This is a testamentary act — the last will of someone about to die.
30. The promise has two dimensions: table fellowship (eating and drinking with Jesus) and governmental authority (sitting on thrones judging the tribes). The verb *krinontes* ('judging') echoes the judges of Israel who both governed and adjudicated. The 'twelve tribes' indicates the restoration of all Israel, not merely the existing southern tribes. This promise is given to the same men who moments ago were arguing about rank — Jesus answers their ambition with a grant that far exceeds anything they imagined.
31. The double name 'Simon, Simon' (*Simōn Simōn*) signals urgency and tenderness. The verb *exētēsato* ('demanded, asked for, claimed') echoes Job 1-2, where Satan requests permission to test Job. The 'you' (*hymas*) is plural — Satan targets all the disciples, not Peter alone. The sifting metaphor (*siniasai*, 'to sift') describes violent shaking to separate grain from chaff; the trials ahead will expose what each disciple is truly made of.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Job 1-2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The 'you' (*sou*) switches to singular — Jesus prays specifically for Peter. The verb *edeēthēn* ('I have prayed, I have besought') is an aorist indicating a specific, completed prayer. The phrase *eklipē hē pistis sou* ('your faith might fail, give out, be eclipsed') uses a word that means to cease or be extinguished — like a lamp going out. The verb *epistrepsas* ('having turned back, having returned') acknowledges that Peter will fall but also promises restoration. The command *stērison* ('strengthen, establish, make firm') gives Peter a post-failure ministry: his own recovery becomes the basis for strengthening others.
33. Peter's declaration is sincere but overconfident. He offers willingness for the extreme scenarios (prison and death) but will stumble at a far lesser test (a servant girl's question). Luke places Peter's boast in the context of the Last Supper discourse rather than on the Mount of Olives (as in Mark 14:29-31), integrating it into the farewell conversation.
34. Jesus uses Peter's apostolic name (*Petre*) rather than 'Simon,' sharpening the personal address. The specificity is devastating: not merely a general prediction of failure but a precise count (three denials), a precise timeframe (before the rooster crows), and a precise content (denying that he knows Jesus). Luke adds *eidenai* ('to know me'), specifying that Peter will deny the relationship itself, not just association.
35. Jesus refers back to the mission of the seventy-two (10:1-12), where he sent them out with no provisions and they lacked nothing. The three items — *ballantion* ('money bag'), *pēra* ('traveler's bag, knapsack'), and *hypodēmata* ('sandals') — represent financial resources, food supplies, and basic equipment. Their unanimous answer 'Nothing' (*outhenos*) confirms that divine provision was sufficient during the earlier, more receptive phase of ministry.

36. The phrase *alla nyn* ('but now') marks a dramatic shift in circumstances. The earlier instructions (travel without provisions) are reversed — the time of hospitality and reception is over; a time of hostility and self-provision has arrived. The instruction to sell one's himation ('outer cloak,' essential for warmth and sleeping) to buy a machaira ('sword, large knife') is startling. Whether Jesus speaks literally (prepare for danger) or figuratively (the situation has become dire) is debated. The next verses suggest the disciples take it literally and Jesus corrects them.
37. Jesus quotes Isaiah 53:12 ('he was numbered with the transgressors'), the fourth Servant Song. The word *anomōn* ('lawless ones, transgressors') foreshadows his crucifixion between two criminals (23:32-33). The phrase *to peri emou telos echei* ('what concerns me has its end/completion') can mean either 'is being fulfilled' or 'is coming to its conclusion.' Luke's Jesus frames his death as the fulfillment of Isaiah's suffering servant prophecy — the only explicit quotation of Isaiah 53 by Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 53:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. The disciples take Jesus's words literally and produce two swords. Jesus's response *hikanon estin* ('it is enough') is often read as weary dismissal: 'Enough of this' — they have missed his point entirely. Two swords would be militarily useless against a Roman cohort; Jesus was not calling for armed resistance. Alternatively, 'it is enough' may mean two swords suffice to fulfill the prophecy of being 'counted among the lawless' (v. 37) — mere possession of weapons classifies them as armed rebels.
39. The phrase *kata to ethos* ('according to custom, as was his habit') connects to 21:37 — Jesus regularly spent nights on the Mount of Olives. This habitual pattern is what enabled Judas to know where to find him (v. 47). Luke does not name Gethsemane (as Mark and Matthew do) but simply refers to the Mount of Olives.
40. The phrase *epi tou topou* ('at the place') is vague in Luke — no garden is named. The command *proseuchē* the *mē eiselthein eis peirasmon* ('pray not to enter into temptation/testing') echoes the Lord's Prayer (11:4) and frames what follows: the disciples' failure to pray will lead to their failure in the testing. The *peirasmos* ('temptation, trial, testing') refers specifically to the crisis of Jesus's arrest and death.
41. The verb *apespasthē* ('he was torn away, he withdrew') carries the connotation of painful separation — the passive voice may suggest reluctance. The distance 'about a stone's throw' (*hōsei lithou bolēn*) is roughly 50-100 feet — close enough to be seen but far enough for privacy. Kneeling (*theis ta gonata*, 'placing the knees') was not the usual Jewish prayer posture (standing with uplifted hands was standard), suggesting intense supplication.
42. Luke's version of the prayer is more concise than Mark's. The address 'Father' (*Pater*) without 'Abba' (which Mark includes) still conveys intimate filial relationship. The 'cup' (*potērion*) is a biblical metaphor for suffering and divine judgment (Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15). The conditional *ei boulei* ('if you are willing') respects the Father's sovereignty. The concluding *mē to thelēma mou alla to son ginesthō* ('not my will but yours be done') is the model of perfect submission — the same petition Jesus taught in the Lord's Prayer (11:2, 'your will be done') now enacted at infinite personal cost.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 75:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 51:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 25:15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. TEXTUAL NOTE: This verse and the next (v. 44) are absent from several important early manuscripts (P75, Codex Vaticanus, the original hand of Codex Sinaiticus) but present in others (the corrected Sinaiticus, Codex Bezae, and most later manuscripts). The SBLGNT places them in double brackets, indicating their disputed status. If original, they are unique to Luke and present a portrait of Jesus's genuine human vulnerability — the Son of God needs angelic strengthening. If later additions, they reflect early Christian reflection on Jesus's humanity. We include them but note the evidence. The verb *enischyōn* ('strengthening') implies giving power to endure rather than removing the cause of distress.
44. TEXTUAL NOTE: See note on verse 43 regarding the disputed status of this verse. The word *agōnīa* ('agony, anguish, intense struggle') is a contest metaphor — it describes the strain of an athlete in the arena. The comparative *ektenesteron* ('more earnestly, more intensely') shows prayer escalating under pressure. The phrase *hōsei thromboi haimatos* ('like clots/drops of blood') uses *hōsei* ('as if, like'), indicating a comparison — Luke says the sweat resembled blood drops in appearance (thick, heavy drops), not necessarily that it was blood. The medical condition *hematidrosis* (sweat mixed with blood under extreme stress) is rare but documented.
45. Luke compresses Mark's three prayer episodes into one and offers an explanation for the disciples' sleep: *apo tēs lypēs* ('from grief, because of sorrow'). This is a compassionate detail unique to Luke — they are not merely indifferent but emotionally overwhelmed. Their grief, however, does not excuse their failure to pray.
46. Jesus's rebuke forms a bracket with verse 40 — the same command to pray against temptation opens and closes the Gethsemane scene. The question *ti katheudete* ('why are you sleeping?') is not merely rhetorical; it expresses genuine anguish that at the hour of greatest need, his closest companions have failed to keep watch. The imperative *anastantes proseuchesthe* ('having risen, pray!') demands immediate action.
47. The phrase *eti autou lalountos* ('while he was still speaking') emphasizes the abruptness — there is no pause between the prayer and the arrest. Judas is again identified as *heis tōn dōdeka* ('one of the Twelve'), a phrase that never loses its shock. The verb *philēsai* ('to kiss') refers to the standard greeting kiss between rabbi and disciple — Judas weaponizes a gesture of loyalty and affection. He *proērchetō* ('was going before, was

leading') the crowd, placing himself at the head of the arrest party.

48. Jesus addresses Judas by name and exposes the horrifying irony: the gesture of devotion (philēmati, 'with a kiss') is the instrument of betrayal (paradidōs, 'you are handing over'). The question form allows Judas one final moment of self-awareness — Jesus does not merely accuse but invites recognition of what he is doing. The title 'Son of Man' frames the betrayal in its full cosmic significance.
49. The phrase hoi peri auton ('those around him') refers to the disciples. Their question is addressed to kyrie ('Lord') and shows they are prepared to fight — the two swords from verse 38 are at hand. The question pataxomen en machairē ('shall we strike with a sword?') uses the same verb (patassō) used in the Septuagint for the LORD striking Egypt with plagues (Exodus 12:12).
49. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 12:12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
50. Luke does not name the attacker (John 18:10 identifies him as Peter) or the victim (John 18:10 names him Malchus). The detail 'right ear' (to ous autou to dexion) is shared with John and adds realistic specificity. The verb apeilen ('cut off, removed') indicates a clean severing. The disciple acts without waiting for Jesus's answer to the question in verse 49.
51. The phrase eate heōs toutou ('permit until this point' or 'stop, that is enough') ends the violence. Jesus's healing of the servant's ear is unique to Luke and is his last recorded miracle — an act of mercy toward his enemy during his own arrest. The verb iasato ('he healed') indicates complete restoration. The juxtaposition of a disciple causing harm and Jesus healing it encapsulates the contrast between their understanding of the mission and his.
52. Luke uniquely specifies that the chief priests, temple officers, and elders themselves are present at the arrest — in Mark, they send subordinates. The word lēstēs ('bandit, revolutionary, insurrectionist') is the same word used for the men crucified with Jesus (Mark 15:27) and for Barabbas's associates. It carries political overtones of armed rebellion. Jesus's question exposes the absurdity: he taught openly in the temple every day (v. 53) and could have been confronted at any time.
53. The final phrase is unique to Luke and theologically profound: hautē estin hymōn hē hōra kai hē exousia tou skotous ('this is your hour and the authority of darkness'). Jesus concedes that this specific hour belongs to his enemies and to the cosmic power of darkness (skotous) behind them. The word exousia ('authority, power, right') indicates that darkness has been given temporary jurisdiction — not by its own power but by divine permission (cf. v. 53's connection to v. 22's 'as it has been determined'). This is not defeat but a controlled yielding.
54. The verbs syllabontes ('having seized'), ēgagon ('they led'), and eisēgagon ('they brought into') mark the progression from arrest to custody. Luke does not name the high priest (Caiaphas, according to Matthew 26:57). Peter's following makrothen ('from a distance') is an ominous detail — close enough to be tested, far enough to be alone. The imperfect ēkolouthei ('was following') indicates ongoing, hesitant pursuit.
55. The aulē ('courtyard') was the open-air interior space of the high priest's residence. The fire (pyr) provides both warmth (it was a spring night in Jerusalem, which can be cold) and light — the light that will illuminate Peter's face and lead to his identification. Peter sits mesos autōn ('in the middle of them'), surrounded by those loyal to the high priest. The setting is claustrophobic and dangerous.
56. The paidiskē ('servant girl, maid') holds no social power whatever — Peter, who declared readiness for prison and death (v. 33), is undone by the lowest-ranking person in the household. The verb atenisasa ('having fixed her gaze, having stared intently') indicates she studied his face carefully. The phrase syn autō ēn ('was with him') identifies Peter as a follower of Jesus.
57. The verb ěrnēsato ('he denied') is the verb Jesus used in his prediction (v. 34). Peter denies knowing Jesus (ouk oida auton, 'I do not know him'), fulfilling the specific content predicted. The address gynai ('woman') is not disrespectful in Greek (Jesus uses it for his mother in John 2:4) but is dismissive in this context.
58. The second accuser is male (heteros, masculine), providing a different source for the identification. The accusation ex autōn ei ('you are of them') identifies Peter as belonging to Jesus's group. Peter's denial ouk eimi ('I am not') is a stark inversion of Jesus's egō eimi ('I am') declarations. Each denial drives Peter further from his declared identity.
59. The interval hōsei hōras mias ('about one hour') makes the third denial deliberate rather than impulsive. The verb diischyrizeto ('insisted, affirmed confidently, maintained vehemently') is a strong word — this accuser is certain. The evidence is Peter's accent: kai gar Galilaios estin ('for he is indeed a Galilean'). Galilean Aramaic had distinctive pronunciation features that were recognizable in Jerusalem.
60. Peter's final denial is not merely 'I don't know him' but 'I don't know what you're talking about' — he denies understanding the accusation itself. The phrase parachrēma eti lalountos autou ('immediately while he was still speaking') means the rooster crows before Peter finishes his sentence — the prediction is fulfilled with devastating precision.
61. This detail — the Lord turning and looking at Peter (strapheis ho kyrios eneblepsen tō Petrō) — is unique to Luke and is one of the most poignant moments in the Gospels. The verb eneblepsen ('looked intently at') is the same word used in 20:17 when Jesus 'looked directly at' the religious leaders. The look carries no recorded words — only the gaze that Peter must have remembered for the rest of his life. Jesus is apparently being led through the courtyard, making eye contact possible. The title ho kyrios ('the Lord') emphasizes the contrast: the Lord remembers and watches; Peter forgot and failed.
62. The verb eklausen ('he wept') indicates audible sobbing (the same word used for Jesus weeping over Jerusalem in 19:41). The adverb pikrōs ('bitterly') describes the quality of the tears — not merely sad but acutely painful. Peter leaves the courtyard (exelthōn exō, 'going out outside'), removing himself from the scene of his failure. This is the last we see of Peter in Luke's passion narrative until the empty tomb report reaches him (24:12).

63. The verb *synechontes* ('holding, guarding, keeping in custody') identifies the abusers as the guards. The verbs *enepaizon* ('were mocking, were ridiculing') and *derontes* ('beating, striking, flogging') describe sustained physical abuse and humiliation. In Luke, this abuse occurs before the trial (unlike Mark, where it follows the trial), placing it during the night while Peter's denial is still reverberating.
64. The verb *perikalypsantes* ('having covered around, having blindfolded') sets up the cruel game: they blindfold Jesus and then demand he identify who strikes him, mocking his prophetic claims. The imperative *prophēteuson* ('prophesy!') is deeply ironic — at this very moment, Jesus's prophecy about Peter's denial has just been fulfilled with exact precision. The guards mock a prophetic ability they do not realize has been demonstrated.
65. The verb *blasphēmountes* ('blaspheming, reviling') is notable — Luke uses 'blasphemy' for what the guards say to Jesus, a term the Sanhedrin will use against Jesus in verse 71. The irony is double: those who blaspheme accuse Jesus of blasphemy. The phrase *hetera polla* ('many other things') indicates the abuse was extensive and sustained.
66. Luke's trial before the Sanhedrin occurs at dawn (*hōs egeneto hēmera*, 'when it became day'), not during the night as in Mark. This may reflect Luke's knowledge of Jewish legal procedure, which prohibited capital trials at night. The *presbyterion* ('council of elders') is defined as consisting of *archiereis* ('chief priests') and *grammateis* ('scribes'). The *synedrion* ('Sanhedrin, council') was the supreme judicial body of Judaism.
67. The question *ei sy ei ho christos* ('if you are the Christ') demands a direct messianic claim. Jesus's response *ean hymin eipō ou mē pisteusēte* ('if I tell you, you will by no means believe') exposes their bad faith — they are not seeking truth but building a case. The double negative *ou mē* ('you will absolutely not believe') indicates Jesus's certainty about their disposition.
68. The second conditional extends the point: not only will they not believe his answer, they will not engage honestly with his questions. This recalls their refusal to answer his question about John's baptism (20:1-8). The trial is predetermined, not a genuine inquiry.
69. Jesus combines Daniel 7:13 (Son of Man) with Psalm 110:1 (seated at the right hand) — the two texts he brought together in 20:41-44. The phrase *apo tou nyn* ('from now on, henceforth') is a temporal marker unique to Luke, indicating that the exaltation begins immediately, not at some distant future point. The seated position (*kathēmenos*) is a position of completed authority. The circumlocution *tēs dynamēōs tou theou* ('the power of God') avoids speaking God's name directly, as was customary.
69. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 7:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
69. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 110:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
70. The question shifts from 'Christ' (v. 67) to 'Son of God' (*huios tou theou*) — the council draws the theological implication from Jesus's claim about the Son of Man. Jesus's answer *hymeis legete hoti egō eimi* ('you say that I am') is neither a direct affirmation nor a denial — it places the declaration in their mouths while not disowning it. The phrase *egō eimi* ('I am') echoes the divine name (Exodus 3:14), which the council would recognize.
70. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 3:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
71. The council declares that Jesus's own words constitute sufficient evidence (*martyrias*, 'testimony, witness') — no additional witnesses are needed. The phrase *apo tou stomatos autou* ('from his own mouth') emphasizes that Jesus has self-incriminated. Luke's trial account is more compact than Mark's — there are no false witnesses, no torn robes, no formal verdict of blasphemy. The council proceeds directly from Jesus's self-identification to the decision to bring him before Pilate (23:1). The speed of the proceedings underscores their predetermined outcome.

23

Summary: *Luke 23 narrates the Roman trial and crucifixion of Jesus. The chapter moves through the trial before Pilate, the hearing before Herod Antipas (unique to Luke), the crowd's demand for Barabbas, the way to the cross with Simon of Cyrene and the weeping women of Jerusalem, the crucifixion between two criminals, the mocking by rulers and soldiers, the repentant criminal's plea and Jesus's promise of paradise, the darkness and torn curtain, Jesus's death, and the burial by Joseph of Arimathea. Luke's crucifixion narrative emphasizes Jesus's innocence (declared three times by Pilate and once by Herod) and his mercy even in death.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Luke's passion narrative is distinguished by several unique elements: the Herod Antipas hearing, the weeping women of Jerusalem (with Jesus's prophecy about Jerusalem's coming destruction), the dialogue between the two criminals (with the promise 'Today you will be with me in paradise'), and the centurion's declaration that Jesus was 'righteous' (rather than Mark's 'Son of God'). The textually disputed verse 34a — 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing' — is one of the most famous sayings attributed to Jesus and epitomizes Luke's portrait of Jesus as merciful even to his executioners.*

Translation Friction: Verse 34a ('Father, forgive them...') is absent from P75, Sinaiticus (original), Vaticanus, and other early witnesses, but present in Sinaiticus (corrected), Bezae, and most later manuscripts. Its authenticity is disputed among scholars. We include it following the SBLGNT's double-bracketed text and note the manuscript evidence. The historical details of Roman crucifixion are rendered without sanitizing. Luke's account of Pilate's three declarations of innocence (vv. 4, 14, 22) creates a more sympathetic portrait of Pilate than other sources support.

Connections: The Barabbas exchange echoes the Day of Atonement scapegoat ritual (Leviticus 16). The darkness at the crucifixion echoes the plague of darkness in Exodus 10:22 and the prophetic warnings of Amos 8:9. The torn curtain connects to the theology of access to God (Hebrews 10:19-22). Jesus's final words ('Father, into your hands I commit my spirit') quote Psalm 31:5. Joseph of Arimathea's burial fulfills Isaiah 53:9 ('with the rich in his death'). The women at the cross connect to the women who will discover the empty tomb (24:1-10).

¹Then the whole assembly rose and led him before Pilate. ²They began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation, forbidding the payment of taxes to Caesar, and claiming to be Christ, a king." ³Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered him, "You say so." ⁴Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." ⁵But they pressed their case more urgently, saying, "He stirs up the people with his teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee all the way here." ⁶When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. ⁷When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem during those days. ⁸When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign performed by him. ⁹He questioned him at considerable length, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰The chief priests and the scribes stood there, accusing him vehemently. ¹¹Herod, along with his soldiers, treated him with contempt and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, he sent him back to Pilate. ¹²That day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other; before this they had been enemies. ¹³Pilate then called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people ¹⁴Said to them, you have brought this man to me, as one that perverteth the people — and, take notice, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof you accuse him:. ¹⁵Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Clearly, he has done nothing deserving death. ¹⁶Therefore, I will have him flogged and then release him." ¹⁸But they all cried out together, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!" ¹⁹Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city and for murder. ²⁰Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again. ²¹But they kept shouting, "Crucify! Crucify him!" ²²For the third time he said to them, "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found no grounds for the death penalty in his case. Therefore I will have him flogged and release him." ²³But they were insistent, demanding with loud cries that he be crucified, and their voices prevailed. ²⁴So Pilate decided to grant their demand. ²⁵He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder — the one they asked for — but he handed Jesus over to their will. ²⁶As they led him away, they seized a man named Simon from Cyrene, who was coming in from the countryside, and placed the cross on him to carry behind Jesus. ²⁷A large crowd of the people followed him, including women who were mourning and wailing for him. ²⁸Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me. Weep for yourselves and for your children, ²⁹For, take notice, the days are coming, in the which they will say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never offered suck. ³⁰Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' ³¹For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" ³²Two other criminals were also led away with him to be executed. ³³When they came to the place called The Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals — one on his right, the other on his left. ³⁴Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided his garments among themselves by casting lots. ³⁵The people stood watching, and the rulers sneered at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One." ³⁶The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, ³⁷Declaring, If you be the king of the Jews, save thyself. ³⁸There was also an inscription above him: "This is the King of the Jews." ³⁹One of the criminals hanging there hurled insults at him, saying, "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" ⁴⁰But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence? ⁴¹We are getting what we deserve for what we have done, but this man has done nothing wrong." ⁴

²Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." ⁴³Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." ⁴⁴It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵The sun stopped shining, and the curtain of the temple was torn down the middle. ⁴⁶Then Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. ⁴⁷When the centurion saw what had happened, he praised God, saying, "Surely this man was righteous." ⁴⁸And all the crowds that had gathered for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, went home beating their chests. ⁴⁹All those who knew him stood at a distance, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, watching these things. ⁵⁰Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the council, a good and righteous man, ⁵¹Indeed, (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathaea, a city of the Jews — who also himself waited for God's reign. ⁵²This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³He took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and placed him in a rock-cut tomb where no one had yet been laid. ⁵⁴It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was about to begin. ⁵⁵The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was placed in it. ⁵⁶Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *hapan to plēthos autōn* ('the whole multitude of them') indicates a corporate decision by the full Sanhedrin. They bring Jesus to Pilate (Pontius Pilatus, Roman prefect of Judea, AD 26-36) because only the Roman governor had the authority to execute a death sentence (*ius gladii*). The transition from Jewish religious tribunal to Roman political court requires reframing the charges.
2. The charges are three, and all are political rather than religious: (1) *diastephonta to ethnos* ('misleading/perverting the nation') — sedition; (2) *kōlyonta phorous Kaisari didonai* ('forbidding taxes to Caesar') — a direct lie, since Jesus said the opposite in 20:25; (3) *legonta heauton christon basilea einai* ('claiming to be Christ, a king') — technically true but framed as a political claim against Caesar's sovereignty. The Sanhedrin transforms a religious charge (blasphemy) into a political one (treason) to engage Roman jurisdiction.
3. Pilate seizes on the only charge that matters to Rome: kingship. The question *sy ei ho basileus tōn Ioudaiōn* ('you are the king of the Jews?') is the charge that will appear on the cross (v. 38). Jesus's answer *sy legeis* ('you say so' or 'you are the one saying it') is identical in form to his answer before the Sanhedrin (22:70) — an acknowledgment that neither fully affirms nor denies, placing the characterization in the questioner's framework.
4. This is the first of Pilate's three declarations of Jesus's innocence (see also vv. 14 and 22). The phrase *ouden heuriskō aition* ('I find nothing blameworthy, no cause for accusation') is a formal legal verdict of acquittal. Despite this, Pilate does not release Jesus — the political pressure overrides the judicial finding. Luke's emphasis on Pilate's repeated acquittals serves his broader theme of Jesus's innocence.
5. The verb *epischyon* ('they were insistent, they pressed harder') shows escalating pressure. The verb *anaseiei* ('stirs up, incites, agitates') carries connotations of rebellion. The geographical sweep — 'from Galilee all the way here' — is designed to portray Jesus as a widespread, destabilizing influence. The mention of 'Galilee' (Galilaias) catches Pilate's attention, as the next verse shows.
6. Pilate's question about Galilean origin is not mere curiosity but jurisdictional — if Jesus is from Galilee, he falls under Herod Antipas's authority, and the case can be transferred. This offers Pilate a political exit: he can defer the decision to someone else.
7. Herod Antipas (son of Herod the Great, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea) was in Jerusalem for the Passover festival. The phrase *ek tēs exousias Hērōdou* ('from Herod's jurisdiction') refers to territorial authority. The Herod episode is unique to Luke and historically plausible — Roman officials sometimes deferred cases to local rulers. Pilate's referral is a political maneuver, not a legal requirement.
8. Herod's reaction *echarē lian* ('he was very glad') is grotesque in context — he treats Jesus as an entertainer. His desire to see a *sēmeion* ('sign, miracle') reduces Jesus's ministry to spectacle. This connects to 9:9, where Herod expressed curiosity about Jesus and tried to see him. His 'joy' at meeting Jesus contrasts with Jesus's silence, creating a scene of failed encounter between the fascinated ruler and the silent prisoner.
9. The phrase *en logois hikanois* ('with many words, at considerable length') indicates extensive questioning. Jesus's total silence (*ouden apekrinat autō*, 'he answered him nothing') echoes Isaiah 53:7 ('like a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth'). Jesus, who answered both the Sanhedrin and Pilate, says nothing to Herod — the man who killed John the Baptist (9:9) receives no word at all.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 53:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The adverb *eutonōs* ('vehemently, vigorously, with great intensity') indicates aggressive prosecution. The religious leaders have followed Jesus from Pilate to Herod to maintain the pressure. The verb *katēgorountes* ('accusing') is a legal term for formal prosecution.
11. The verb *exouthenēsas* ('having treated with contempt, having despised') is the same word used in 18:9 for those who 'despised' others. The *esthēta lampran* ('bright/splendid garment') is a mock-royal robe, a parody of kingly attire. Herod's mockery is political theater: by dressing Jesus as a pretend king, he dismisses the charge as ridiculous. He does not condemn Jesus — his sending him back constitutes an implicit acquittal.

12. This detail is unique to Luke and deeply ironic: the trial of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, reconciles two political enemies. Their enmity (*echthra*) may have stemmed from the incident described in 13:1 (Pilate's slaughter of Galileans, which would have offended Herod as ruler of Galilee). The joint handling of the Jesus case creates a political bond: both can share responsibility while neither takes full blame.
13. Pilate reassembles all parties — religious leaders, civic leaders, and the general public. The inclusion of *ton laon* ('the people') is significant: Pilate makes his second acquittal public, presumably hoping popular opinion will support release.
14. The verb *anakrinās* ('having examined, having conducted a judicial investigation') is a legal technical term for a formal hearing. Pilate's second declaration of innocence is more detailed than the first (v. 4) — he specifies that the examination was thorough (*enōpion hymōn*, 'in your presence') and that none of the specific charges (*hōn katēgoreite*, 'of which you accuse') has substance.
15. Pilate appeals to Herod's verdict as corroboration: two independent authorities have found no capital offense. The phrase *ouden axion thanatou* ('nothing worthy of death') is a formal legal assessment. The perfect participle *pepragmenon* ('having been done') indicates a thorough review of Jesus's entire record, not just the current charges. The double acquittal should, in any fair legal system, result in release.
16. The verb *paideusas* ('having disciplined, having punished, having flogged') is a euphemism for a severe beating that typically preceded release in Roman provincial justice. Pilate's proposal is a compromise: punish Jesus enough to satisfy the accusers without executing an innocent man. The injustice is already apparent — Pilate proposes to flog someone he has just declared innocent.
17. Verse 17 is absent from the SBLGNT and most critical editions. It appears in some later manuscripts as an explanatory gloss about the custom of releasing a prisoner at the festival, drawn from Mark 15:6/Matthew 27:15. We follow the SBLGNT in omitting it from the rendering. The custom is referenced in verse 18 without this explanatory note.
18. The adverb *pamplēthei* ('all together, with the whole multitude') indicates a unified crowd reaction. The verb *aire* ('take away, remove, destroy') expresses violent rejection. The name Barabbas (Barabbas) means 'son of the father' (*bar-abba*) in Aramaic — an ironic name, as the crowd demands the release of 'the son of the father' while calling for the death of the Son of the Father. The crowd's demand for Barabbas is not explained in Luke — the reader must accept this sudden reversal from the people who 'hung on his words' (19:48).
19. Luke specifies Barabbas's crimes: *stasin* ('insurrection, revolt, sedition') and *phonon* ('murder'). The irony is devastating: Jesus, falsely accused of inciting revolt (v. 2), is condemned, while Barabbas, who actually committed insurrection and murder, is released. The charges the authorities fabricated against Jesus accurately describe Barabbas.
20. Luke emphasizes Pilate's desire (*thelōn*, 'wanting, wishing') to release Jesus — the Roman governor is portrayed as reluctantly pushed toward crucifixion rather than eagerly pursuing it. The verb *prosephōnēsen* ('called out to, addressed') suggests Pilate is trying to persuade the crowd.
21. The imperfect *epephōnoun* ('they kept shouting') indicates sustained, repeated demands. The doubled imperative *staurou staurou* ('crucify, crucify') is a demand for the most degrading Roman punishment — reserved for slaves, pirates, and those convicted of treason. The crowd's chant drowns out Pilate's appeal.
22. Luke explicitly notes this is the third time (*triton*) Pilate declares Jesus's innocence, creating a structural parallel with Peter's three denials. The question *ti gar kakon epoiēsen houtos* ('what evil has this man done?') demands a specific crime, which is never provided. Pilate repeats his compromise offer (flogging and release) word for word from verse 16, but the crowd's response will be different this time.
23. The verb *epekeinto* ('they pressed upon, they were insistent, they bore down') describes overwhelming pressure. The verb *katischyon* ('prevailed, won out, gained strength') is a legal term indicating that the crowd's demand overcame Pilate's resistance. Luke's account makes clear that Pilate capitulated to pressure rather than reaching a judicial decision — the voices (*phōnai*), not evidence, determined the outcome.
24. The verb *epekrinen* ('he pronounced judgment, he decided, he decreed') is a judicial term — Pilate formally grants the crowd's *aitēma* ('demand, request'). The sentence is technically illegal by Roman standards: the governor condemns a man he has three times declared innocent. Luke does not soften this injustice.
25. Luke restates Barabbas's crimes (*stasis* and *phonos*) to maximize the irony of the exchange. The phrase *paredōken tō thelēmati autōn* ('he handed over to their will') uses *paradidōmi*, the same verb used for Judas's betrayal and for God's sovereign handing-over. Pilate surrenders Jesus not to justice but to 'their will' — mob desire replaces legal verdict.
26. Roman practice required the condemned to carry the horizontal crossbeam (*patibulum*) to the execution site. Jesus's inability to carry it suggests extreme physical weakness from the flogging. Simon of Cyrene (a city in modern Libya) was likely a Jewish pilgrim in Jerusalem for Passover. The phrase *pherein opisthen tou Iēsou* ('to carry behind Jesus') takes on symbolic meaning in light of Jesus's teaching: 'Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple' (14:27). Simon literally fulfills the discipleship metaphor.
27. This scene is unique to Luke. The women who mourn (*ekoptonto*, 'were beating their breasts') and wail (*ethrēnoun*, 'were lamenting with funeral dirges') perform the traditional Jewish mourning rites while Jesus is still alive. The distinction between 'the people' (*ton laon*) and 'women' (*gynaikōn*) may indicate that Luke sees the women as a distinct group within the larger crowd. Their grief is genuine, unlike the crowd's demand for crucifixion.
28. The address *thygateres Ierousalēm* ('daughters of Jerusalem') echoes the Song of Solomon (1:5, 2:7, 3:5, 5:8, 8:4) and the prophets. Jesus redirects their grief from himself to what awaits Jerusalem — the coming destruction he prophesied in 19:41-44 and 21:20-24. Even on the way to his own execution, Jesus is concerned for others. The phrase 'your children' (*ta tekna hymōn*) connects to 19:44 ('they will dash you to the ground — you and your children within you').

- 29.** This is a devastating inversion of the normal beatitude: in Jewish culture, barrenness was considered a curse (cf. Elizabeth's 'disgrace' in 1:25), but Jesus declares that the coming siege will be so horrific that childless women will be the fortunate ones — they will have no children to watch suffer. Josephus records instances of cannibalism during the siege of Jerusalem (War 6.3.4), making this prophecy terrifyingly specific.
- 30.** Jesus quotes Hosea 10:8, the prophet's description of Israel's desperate flight from divine judgment. The plea for mountains to crush them and hills to cover them expresses a preference for death over the horrors that are coming. This passage is later echoed in Revelation 6:16, where the kings of the earth cry the same words at the cosmic judgment.
- 30.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Hosea 10:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 31.** This proverb is unique to Luke and enigmatic. The 'green wood' (hygō xylō) is fresh and difficult to burn; the 'dry wood' (xērō) catches fire easily. If Rome does this to an innocent man (the green wood, full of life), what will Rome do to a guilty, rebellious nation (the dry wood, ready to burn)? The proverb warns that the suffering Jesus endures is mild compared to what Jerusalem will face.
- 32.** The word kakourgoi ('criminals, evildoers') is more general than Mark's lēstai ('revolutionaries, bandits'). The phrase syn autō ('with him') fulfills the Isaiah 53:12 quotation from 22:37: 'he was counted among the lawless.' The grammatical structure heteroi kakourgoi duo ('two other criminals') could be read as classifying Jesus as a criminal too — some manuscripts adjust the word order to avoid this implication.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 53:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 33.** The Greek Kranion ('Skull') translates the Aramaic Golgotha (which only Mark and Matthew transliterate; Luke gives only the Greek). The traditional site was a rocky outcrop outside the city walls. Luke's account of the crucifixion itself is understated: estayrōsan auton ('they crucified him') — four words in Greek for the most agonizing form of execution the Roman world knew. The positioning of the two criminals on either side physically enacts Isaiah 53:12.
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 34.** TEXTUAL NOTE: The first sentence ('Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing') is absent from P75, the original hand of Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, and other early witnesses. It is present in the corrected Sinaiticus, Codex Bezae, and most later manuscripts. The SBLGNT includes it in double brackets. The saying is consistent with Luke's portrait of Jesus (cf. the prayer for persecutors and Stephen's echo in Acts 7:60) and may have been removed by scribes who thought it inappropriate after the destruction of Jerusalem. We include it but note the disputed evidence. The imperfect elegen ('he was saying, he kept saying') may indicate repeated prayer. The casting of lots for garments echoes Psalm 22:18.
- 34.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 22:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 35.** Luke distinguishes between the people (ho laos) who simply watch (theōrōn, 'observing') and the rulers (hoi archontes) who actively mock (exemyktērizon, 'were sneering, were turning up their noses'). The taunt 'he saved others' (allous esōsen) is unwittingly true — Jesus did save others, and the irony is that saving himself would make saving others impossible. The title ho eklektos ('the Chosen One') echoes the divine voice at the transfiguration (9:35), spoken by God in affirmation and now by the rulers in mockery.
- 36.** The soldiers' mockery adds a military dimension to the religious rulers' scorn. The oxos ('vinegar, sour wine') was posca, the cheap wine-vinegar mixture that Roman soldiers drank. Offering it to a crucified man was a form of taunting — the soldiers' drink, not a prisoner's comfort. The scene echoes Psalm 69:21 ('they gave me vinegar for my thirst').
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 69:21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 37.** The soldiers' mockery parallels the rulers' (v. 35) but uses the political title 'King of the Jews' (ho basileus tōn Ioudaiōn) rather than the religious title 'Christ.' Three groups now mock: rulers (v. 35), soldiers (vv. 36-37), and one of the criminals (v. 39). The conditional ei ('if') challenges Jesus to prove his claim through self-rescue — the fundamental misunderstanding of his mission.
- 38.** The epigraphē ('inscription, titulus') was the charge plaque (titulus crucis) that Roman practice required to be displayed above the condemned, stating the crime. Luke's version is the shortest of the four Gospels. The charge — basileus tōn Ioudaiōn ('King of the Jews') — was political treason against Rome. Ironically, the inscription is theologically true: the crucified man is indeed the King of the Jews, enthroned on a cross.
- 39.** The verb eblasphēmei ('was blaspheming, was reviling') is strong — the criminal does not merely ask for help but insults Jesus. The participle kremasthentōn ('hanging') uses a verb associated with the curse of Deuteronomy 21:23 ('cursed is anyone who hangs on a tree'). His demand echoes the rulers' and soldiers' mockery, adding 'and us' — he wants rescue without repentance.
- 39.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 21:23. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 40.** The second criminal's response is unique to Luke and theologically remarkable. He rebukes (epitimōn) the first criminal — the same verb used for rebuking demons and storms. His question 'Do you not fear God?' (oude phobē sy ton theon) identifies the fundamental problem: even facing death, the first criminal lacks reverence for God. The phrase en tō autō krimati ('under the same judgment/condemnation') acknowledges that they share Jesus's fate.

41. The criminal confesses his own guilt (*dikaiōs*, 'justly, rightly') and declares Jesus's innocence (*ouden atapon epraxen*, 'he has done nothing out of place, nothing wrong'). The word *atapon* ('out of place, wrong, improper, evil') is a litotes — a profound understatement. This criminal becomes the fifth witness to Jesus's innocence in Luke's passion narrative (after Pilate three times and Herod). A condemned criminal sees what the religious and political authorities refuse to acknowledge.
42. The criminal addresses Jesus by name (*Iēsou*) without a title — an intimacy that goes beyond formality. The plea *mnēsthēti mou* ('remember me') echoes the language of the Psalms (Psalm 25:7, 106:4), where 'remember' means to act in someone's favor. The phrase *hotan elthēs eis tēn basileian sou* ('when you come into your kingdom') is astonishing: hanging beside a dying man, the criminal confesses faith in Jesus's kingship and future reign. This is perhaps the most radical act of faith in the Gospels.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 25:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. The response exceeds the request: the criminal asked to be remembered in a future kingdom; Jesus promises presence with him today (*sēmeron*) in paradise (*paradeisō*). The word *paradeisos* (borrowed from Persian, meaning 'enclosed garden, park') is used in the Septuagint for the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8) and in Jewish apocalyptic literature for the dwelling of the righteous dead. Luke's characteristic *sēmeron* ('today') — the same word used at Jesus's birth (2:11), in the Nazareth sermon (4:21), and at Zacchaeus's house (19:9) — marks the present moment as the time of salvation. The promise *met' emou esē* ('you will be with me') defines paradise not as a place but as communion with Jesus.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 2:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
44. The 'sixth hour' (*hōra hektē*) is noon; the 'ninth hour' (*hōras enatēs*) is 3 PM — three hours of midday darkness. The darkness (*skotos*) echoes the plague of darkness over Egypt (Exodus 10:21-23) and the prophetic warnings of Amos 8:9 ('I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight'). The phrase *eph' holēn tēn gēn* ('over the whole land/earth') is ambiguous — it could mean the land of Israel or the entire earth. The phenomenon was not a normal solar eclipse (impossible during Passover's full moon).
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 10:21-23. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Amos 8:9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
45. The verb *eklipontos* ('failing, being eclipsed') is the same root used in 22:32 for faith 'failing.' Luke places the tearing of the temple curtain before Jesus's death (unlike Mark, who places it after), making it a sign that accompanies the dying rather than follows it. The *katapetasma tou naou* ('curtain of the sanctuary') most likely refers to the inner curtain separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (Exodus 26:33). Its tearing *meson* ('in the middle, in two') symbolizes the removal of the barrier between God and humanity — access to God's presence is opened through Jesus's death.
45. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 26:33 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
46. Luke's Jesus dies with the words of Psalm 31:5 on his lips — a psalm of trust in God's protection. This replaces Mark's cry of dereliction ('My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' from Psalm 22:1). Luke's last word is 'Father' (*Pater*), maintaining the intimate filial relationship that characterized Jesus's prayer life throughout the Gospel (10:21, 11:2, 22:42, 23:34). The verb *paratithēmai* ('I entrust, I commit, I deposit for safekeeping') is a banking term for depositing something valuable with a trusted guardian. The verb *exepneusen* ('he breathed out, he expired') is a dignified description of death — Jesus releases his spirit actively rather than having it taken from him.
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 31:5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 22:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
47. Luke's centurion declares Jesus *dikaio*s ('righteous, innocent') rather than Mark's 'Son of God' (*huios theou*). This serves Luke's apologetic purpose: even the Roman executioner acknowledges Jesus's innocence. The verb *edoxazen* ('he was glorifying, praising') is a Lukan term — the centurion does not merely express an opinion but praises God. This is the sixth witness to Jesus's innocence in the passion narrative. The word *ontōs* ('truly, certainly, in reality') expresses firm conviction.
48. The crowds who had demanded crucifixion now return home *typtones ta stēthē* ('beating their chests') — a gesture of grief, mourning, and possibly repentance. Luke's portrait of the crowd is more nuanced than often recognized: they are not uniformly hostile but move from demand (v. 21) to grief (v. 48). The word *theōrian* ('spectacle, sight') reduces the crucifixion to public entertainment, which makes the crowd's emotional reversal all the more striking.
49. The 'acquaintances' (*gnōstōi*) and the Galilean women remain — they are witnesses who will bridge the gap between crucifixion and resurrection. Their position *apo makrothen* ('from a distance') echoes the ten lepers' position (17:12) and Peter's following (22:54). The women are named in 24:10 (Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James). Their faithful watching (*horōsai*, 'seeing, observing') contrasts with the disciples' absence — Luke does not record any male disciple at the cross.

50. Joseph of Arimathea is described as a bouleutēs ('councilor'), meaning he was a member of the Sanhedrin — the very body that condemned Jesus. Luke's description of him as agathos kai dikaios ('good and righteous') uses the same language applied to Simeon (2:25) and to Barnabas (Acts 11:24). The dash at the end indicates the description continues.
51. The phrase ouk ēn synkatatetheimenos ('had not agreed, had not voted with') is a legal term indicating dissent from the Sanhedrin's verdict. This detail is unique to Luke and establishes Joseph's moral integrity — he opposed the plot. Arimathea (probably Ramathaim, Samuel's hometown in 1 Samuel 1:1) was a town in the Judean hills. The phrase prosedecheto tēn basileian tou theou ('was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God') links Joseph to Simeon (2:25, 'waiting for the consolation of Israel') and Anna (2:38, 'looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem').
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Samuel 1:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
52. Requesting the body of a crucified criminal required courage — it identified Joseph publicly as an associate of a condemned man. Under Roman law, the bodies of the executed usually belonged to the state; release to family or friends required special permission. Joseph's willingness to approach Pilate marks him as willing to bear the social cost of association with Jesus.
53. The verb kathelōn ('having taken down') implies Joseph personally removed the body from the cross — an act of extraordinary devotion. The sindoni ('linen cloth, linen shroud') was used for burial wrapping. The mnēmati laxeutō ('tomb hewn/cut from rock') was an expensive, newly excavated burial cave. The detail 'where no one had yet been laid' (hou ouk ēn oudeis oupō keimenos) ensures that the subsequent resurrection cannot be confused with another body's presence.
54. The paraskeuē ('Preparation') was Friday, the day before the Sabbath, when all work for the Sabbath had to be completed before sunset. The verb epephōskēn ('was dawning, was beginning') refers to the Jewish reckoning where a new day began at sunset, not sunrise — the Sabbath was 'dawning' as the sun set on Friday evening. The urgency of the burial is explained: once the Sabbath began, no burial work could be performed.
55. The women serve as witnesses to both the death (v. 49) and the burial — they know exactly where the tomb is and how the body was positioned. The verb etheasanto ('they observed carefully, they saw with attention') indicates deliberate observation, not a passing glance. This eyewitness knowledge will be critical when they return after the Sabbath (24:1) and find the tomb empty. Their role as witnesses is legally significant in Luke's narrative, even though women's testimony was not accepted in Jewish courts.
56. The women's preparation of arōmata kai myra ('spices and ointments') for proper burial anointing demonstrates both their devotion and their expectation that Jesus is permanently dead — they are preparing for a body, not awaiting a resurrection. The final clause kata tēn entolēn ('according to the commandment') refers to the Sabbath law of Exodus 20:8-11. Even in grief, they observe Torah. The chapter ends on the Sabbath rest — silence, stillness, waiting. Luke places the reader in the suspended moment between death and resurrection.
56. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 20:8-11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

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Summary: *Luke 24 narrates the resurrection and its aftermath: the women discover the empty tomb and receive the angelic announcement, Peter visits the tomb, the risen Jesus walks with two disciples on the road to Emmaus and is recognized in the breaking of bread, Jesus appears to the gathered disciples in Jerusalem, opens their minds to understand Scripture, commissions them as witnesses, and ascends into heaven. The chapter is a theological masterpiece that demonstrates how the resurrection transforms everything — grief becomes joy, confusion becomes understanding, and scattered disciples become commissioned witnesses.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Emmaus road narrative (unique to Luke) is one of the most carefully crafted resurrection accounts in the New Testament. The literary structure is exquisite: two disciples walk away from Jerusalem in despair, encounter the risen Jesus without recognizing him, receive a comprehensive Bible study on messianic suffering, recognize him in the breaking of bread, and immediately return to Jerusalem transformed. The phrase 'Did not our hearts burn within us?' captures the subjective experience of encounter with the risen Christ. Jesus's opening of their minds to understand Scripture (v. 45) resolves the incomprehension noted throughout the Gospel (9:45, 18:34). The ascension in verses 50-53 brings the Gospel full circle — it began in the temple (1:8-9) and ends in the temple (24:53).*

Translation Friction: *The Emmaus road episode raises questions about the nature of the resurrection body — Jesus walks, talks, and eats, yet is not recognized by people who knew him. The phrase 'their eyes were kept from recognizing him' (v. 16) uses a divine passive, suggesting God prevented recognition until the proper moment. We render the text as written without speculating about the physics of resurrection bodies. The ascension is*

described very briefly here (v. 51) and in more detail in Acts 1:9-11.

Connections: The empty tomb tradition is shared with all four Gospels. The Emmaus road echoes Genesis 18 (Abraham's hospitality to divine visitors) and the post-exile journey motif in Isaiah 40-55. Jesus's scriptural exposition connects to the promise of 21:15 ('I will give you words and wisdom'). The commission to be 'witnesses' (v. 48) is the programmatic statement that launches Acts. The blessing at Bethany (v. 50) connects to the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:24-26. The return to the temple (v. 53) completes the inclusio with Luke 1.

¹On the first day of the week, at early dawn, the women came to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³They entered in, and discovered not the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were puzzling over this, suddenly two men stood beside them in dazzling clothing. ⁵The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here; he has been raised. Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee, ⁷Indeed, declaring, the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day come back to life. ⁸Then they remembered his words. ⁹When they returned from the tomb, they reported all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles. ¹¹But these words seemed to them like nonsense, and they did not believe them. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. Bending down, he saw the linen cloths by themselves. Then he went home, amazed at what had happened. ¹³Now that same day, two of them were walking to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴They talked as one of all these matters which had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and walked with them, ¹⁶However, their eyes were holden that they should not know him. ¹⁷He said to them, "What are you discussing with each other as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸One of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" ¹⁹He asked them, "What things?" They said to him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people — ²⁰How the leading religious leaders and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ²²Moreover, some women from our group astonished us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³When they discovered not his body, they arrived and stated, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which stated that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." ²⁵Then he said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures. ²⁸As they approached the village where they were going, he acted as though he were going farther. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he had reclined at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and began giving it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him — and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us on the road, while he was opening the Scriptures to us?" ³³They got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them gathered together, ³⁴Declaring, The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon. ³⁵Then they described what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. ³⁶While they were saying these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace to you." ³⁷They were startled and terrified, thinking they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet — it is I myself! Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see that I have." ⁴⁰When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, he said to them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³He picked up it, and did eat before them. ⁴⁴Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you — that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶He said to them, "Thus it is written: the

Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name in the midst of all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And look, I am sending what my Father promised upon you. But stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." ⁵⁰Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹While he was blessing them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵²They worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with remarkable joy:. ⁵³They spent all their time in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *tē mia tōn sabbatōn* ('on the first [day] of the Sabbaths/week') became the standard designation for Sunday, the day of resurrection. The phrase *orthrou batheōs* ('at deep dawn, very early') indicates the first light before sunrise — they came as early as possible after the Sabbath rest ended. The 'spices' (*arōmata*) are those prepared in 23:56. The women's visit is motivated by love and grief, not by any expectation of resurrection.
2. The perfect participle *apokeklystmenon* ('having been rolled away') indicates a completed action with ongoing results — the stone is already moved when they arrive. Rock-cut tombs in first-century Jerusalem were typically sealed with a large disc-shaped stone rolled in a channel across the entrance. Luke does not describe who moved the stone (Matthew attributes it to an angel; Mark leaves it unexplained).
3. Luke uses the full title *tou kyriou Iēsou* ('of the Lord Jesus'), which is more characteristic of Acts than of the Gospel — it reads from a post-resurrection perspective where the lordship of Jesus is established. The negative *ouch heuron* ('they did not find') is stark: the absence of the body is the first datum of the resurrection, though the women do not yet interpret it that way.
4. The verb *aporeisthai* ('to be at a loss, to be perplexed, to be puzzled') describes genuine confusion — the empty tomb is not self-interpreting. The 'two men' (*andres duo*) are later identified as angels (v. 23) and described as wearing *esthēti astraptousē* ('clothing that flashes like lightning'). Luke uses 'two men' rather than 'angels,' perhaps to emphasize the witness motif (two witnesses establish testimony, Deuteronomy 19:15). The same 'two men in white' appear at the ascension (Acts 1:10).
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 19:15. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The posture *emphobōn* ('terrified') and *klinousōn ta prosōpa eis tēn gēn* ('bowing their faces to the ground') is the standard response to angelic appearance. The question *ti zēteite ton zōnta meta tōn nekrōn* ('why do you seek the living one among the dead?') is one of the most theologically significant questions in the New Testament. The participle *ton zōnta* ('the living one') is not merely 'someone alive' but a title — Jesus is 'the Living One,' an attribute of God himself (cf. 'the living God'). The question reframes the entire situation: the tomb is the wrong place to look for someone who is alive.
6. The core proclamation is three words in Greek: *ouk estin hōde* ('he is not here') followed by *alla ēgerthē* ('but he has been raised'). The passive voice *ēgerthē* ('he was raised') is a divine passive — God raised Jesus from the dead. The command *mnēsthēte* ('remember!') redirects them to Jesus's own words. Luke's version refers to Galilee as the location of the prediction, not as the location where Jesus will appear (contrast Mark 16:7, 'he is going ahead of you to Galilee').
7. The angels quote Jesus's passion predictions (9:22, 9:44, 18:31-33), compressing them into a three-part summary: delivery (*paradothēnai*), crucifixion (*staurōthēnai*), and resurrection (*anastēnai*). The word *dei* ('must, it is necessary') reaffirms divine necessity — the passion was not an accident but a plan. The phrase *anthrōpōn hamartōlōn* ('sinful men') encompasses both Jewish and Roman agents, without singling out either group.
8. The verb *emnēsthēsan* ('they remembered') marks the turning point — the angelic reminder triggers recognition. What was hidden (18:34, 'this saying was hidden from them') is now uncovered. Remembering in Luke is not passive recall but the activation of understanding that transforms the present.
9. The women are the first witnesses and first proclaimers of the resurrection — they *apēngeilan* ('reported, announced') the news. The 'Eleven' (*tois hendeka*) reflects Judas's defection. The phrase *pasin tois loipois* ('all the rest') indicates a larger group of disciples beyond the Twelve.
10. Luke now names the women: Mary Magdalene (from whom seven demons had been cast out, 8:2), Joanna (wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, 8:3 — unique to Luke), and Mary the mother of James. The inclusion of Joanna connects the resurrection witness to the women who supported Jesus's ministry financially. Luke notes 'the other women with them' (*hai loipai syn autais*), indicating the named women were not the only witnesses.
11. The word *lēros* ('nonsense, idle talk, foolish chatter') is a medical term that Hippocrates used for the delirious talk of the feverish. Luke's use of it is devastatingly frank: the apostles dismiss the women's testimony as the ravings of grief-stricken, hysterical women. The verb *ēpistoun* ('they were disbelieving, they refused to believe') is in the imperfect tense, indicating sustained disbelief, not a momentary reaction. The early church would never have invented women as the primary resurrection witnesses in a culture where women's testimony was legally inadmissible — this detail's embarrassment guarantees its historicity.
12. Peter's response is somewhere between the women's belief and the apostles' dismissal — he runs to verify but does not yet fully understand. The verb *parakypsas* ('having bent down, having stooped to peer in') indicates he looked into the low tomb entrance without entering. The *othonia* ('linen cloths, strips of linen') lying *mona* ('by themselves, alone') are significant: if the body had been stolen, the wrappings would have been taken with it. Peter's reaction is *thaumazōn* ('wondering, marveling') — not yet faith, but no longer dismissal. Some manuscripts omit this verse, but the SBLGNT includes it.

13. The Emmaus road narrative (vv. 13-35) is unique to Luke and is considered one of the finest pieces of narrative art in the New Testament. The 'two of them' (duo ex autōn) are disciples (not apostles) — one is named Cleopas (v. 18); the other is unnamed. The distance stadiou hexēkonta ('sixty stadia') is approximately seven miles (11 km). The exact location of Emmaus is debated among archaeologists; several sites have been proposed.
14. The verb hōmiloun ('were conversing, were discussing') gives us the English word 'homily.' The perfect participle symbebēkotōn ('things that have happened and are still in effect') indicates events with ongoing impact — the crucifixion's effects are still reverberating. They are trying to make sense of what has occurred.
15. The phrase autos Iēsous ('Jesus himself') emphasizes the personal, physical presence of the risen Lord. The verb engisas ('having drawn near, having approached') shows Jesus taking the initiative — he joins their journey unsolicited. The verb syneporeueto ('was walking along with') indicates sustained companionship, not a brief encounter. Jesus enters the conversation already in progress.
16. The passive verb ektratounto ('were being held, were being restrained') is a divine passive — God prevents their recognition. The phrase tou mē epignōnai ('from knowing, from recognizing') uses the stronger compound verb (epignōnai, 'to recognize fully') rather than simple gnōnai ('to know'). This divine restraint serves a narrative and theological purpose: Jesus will first teach them from Scripture before being revealed in the breaking of bread. Understanding must precede sight.
17. The verb antiballete ('you are tossing back and forth, you are exchanging') suggests animated but inconclusive debate. Jesus's question draws them into conversation. The verb estathēsan ('they stopped, they stood still') indicates they halt in their tracks. The adjective skythrōpoi ('gloomy, sad-faced, with a dark expression') appears only here and in Matthew 6:16 (describing the faces of hypocritical fasters). Their faces mirror their grief.
18. Cleopas (Kleopas, possibly short for Kleopatros) is named but the other disciple is not — the unnamed companion has invited endless speculation (Cleopas's wife? Luke himself?). The question sy monos paroikeis Ierusalēm ('are you the only one residing as a stranger in Jerusalem?') implies that the crucifixion was the talk of the entire city — everyone knows except, apparently, this stranger. The dramatic irony is profound: they are explaining Jesus's death to Jesus.
19. Jesus's question poia ('what things?') draws out their testimony. Their description of Jesus as anēr prophētēs dynatos en ergō kai logō ('a man who was a prophet powerful in deed and word') is accurate but incomplete — they know him as a prophet but not yet as the risen Messiah. The phrase 'before God and all the people' (enantion tou theou kai pantos tou laou) acknowledges both divine and public approval. Their description echoes the characterization of Moses in Acts 7:22.
20. They identify the agents of Jesus's death as 'our chief priests and rulers' (hoi archiereis kai hoi archontes hēmōn) — 'our' indicates they still identify as part of the community whose leaders condemned Jesus. The phrase krima thanatou ('sentence of death, death penalty') is a legal term. The verb estaurōsan ('they crucified') assigns the crucifixion to the Jewish leaders even though Rome performed the execution — Luke's account emphasizes the instigators over the executioners.
21. The imperfect ēlpizomen ('we were hoping, we had been hoping') is one of the saddest verbs in the New Testament — their hope is stated in the past tense. The verb lytrouthai ('to redeem, to ransom, to liberate') echoes Zechariah's prophecy in 1:68 ('he has visited and accomplished redemption for his people') and connects to the concept of the go'el, the kinsman-redeemer. Their messianic expectation was political liberation; the crucifixion destroyed that hope. The mention of 'the third day' (tritēn tautēn hēmeran) is ironic — they note the timeframe that Jesus predicted for his resurrection but do not connect it.
22. The verb exestēsan ('astonished, amazed, disturbed') indicates that the women's report was not simply dismissed (as verse 11 might suggest) but created genuine disturbance among the group. The phrase genomenai orthrinai ('having been early-rising, having gone early') places the women's visit in context.
23. The word optasian ('vision, appearance') may reflect the disciples' interpretation of the women's experience — calling it a 'vision' allows them to acknowledge the report without accepting its implications. The final phrase hoi legousin auton zēn ('who say he is alive') is the heart of the Christian proclamation compressed into five Greek words. The disciples report this as information, not yet as belief.
24. The verification visit (tines tōn syn hēmin, 'some of those with us,' referring to Peter and possibly others) confirmed the empty tomb but not the resurrection itself — auton de ouk eidon ('but him they did not see'). The tomb's emptiness is a necessary but insufficient condition for belief. The physical absence of Jesus is confirmed; his living presence has not yet been encountered. The emphatic final position of ouk eidon ('they did not see') communicates the disappointment.
25. The exclamation ō anoētoi ('O senseless ones, O foolish ones') is not an insult but an expression of loving exasperation. The word anoētos means 'not understanding, not thinking through' — they have the data but have not drawn the conclusion. The phrase bradeis tē kardia ('slow of heart') locates the problem not in the intellect but in the will — they are sluggish to believe. The phrase epi pasin hois elalēsan hoi prophētai ('concerning all things the prophets spoke') indicates the prophetic witness is comprehensive, not piecemeal.
26. The question is rhetorical: ouchi tauta edei pathein ton christon ('was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer?'). The verb edei ('it was necessary') is the same word used throughout Luke for divine necessity (2:49, 4:43, 9:22, 13:33, 17:25, 22:37, 24:7). Jesus's argument is that messianic suffering was not a contradiction of God's plan but its fulfillment. The sequence — suffering first (pathein), then glory (eiselthein eis tēn doxan) — is the pattern the disciples had not grasped: the cross precedes the crown.
27. The phrase arxamenos apo Mōyseōs kai apo pantōn tōn prophētōn ('beginning from Moses and from all the prophets') indicates a comprehensive, canonical exposition — Jesus explains the entire Old Testament as pointing to himself. The verb diermēneusen ('he interpreted, he explained, he

- translated') is the root of 'hermeneutics' — Jesus provides the interpretive key that unlocks the whole of Scripture. The phrase *ta peri heautou* ('the things concerning himself') reveals that Jesus is the subject of the entire Bible. What we would give to have the content of this exposition — Luke records only that it happened, not what was said.
- 28.** The verb *prosepoiēsato* ('he pretended, he acted as though, he made as if') indicates that Jesus created the impression he intended to continue walking. This is not deception but an invitation: he waits to be welcomed. The pattern is significant: the risen Christ does not force his presence on anyone but waits for invitation. The disciples must choose to extend hospitality.
- 29.** The verb *parebiasanto* ('they strongly urged, they compelled by entreaty') indicates persistent, warm insistence. The phrase *meinon meth' hēmōn* ('stay with us') is a simple invitation that becomes the moment of grace. The time reference — evening approaching, day declining — is both practical (travel was dangerous after dark) and symbolic (spiritual darkness is about to give way to light). Jesus accepts their hospitality: *eisēlthen tou meinai syn autois* ('he entered to remain with them').
- 30.** The four actions — took (*labōn*), blessed (*eulogēsēn*), broke (*klasas*), gave (*epedidou*) — mirror the Last Supper (22:19) and the feeding of the five thousand (9:16). The guest has become the host: the one invited to dinner takes the role of the host who distributes bread. This reversal is the moment of revelation. The imperfect *epedidou* ('was giving, began giving') suggests the recognition occurred during the distribution, not after.
- 31.** The passive *diēnoichthēsan* ('were opened') reverses the divine closing of verse 16 — God who held their eyes shut now opens them. The verb *epegnōsan* ('they recognized fully, they knew him completely') is the same compound verb from verse 16 (*epignōnai*). Recognition comes through the breaking of bread, not through the Scripture exposition — though the exposition prepared them. The word *aphantos* ('invisible, unseen, vanished') occurs only here in the New Testament. Jesus does not walk away but simply ceases to be visible. The risen Christ's appearances are under his sovereign control.
- 32.** The phrase *hē kardia hēmōn kaiomenē ēn* ('our heart was burning') describes the subjective experience of encountering the risen Christ through Scripture — warmth, illumination, and kindling of what was extinguished. The verb *diēnoigen* ('was opening') uses the same root as the opening of their eyes (v. 31) and the opening of their minds (v. 45) — opening is the central action of this chapter. Their hearts burned during the walk, but they did not understand the burning until after the recognition. Retrospectively, the Scripture exposition was already the presence of the risen Christ.
- 33.** The phrase *autē tē hōra* ('that very hour') indicates they left immediately — despite the late hour and the seven-mile journey back to Jerusalem in the dark. The resurrection reverses their direction: they had walked away from Jerusalem in despair; now they rush back in joy. The verb *hypestrepsan* ('they returned') is significant in Luke — the faithful always return (the leper in 17:15, the women in 23:56). They find the Eleven already gathered (*ēthroumeous*), indicating the community has regathered despite the scattering.
- 34.** Before the Emmaus disciples can share their news, they are greeted with a proclamation: *ontōs ēgerthē ho kyrios* ('the Lord has truly been raised'). The adverb *ontōs* ('truly, really, in fact') marks the shift from rumor to conviction. The appearance to Simon (Peter) is mentioned only here and in 1 Corinthians 15:5 — Luke does not narrate it, but this brief reference confirms that Peter had a personal encounter with the risen Jesus between verses 12 and 34, transforming his amazement into faith.
- 35.** The verb *exēgounto* ('they were narrating, explaining in detail') gives us 'exegesis.' They share two things: what happened on the road (*ta en tē hodō*) and how recognition came in the breaking of bread (*en tē klasei tou artou*). The phrase 'the breaking of the bread' (*tē klasei tou artou*) uses the article, suggesting this is already becoming a technical term for the communal meal that would later be called the Eucharist (Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7). Jesus is recognized not in supernatural display but in the ordinary act of sharing a meal.
- 36.** The appearance is sudden: *autos estē en mesō autōn* ('he himself stood in their midst'). The greeting *eirēnē hymin* ('peace to you') is the standard Hebrew *shalom aleichem* — but in this context it carries its full theological weight: the peace of the risen Christ, the restoration of all that was broken. This is not merely a greeting but a bestowal.
- 37.** Despite having just heard the Emmaus report and having proclaimed 'The Lord has truly been raised,' the disciples react with terror (*ptoēthentes*, 'startled, frightened') and fear (*emphoboi*, 'filled with fear'). The word *pneuma* ('spirit, ghost') indicates they think they are seeing an apparition of a dead person, not a resurrected body. This detail underscores that the resurrection was not expected or easily believed, even by those who had reasons to expect it.
- 38.** The verb *tetaragmenoi* ('disturbed, agitated, troubled') describes inner turmoil. The word *dialogismoi* ('reasonings, doubts, debates') can mean either 'thoughts' or 'doubts' — in context, the skeptical nuance predominates. The phrase *anabainousin en tē kardia hymōn* ('rise up in your hearts') locates doubt in the heart, not the mind, connecting to 'slow of heart to believe' in verse 25.
- 39.** Jesus offers empirical evidence: visual (*idete*, 'look'), tactile (*psēlaphēsate*, 'touch, handle, feel'), and rational (a ghost lacks *sarka kai ostea*, 'flesh and bones'). The phrase *egō eimi autos* ('I am myself, it is I myself') is a strong identity claim — the same person who was crucified is now standing before them. The hands and feet (*tas cheiras mou kai tous podas mou*) bear the crucifixion wounds — the nail marks are the proof that this is the same body, transformed but continuous. The resurrection body is physical, tangible, and material.
- 40.** The verb *edeixen* ('he showed, he displayed') indicates Jesus actively presented the evidence. The crucifixion wounds are not hidden or healed but displayed as identifying marks — the risen body retains the marks of the passion. This detail is theologically significant: the resurrection does not erase the cross but transforms it.
- 41.** The phrase *apistountōn apo tēs charas* ('disbelieving from joy') is one of Luke's most psychologically acute observations: their joy is so overwhelming that they cannot yet fully absorb the reality. This is not skeptical unbelief but the stunned incredulity of receiving something too good to be true.

Jesus's request for food (brōsimon, 'something edible') serves as further evidence of physical reality — ghosts do not eat.

42. The ichthys optou ('broiled fish') is ordinary food — a common part of a Jerusalem meal. Some later manuscripts add 'and a honeycomb' (kai apo melissiou kēriou), but the SBLGNT follows the shorter reading. The fish connects to Jesus's ministry around the Sea of Galilee and to the post-resurrection breakfast in John 21:9-13.
43. The phrase enōpion autōn ('before them, in their presence, in front of them') emphasizes that the eating was publicly witnessed — this is a demonstration, not a private meal. The risen Jesus eats physical food with his physical body in the physical presence of witnesses. This detail served as crucial evidence against Docetism (the later heresy that Christ only appeared to have a physical body).
44. The phrase eti ōn syn hymin ('while I was still with you') is striking — Jesus speaks of his pre-resurrection ministry as a distinct, completed phase. The threefold division — nomō Mōyseōs ('Law of Moses'), prophētais ('Prophets'), and psalmois ('Psalms') — represents the three sections of the Hebrew Bible: Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim (the Psalms representing the Writings as its largest and most prominent book). This is the earliest reference to the tripartite structure of the Hebrew canon. The verb dei ('must') reaffirms divine necessity for the final time.
45. The verb diēnoixen ('he opened') echoes the opening of eyes (v. 31) and the opening of Scriptures (v. 32). Now it is the nous ('mind, understanding, intellect') that is opened. This is a divine act — the disciples cannot understand Scripture on their own; the risen Christ must unlock their comprehension. This verse resolves the incomprehension that has been a motif throughout the Gospel (9:45, 18:34). What was hidden by divine design (18:34, 'this saying was hidden from them') is now revealed by divine action.
46. The formula houtōs gegraptai ('thus it is written, so it stands written') is a standard introductory formula for Scripture citation. The two elements — suffering (pathein) and resurrection (anastēnai ek nekrōn, 'to rise from the dead') on the third day — constitute the foundational Christian kerygma (proclamation), the same pattern found in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, which Paul identifies as the tradition he received.
47. The infinitive kērychthēnai ('to be proclaimed, to be heralded') extends the 'it is written' formula: Scripture foretold not only the suffering and resurrection but also the resulting worldwide mission. The content of the proclamation is metanoian eis aphesin hamartiōn ('repentance leading to forgiveness of sins'). The scope is eis panta ta ethnē ('to all the nations') — the universal mission that Luke will narrate in Acts. The phrase arxamenoi apo Ierousalēm ('beginning from Jerusalem') provides the geographic starting point and the programmatic outline for Acts (cf. Acts 1:8, 'in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth').
48. The declaration hymeis martyres toutōn ('you are witnesses of these things') is the commission statement that bridges the Gospel and Acts. The word martyres ('witnesses') carries legal weight — they have seen and can testify. The 'these things' (toutōn) encompasses everything: the suffering, resurrection, and the scriptural interpretation. This single sentence defines the apostolic mission: to bear witness to what they have seen and heard.
49. The phrase tēn epangelian tou patros mou ('the promise of my Father') refers to the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:4-5, 2:33). The verb apostellō ('I am sending') is a present tense indicating certainty. The command kathisate en tē polei ('sit, stay, remain in the city') requires waiting — the disciples must not begin their mission until equipped. The metaphor endysēsthe ('you are clothed with') presents the Holy Spirit as a garment — power (dynamis) from on high (ex hypsous) that covers and transforms them. This promise is fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2).
50. Bethany (Bēthanian) is on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem (cf. 19:29). The gesture eparas tas cheiras ('having lifted his hands') is the priestly blessing posture (cf. Leviticus 9:22, where Aaron 'lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them'). Jesus departs not as a prophet or teacher but as a priest, bestowing the final benediction on his people. The verb eulogēsēn ('he blessed') connects to the Benedictus of Zechariah (1:68, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel').
50. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 9:22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
51. The ascension occurs en tō eulogein auton autous ('while he was blessing them') — his last earthly act is benediction. The verb diestē ('he parted, he was separated, he withdrew') conveys gentle departure. The phrase anephereto eis ton ouranon ('he was being carried up into heaven') is in the imperfect passive, suggesting a gradual, visible ascent. Some manuscripts omit 'and was carried up into heaven,' but the SBLGNT includes it. Acts 1:9-11 provides the more detailed account.
52. The verb proskynēsantes ('having worshiped, having prostrated themselves') is the first unambiguous act of worship directed at Jesus in Luke's Gospel — his departure prompts what his presence did not. The phrase meta charas megalēs ('with great joy') is counterintuitive: their master has just left them, yet they are filled with joy rather than grief. This transforms the departure from loss into exaltation. The verb hypēstrepsan ('they returned') completes the movement: the Emmaus disciples returned to Jerusalem in verse 33; now all the disciples return, and the centripetal pull toward Jerusalem continues into Acts.
53. The Gospel ends where it began: in the temple (en tō hierō). Luke 1:8-9 opened with Zechariah serving in the temple; Luke 24:53 closes with the disciples worshipping in the temple. The phrase dia pantos ('continually, at all times') indicates this was not a single visit but a sustained practice of worship. The participle eulogountes ('blessing, praising') uses the same verb Jesus used in blessing them (v. 50) — they return to God the blessing they received from Christ. The Gospel of Luke concludes not with an ending but with a beginning: the community of praise that will, in the opening of Acts, receive the Spirit and become the church.

John

1

Summary: *John 1 opens with one of the most theologically dense passages in the New Testament: the Prologue (1:1-18), which identifies Jesus as the eternal Word (logos) who was with God, was God, and became flesh to dwell among humanity. The chapter then introduces John the Baptist as a witness to the light, narrates the Baptist's testimony before the priests and Levites, and concludes with the calling of the first disciples — Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael — as they begin to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, and the King of Israel.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Prologue draws on both Jewish Wisdom tradition (Proverbs 8, Sirach 24) and Greek philosophical vocabulary to present Jesus as the pre-existent, creative, and revelatory Word of God. The Greek logos carried immense weight in both traditions — for Jews, the word of God was the agent of creation (Genesis 1, Psalm 33:6); for Greeks, logos was the rational principle ordering the universe. John's genius is to take this loaded term and declare that it 'became flesh' — a claim that would have shocked both audiences. The 'I am' language that will dominate the Gospel appears implicitly in the Baptist's self-identification as 'not the Christ' and his pointing to 'one standing among you whom you do not know.'*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between the Prologue's logos theology and the narrative that follows requires careful handling. We render logos as 'Word' (capitalized) to preserve its theological weight as a title for Christ. The Baptist's denial sequence (1:19-28) requires attention to the political and religious expectations surrounding messianic figures. Nathanael's skepticism about Nazareth (1:46) reflects a real geographical prejudice in first-century Judaism. The title 'Son of Man' in verse 51 draws on Daniel 7:13 and will require expanded treatment.*

Connections: *The Prologue connects to Genesis 1:1 ('In the beginning'), Proverbs 8:22-31 (Wisdom as God's companion in creation), and Isaiah 40:3 (the voice in the wilderness). The 'Lamb of God' title (1:29, 36) connects to the Passover lamb of Exodus 12 and the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. Jacob's ladder (Genesis 28:12) is explicitly referenced in 1:51. The entire chapter establishes the identity claims that the rest of the Gospel will develop through signs and discourse.*

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and apart from him not one thing came into being that has come into being. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of humanity. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁶There

e came a man sent from God; his name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. ⁹The true light, which gives light to every person, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who received him — to those who believe in his name — he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³Which were brought into the world, not of lifeblood, nor of the will of the physical nature, nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory — glory as of the only Son from the Father — full of grace and truth. ¹⁵John testified about him and cried out, saying, "This is the one of whom I said, 'The one coming after me has surpassed me, because he existed before me.'" ¹⁶For from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. The only God, who is at the Father's side — he has made him known. ¹⁹This is John's testimony, when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." ²¹They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am 'a voice crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. ²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They questioned him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one whom you do not know — ²⁷He it is, who coming following me is preferred prior to me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. ²⁸These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. ²⁹The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look — the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" ³⁰This is the one about whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who has surpassed me, because he existed before me.' ³¹I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was so that he might be revealed to Israel." ³²And John testified, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining — he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴And I have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God." ³⁵The next day John was standing again with two of his disciples, ³⁶Looking upon Jesus as he walked, he says, take notice the Lamb of God! ³⁷The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" ³⁹He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about the tenth hour. ⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. ⁴¹He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Christ). ⁴²He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter). ⁴³The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and the prophets wrote about as well — Jesus son of Joseph, from Nazareth." ⁴⁶Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." ⁴⁷Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Look — a true Israelite, in whom there is no deceit!" ⁴⁸Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you." ⁴⁹Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" ⁵⁰Jesus answered him, "Do you believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *en arche* ('in the beginning') deliberately echoes the opening of Genesis (*bereshit* in Hebrew, *en arche* in the Septuagint). The imperfect verb *en* ('was') denotes continuous past existence, not a point of origin — the Word already existed when the beginning occurred.

1. The preposition *pros* ('with') in 'the Word was with God' suggests not merely proximity but relational orientation — face-to-face communion. The Word was directed toward God, in dynamic relationship.
1. In the final clause, 'God' (*theos*) appears without the article, which in Greek grammar indicates qualitative force — the Word shared the nature and essence of God. This is distinct from saying 'the Word was the God' (which would conflate the persons) or 'the Word was a god' (which would diminish the claim). The rendering 'the Word was God' preserves the theological precision of the Greek.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 1:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The pronoun *houtos* ('this one, he') personalizes the *logos* — no longer 'it' but 'he.' This verse reaffirms what verse 1 stated, functioning as a summary transition before the creation theme of verse 3. The repetition is characteristic of John's literary style, where key ideas are restated with slight variation for emphasis.
3. The verb *egeneto* ('came into being') contrasts with the *en* ('was') of verses 1-2. The Word 'was' (eternal existence); all things 'came into being' (originated existence) through him. The preposition *dia* ('through') identifies the Word as the agent of creation, echoing Proverbs 8:30 and Colossians 1:16.
3. The punctuation of the final phrase *ho gegonen* ('that has come into being') is disputed. The SBLGNT places it with verse 3 as the conclusion of the creation statement. Some manuscripts and church fathers attach it to verse 4: 'What has come into being in him was life.' We follow the SBLGNT punctuation.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Proverbs 8:30 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The Greek *zoe* ('life') in John always carries theological weight beyond mere biological existence — it points toward the 'eternal life' (*zoe aionios*) that becomes a central theme of the Gospel. The chain of identification — Word, life, light — establishes the conceptual framework for the entire book. 'Of humanity' renders *ton anthronon* more inclusively than the KJV's 'of men,' reflecting the universal scope of the claim.
5. The verb *katelaben* (from *katalambano*) carries a double meaning: 'to comprehend/understand' (as the KJV renders it) and 'to seize/overcome/extinguish.' Both senses are likely intended — the darkness neither understood the light nor was able to overpower it. We render 'overcome' as the primary sense, since the light-versus-darkness imagery suggests conflict rather than mere cognition.
5. The present tense *phainei* ('shines') amid past-tense narration may indicate that the light's shining is an ongoing reality, not merely a past event.
6. The verb *egeneto* ('there came, there appeared') contrasts with the *en* ('was') used of the Word in verses 1-2. John the Baptist 'came into being' — he is a creature, not the eternal Word. The participle *apestalmenos* ('sent') is from *apostello*, the root of 'apostle,' emphasizing John's divinely commissioned role.
7. The word *martyria* ('witness, testimony') and its verb *martyreo* ('to testify') appear prominently throughout John's Gospel. The Baptist's role is defined entirely in terms of witness — he is not the light but the one who points to it. The purpose clause 'so that all might believe' establishes that faith (*pistis/pisteuo*) is the intended response to testimony, a theme John develops throughout.
8. The emphatic *ekeinos* ('that one, he himself') underscores the distinction between the Baptist and the light. This careful distancing may reflect a historical situation in which some followers of John the Baptist continued to venerate him as a messianic figure (cf. Acts 19:1-7). John's Gospel consistently subordinates the Baptist to Jesus.
9. The adjective *alethinon* ('true, genuine, real') does not merely mean 'not false' but 'the authentic reality of which all other lights are shadows.' The participle *erchomenon* ('coming') can modify either 'light' (the true light was coming into the world) or 'person' (every person coming into the world). We attach it to 'light,' following the flow of the Prologue's narrative about the Word entering the world.
10. The threefold repetition of *kosmos* ('world') creates a devastating irony: the world that owed its very existence to the Word failed to recognize its maker. The verb *egno* ('knew, recognized') implies relational knowledge, not merely intellectual awareness — the world failed to acknowledge or receive the one through whom it was made.
11. The Greek shifts from neuter *ta idia* ('his own things/domain') to masculine *hoi idioi* ('his own people'). He came to his own place — Israel, the covenant people — and his own people rejected him. This verse encapsulates the tragic theme of the Gospel: the divine Word comes home and is turned away by those who should have recognized him.
12. The Greek *exousia* means 'right, authority, power' — not merely ability but authorized status. 'Children' (*tekna*) rather than 'sons' (*huioi*) is John's deliberate word choice, emphasizing the intimacy of the relationship rather than legal standing. The present tense 'believe' (*pisteuousin*) suggests ongoing faith, not a one-time act. 'In his name' means trusting in the person and character that the name represents.
13. The plural 'bloods' (*haimaton*) is unusual and may refer to the mixture of parental blood thought in antiquity to produce offspring. The threefold negation — not from blood, not from physical desire, not from human decision — systematically eliminates every natural means of generation. This divine birth is entirely God's initiative. Some early church fathers read the singular ('who was born') referring to Christ's virgin birth, but the plural is better attested in the manuscripts.

14. The verb *eskenosen* ('tabernacled, pitched his tent') is one of John's most theologically loaded words. It echoes the Hebrew *shakan* ('to dwell'), from which *Shekhinah* derives — God's indwelling presence in the tabernacle and temple. The Word does not merely visit but takes up residence in human flesh.
14. *Monogenous* ('only, unique, one-of-a-kind') is rendered 'only Son' rather than the KJV's 'only begotten.' The Greek does not emphasize manner of origin (begetting) but uniqueness of relationship. The Word is God's one-of-a-kind Son.
14. The pairing 'grace and truth' (*charitos kai aletheias*) corresponds to the Hebrew *chesed ve'emet* of Exodus 34:6, where God reveals himself as 'abounding in faithful love and truth.' John claims that this divine self-revelation is now embodied in a person.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 34:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The perfect tense *kekragen* ('has cried out') indicates that John's testimony continues to resonate. The paradox is deliberate: the one who comes 'after' John in time (born later, began ministry later) 'was before' him in preexistence. The Greek *protos mou en* ('he was first/before me') points to the eternal existence affirmed in verse 1.
16. The phrase *charin anti charitos* ('grace upon grace') is notoriously difficult. The preposition *anti* can mean 'in place of,' 'in return for,' or 'upon.' The sense is likely wave upon wave — one expression of grace replaced and exceeded by the next, an inexhaustible supply. 'Fullness' (*pleroma*) indicates that the incarnate Word lacks nothing of the divine nature.
17. John does not set Moses and Jesus in opposition (note the absence of 'but' — the Greek has no adversative conjunction here, though the KJV adds one). The law was given (passive, from God) through Moses; grace and truth came (active, from their source) through Jesus Christ. The comparison is one of escalation, not contradiction. This is the first time the name 'Jesus Christ' appears in the Gospel.
18. The SBLGNT reads *monogenes theos* ('the only God' or 'the unique one, God') rather than the variant *monogenes huios* ('the only Son') found in later manuscripts. This is one of the strongest christological statements in the New Testament — the Word is not merely the only Son but 'the only God,' a second use of *theos* applied to the Word (cf. 1:1c).
18. The verb *exegesato* ('has made known, has explained') is the root of 'exegesis.' The Son 'exegetes' the Father — he is the authoritative interpretation and revelation of the invisible God. The image of being 'at the Father's side' (*eis ton kolpon*, literally 'in the bosom') conveys the most intimate possible relationship.
19. The term *hoi Ioudaioi* ('the Jews') in John's Gospel almost always refers to the religious authorities in Jerusalem, not the Jewish people as a whole. We render 'the Jewish leaders' to reflect this. The delegation of priests and Levites indicates an official inquiry from the temple establishment — John's activity in the wilderness had attracted enough attention to prompt an investigation.
20. The emphatic double statement — 'confessed and did not deny' — uses a literary device (*litotes*: affirming by negating the opposite) to stress the forcefulness of John's declaration. The *ego ouk eimi* ('I am not') is a deliberate contrast with Jesus's *ego eimi* ('I am') statements that will follow throughout the Gospel.
21. Three messianic expectations are probed: the Christ, Elijah (expected to return before the Messiah, per Malachi 4:5), and 'the Prophet' (the prophet like Moses promised in Deuteronomy 18:15-18). John denies all three. The synoptic Gospels identify John as Elijah (Matthew 11:14, 17:12-13), but John's Gospel has the Baptist himself deny this identification — a tension scholars have long noted. 'The Prophet' with the definite article indicates a specific expected figure, not just any prophet.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Malachi 4:5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 18:15-18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The delegation's frustration is evident — they need a report for the authorities in Jerusalem. The question 'What do you say about yourself?' forces John to define his own identity positively after three negative denials.
23. John identifies himself not with a title but with a function — he is a voice, nothing more. The quotation is from Isaiah 40:3 (Septuagint), which in its original context announced the end of the Babylonian exile and God's return to his people. John applies this to Jesus's coming. In the Hebrew of Isaiah 40:3, 'in the wilderness' modifies 'prepare the way' (prepare in the wilderness a way for the LORD), but the Septuagint (and John) attach it to 'crying' — a voice crying in the wilderness.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 40:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. This parenthetical note identifies the theological party behind the inquiry. The Pharisees, who were deeply concerned with ritual purity and proper religious practice, would have been particularly interested in an unauthorized baptizer operating in the wilderness. This explains the question that follows in verse 25 about John's authority to baptize.
25. The logic is clear: if John holds none of the recognized eschatological offices, by what authority does he perform a rite of purification? Baptism (immersion) was known in Judaism — proselyte baptism, Qumran immersions — but an unauthorized figure calling all Israel to repentance through baptism was unprecedented.

26. John deflects the question about his own authority by pointing to a greater figure already present but unrecognized. The verb *hesteken* ('stands,' perfect tense) suggests a settled, ongoing presence — the one they seek is already there. The irony is characteristic of John's Gospel: the religious authorities are investigating the wrong person.
27. Untying a master's sandal was considered too menial even for a Jewish slave — it was reserved for Gentile slaves. John declares himself unworthy of even the lowest servant's task in relation to the coming one. The image is vivid and culturally specific, conveying radical self-abasement.
28. This Bethany is distinct from the Bethany near Jerusalem (11:1). The SBLGNT reads 'Bethany' (Bethania) rather than 'Bethabara,' which is an early emendation by Origen, who could not locate a Bethany east of the Jordan in his day. The location 'beyond the Jordan' places the events in Perea or Transjordan.
29. The title 'Lamb of God' (*ho amnos tou theou*) is unique to John's Gospel and carries multiple Old Testament resonances: the Passover lamb (Exodus 12), the lamb led to slaughter in Isaiah 53:7, and possibly the daily *tamid* offerings in the temple. The verb *airon* ('takes away, bears, removes') can mean both 'to carry' and 'to remove,' and both senses may be intended — the lamb both bears sin and removes it.
29. The scope is universal — 'the sin of the world' (*tou kosmou*), not merely Israel. This fits the Prologue's universal vision of light for 'every person' (1:9).
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 53:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. This repeats the testimony of verse 15, now spoken in narrative context rather than within the Prologue. The paradox remains: Jesus comes 'after' John chronologically but existed 'before' him eternally. The word *aner* ('man') is significant — the eternal Word (1:1) is now identified as a specific human being.
31. John's confession 'I did not know him' (*ouk edein auton*) is striking — even the forerunner required divine revelation to identify the one he was preparing for. His entire baptizing ministry had a single purpose: to create the occasion for Jesus's public unveiling to Israel. The passive 'might be revealed' (*phanerothe*) implies God as the agent of revelation.
32. John's Gospel does not narrate the baptism of Jesus directly but presents it through the Baptist's eyewitness testimony. The perfect tense *tetheamai* ('I have seen, I have observed') indicates a vivid, lasting impression. The dove imagery and the Spirit's descent connect to Genesis 1:2 (the Spirit hovering over the waters) and Isaiah 11:2 (the Spirit resting on the Messiah). The key detail is that the Spirit 'remained' (*emeinen*) — not a temporary empowerment but a permanent anointing.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 1:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 11:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. John's recognition of Jesus depended on a prior divine sign — the Spirit's descent and remaining. The description of Jesus as 'the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit' defines his ministry in contrast to John's water baptism. The verb *menon* ('remaining') is a key Johannine word (*meno*, 'to remain, abide') that will become central to the Gospel's theology of relationship with God.
34. The perfect tenses *heoraka* ('I have seen') and *memartyrika* ('I have testified') indicate completed action with continuing relevance — John's witness is settled and permanent. Some manuscripts read 'the Chosen One of God' (*ho eklektos tou theou*) instead of 'the Son of God,' which would echo Isaiah 42:1. The SBLGNT reads 'Son of God,' which we follow.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 42:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. This marks the third day in John's opening sequence (day 1: vv. 19-28; day 2: vv. 29-34; day 3: vv. 35-42). The progressive narrative builds toward Jesus's gathering of his first followers. That these are John's own disciples who will leave him for Jesus underscores the Baptist's role as a transitional figure.
36. The verb *emblepsas* ('having looked intently at') suggests a fixed, penetrating gaze — John does not casually glance but stares with recognition. The declaration is shorter than in verse 29, omitting 'who takes away the sin of the world,' as if the title alone now suffices. This is the second and final time John identifies Jesus as the Lamb.
37. The verb *ekoloutheesan* ('followed') carries both the literal sense of walking after someone and the theological sense of becoming a disciple. The Baptist's testimony achieves its intended purpose — his disciples transfer their allegiance to the one he has been pointing toward.
38. Jesus's first words in John's Gospel are a question — 'What are you looking for?' (*ti zeteite*) — which functions on multiple levels: practically (what do you want?), spiritually (what are you seeking in life?). John translates 'Rabbi' for his Greek-speaking audience as 'Teacher' (*didaskalos*). The verb *meneis* ('are you staying/remaining') connects to the Johannine theme of 'remaining/abiding' (*meno*) that pervades the Gospel.
39. Jesus's invitation 'Come and you will see' (*erchesthe kai opsesthe*) becomes a pattern in the Gospel — seeing leads to believing. The 'tenth hour' is approximately 4 PM by Roman reckoning (or 10 AM by Jewish reckoning, counting from sunrise). The precise time detail is the kind of eyewitness memory that suggests the narrator was one of the two disciples present.

- 40.** Andrew is identified through his relationship to Simon Peter, who was evidently better known to the audience. The other unnamed disciple is traditionally identified as the author of the Gospel (the 'beloved disciple'), though the text does not say so explicitly.
- 41.** This is one of only two places in the New Testament where the Hebrew/Aramaic title *Messias* ('Anointed One') is transliterated into Greek (the other is John 4:25). John translates it as *Christos* for his Greek audience. The adverb *proton* ('first') implies that Andrew found Simon before doing anything else — the discovery was too important not to share immediately.
- 42.** The verb *emblemsas* ('having looked intently') is the same word used of the Baptist in verse 36 — a penetrating gaze that sees beyond the surface. Jesus demonstrates supernatural knowledge by naming Simon before being introduced. 'Cephas' is Aramaic (*kepha*, 'rock'); John translates it into Greek as *Petros* ('rock, stone'). The SBLGNT reads 'son of John' (*Ioannou*) rather than the variant 'son of Jonah' (*Iona*) found in some manuscripts.
- 43.** This marks the fourth day in John's opening sequence. Unlike Andrew and the unnamed disciple who came to Jesus through the Baptist's testimony, Philip is called directly by Jesus. The command 'Follow me' (*akolouthei moi*) is the standard call to discipleship in the Gospels — a summons to leave one's current path and walk with Jesus.
- 44.** Bethsaida ('house of fishing') was located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The note connecting Philip to Andrew and Peter's hometown suggests a pre-existing social network that facilitated the chain of recruitment: John the Baptist to Andrew, Andrew to Peter, and now the connection extends to Philip.
- 45.** Philip's identification of Jesus draws on the full breadth of Jewish Scripture — both the Torah (Moses) and the Prophets. The phrase 'Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth' presents Jesus in purely human terms — his legal parentage and hometown. The irony is that the reader already knows from the Prologue that Jesus's true identity far transcends these categories. Nathanael is traditionally identified with Bartholomew in the Synoptic lists of the Twelve.
- 46.** Nathanael's skepticism reflects a real geographical prejudice — Nazareth was a small, insignificant village in Lower Galilee with no prophetic associations. The Old Testament nowhere mentions Nazareth. Philip's response echoes Jesus's own invitation in verse 39 ('Come and you will see'), turning the method of encounter into a chain: come, see, and judge for yourself.
- 47.** The phrase 'a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit' (*dolos*, 'guile, treachery, deceit') alludes to Jacob/Israel, whose name means 'supplanter/deceiver.' Nathanael is everything his ancestor Jacob was not — an Israelite without the craftiness. The allusion prepares for the Jacob's ladder reference in verse 51. The adverb *alethos* ('truly, genuinely') emphasizes that Nathanael embodies the ideal of Israel.
- 48.** Sitting under a fig tree was associated in Jewish tradition with studying Torah (cf. Micah 4:4; Zechariah 3:10). If Nathanael was engaged in prayer or Scripture study, Jesus's supernatural knowledge of this private moment would be deeply startling. The verb *eidon* ('I saw') implies more than physical sight — Jesus perceived Nathanael's character and activity from a distance.
- 48.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Micah 4:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 48.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 3:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 49.** Nathanael's confession moves from skepticism ('Can anything good come from Nazareth?') to the highest christological titles in a single encounter. 'Son of God' and 'King of Israel' are parallel messianic titles drawn from Psalm 2:6-7 and Zephaniah 3:15. The rapid escalation of faith through personal encounter is characteristic of John's narrative theology.
- 49.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 2:6-7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 49.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Zephaniah 3:15. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 50.** Jesus's response affirms Nathanael's faith but points beyond it — the sign that prompted belief (supernatural knowledge) is only the beginning. 'Greater things' (*meizo touton*) anticipates the signs that will follow throughout the Gospel: water to wine, healing, raising the dead. Faith based on signs is accepted but will be surpassed by deeper revelation.
- 51.** The double 'Amen, amen' (*amen amen*) is unique to John's Gospel and marks solemn, authoritative declarations — Jesus is speaking with the authority of God himself. The imagery draws directly from Jacob's dream at Bethel (Genesis 28:12), where a ladder connected heaven and earth with angels ascending and descending. Jesus replaces the ladder — he is the point of connection between heaven and earth.
- 51.** The shift from singular 'you' (*soi*, verse 50) to plural 'you' (*hymin*) indicates that this promise extends beyond Nathanael to all disciples. 'Son of Man' (*ho huios tou anthropou*) is Jesus's preferred self-designation, drawing on Daniel 7:13 where the 'one like a son of man' receives dominion from the Ancient of Days.
- 51.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 28:12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 51.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 7:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

2

Summary: *John 2 presents two dramatically different scenes that together establish Jesus's authority over both celebration and worship. At the wedding in Cana, Jesus performs his first sign — transforming water into wine — revealing his glory and prompting his disciples to believe. In Jerusalem, he enters the temple and drives out the merchants and money changers, provoking the authorities to demand a sign of his authority. Jesus responds with a cryptic prophecy about destroying and raising 'this temple' in three days, which the narrator explains refers to his body and resurrection.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *John identifies the Cana miracle as the 'beginning of signs' (archen ton semeion), using his distinctive word semeion ('sign') rather than the Synoptic dynamis ('mighty work'). A sign in John is not merely a display of power but a revelation of identity — each sign points beyond itself to who Jesus is. The six stone water jars 'for Jewish purification rites' symbolically represent the old order that Jesus transforms. The temple action, placed at the beginning of Jesus's ministry rather than at the end as in the Synoptics, signals John's theological rather than chronological arrangement.*

Translation Friction: *Jesus's address to his mother as 'Woman' (gynai) sounds harsh in English but was a respectful form of address in Greek. His statement 'My hour has not yet come' introduces the 'hour' motif that runs through the Gospel, pointing to his death and glorification. The temple cleansing's placement differs from the Synoptics — scholars debate whether this represents a different event, a theological rearrangement, or a literary convention. We render without harmonizing.*

Connections: *The wine miracle connects to Old Testament imagery of wine as a sign of the messianic age (Isaiah 25:6, Amos 9:13-14, Joel 3:18). The temple action connects to Psalm 69:9 ('Zeal for your house will consume me'), Malachi 3:1-3 (the Lord suddenly coming to his temple), and the destruction/rebuilding motif that recurs at Jesus's trial (Mark 14:58). The pattern of sign followed by controversy will structure the entire first half of the Gospel.*

¹On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ²Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." ⁵His mother said to the servants, "Whatever he tells you, do it." ⁶Now six stone water jars were standing there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding two or three measures. ⁷Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them to the brim. ⁸Then he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast." So they took it. ⁹When the master of the feast tasted the water that had become wine — not knowing where it came from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew — he called the bridegroom ¹⁰Says to him, Every man at the beginning does set forth good wine. And when men have well drunk, then that which is worse — but you have kept the good wine until now. ¹¹Jesus did this as the first of his signs in Cana of Galilee, and he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him. ¹²After this he went down to Capernaum — he, his mother, his brothers, and his disciples — and they stayed there a few days. ¹³The Passover of the Jewish people was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵So he made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶To those selling doves he said, "Take these things away from here! Do not make my Father's house a marketplace!" ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it is written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." ¹⁸The Jewish leaders then responded and said to him, "What sign do you show us as your authority for doing these things?" ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰The Jewish leaders said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?" ²¹But he was speaking about the temple of his body. ²²So when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. ²³Now while he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name when they saw the signs he was performing. ²⁴But Jesus himself did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵Needed not that any should testify of man — since he recognized what

was in man.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The 'third day' continues John's opening day-sequence (1:29, 1:35, 1:43, now 2:1). Some scholars see a symbolic connection to the resurrection 'on the third day.' John never names Jesus's mother — she is always 'the mother of Jesus' or 'woman,' a pattern that may emphasize her role rather than her personal identity.
2. The passive eklethe ('was called, invited') indicates Jesus attended as a guest, not as a host or official. The presence of 'his disciples' shows the group from chapter 1 is already functioning as a recognizable unit.
3. Running out of wine at a wedding was a serious social embarrassment in the ancient Near East, where hospitality obligations were paramount. The mother's statement is not merely informational but implicitly requests action. The Greek *hysteresantos oinou* ('the wine having failed') uses a genitive absolute construction indicating the wine was completely gone, not merely running low.
4. The address *gynai* ('woman') was a respectful form in Greek, comparable to 'ma'am' — not dismissive as it sounds in English. The idiom *ti emoi kai soi* ('what to me and to you?') is a Semitic expression creating distance — 'what concern is that of ours?' or 'why involve me?' The 'hour' (*hora*) is a loaded theological term in John, referring to Jesus's death, resurrection, and glorification (cf. 7:30, 8:20, 12:23, 13:1, 17:1). Jesus's public ministry operates on a divine timetable.
5. Despite Jesus's apparent reluctance, his mother proceeds with confident expectation. Her instruction to the servants (*diakonois*, 'attendants, servants') echoes the language of covenant obedience — 'whatever he tells you, do it' resonates with Israel's response at Sinai (Exodus 19:8, 'All that the LORD has spoken we will do'). The word *diakonos* is the root of 'deacon.'
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 19:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The detail that the jars were 'for Jewish purification rites' (*kata ton katharismos ton Ioudaion*) is theologically significant — Jesus transforms the water of ritual cleansing into the wine of celebration. A *metretes* was approximately 9 gallons (34 liters), making the total volume between 108 and 162 gallons — an extraordinary quantity, signaling the abundance of the messianic age. The number six (one short of seven, the number of completion) may symbolize the incompleteness of the old order that Jesus is about to fulfill.
7. The servants' immediate obedience follows the mother's instruction in verse 5. The phrase *heos ano* ('up to the top, to the brim') emphasizes completeness — there is no room for anyone to add wine, eliminating the possibility of fraud. The human action (filling jars) and the divine action (transforming the contents) work together.
8. The *architriklinos* ('master of the feast, head steward') was the person responsible for managing the banquet, including tasting and serving the wine. The verb *antlesate* ('draw out') was used for drawing water from a well — Jesus does not announce a miracle but simply instructs them to serve what they have drawn.
9. John creates a layered irony: the master of the feast has no idea what has happened, the servants know the physical fact but perhaps not its significance, and only the disciples will understand the sign. The word *pothen* ('from where') carries theological weight in John — the question of where Jesus and his gifts come from points to his divine origin (cf. 3:8, 7:27-28, 8:14, 9:29-30, 19:9).
10. The steward's observation follows common banquet logic — after guests have drunk enough to dull their palates, cheaper wine is served. The verb *methysthosin* ('have drunk freely, become intoxicated') is frank about the level of consumption at such feasts. The theological irony is profound: God has saved the best for last. The old covenant provisions (water for purification) are surpassed by the new (wine of the messianic age).
11. John uses *semeion* ('sign') rather than the Synoptic *dynamis* ('mighty work') or *teras* ('wonder'). A sign in John is not merely a display of power but a pointer — it reveals something about who Jesus is. This first sign reveals his 'glory' (*doxa*), connecting back to the Prologue's claim that 'we have seen his glory' (1:14). The sequence — sign, glory revealed, faith — establishes the pattern for the entire 'Book of Signs' (chapters 1-12).
12. The verb *katebe* ('went down') is geographically accurate — Cana is in the Galilean hills, while Capernaum sits on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, which is approximately 680 feet below sea level. The mention of 'his brothers' (*hoi adelphoi autou*) introduces Jesus's biological family, who will later express skepticism about his mission (7:3-5). The brief stay transitions to the Jerusalem scene.
13. This is the first of three Passovers mentioned in John's Gospel (cf. 6:4, 11:55), which is the basis for estimating Jesus's ministry at approximately three years. The verb *anebe* ('went up') is the technical term for pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which sits on a hill — one always 'goes up' to Jerusalem regardless of the starting point. 'Passover of the Jewish people' distinguishes the feast for John's mixed audience.
14. The *hieron* ('temple') refers to the broader temple complex, specifically the Court of the Gentiles where commercial activity took place. The animals were sold for sacrificial use — pilgrims traveling long distances needed to purchase offerings locally. Money changers exchanged foreign currency for Tyrian shekels, the only coinage accepted for the temple tax. The commerce was technically legitimate but had become exploitative.
15. The *phragellion* ('whip') made from *schoinion* ('cords, rushes') was likely improvised from materials at hand. The Greek syntax of *pantas exebalen* ('drove them all out') is ambiguous — 'all' could refer to the animals, the sellers, or both. The violent action recalls prophetic symbolic acts (cf. Jeremiah's breaking of the pot, Ezekiel's siege model). Jesus acts with prophetic authority to purify the place of worship.

16. The dove sellers are addressed separately, probably because doves could not be driven out but had to be carried in their cages. The phrase 'my Father's house' (ton oikon tou patros mou) is a bold claim to filial relationship with God and echoes the boy Jesus's words in Luke 2:49. The word emporion ('marketplace, trading house') is the root of 'emporium.' John's version differs from the Synoptics' quotation of Isaiah 56:7/Jeremiah 7:11 ('den of robbers').
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 56:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 7:11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The quotation is from Psalm 69:9. The Septuagint uses the aorist katephagen ('consumed/ate'), but John changes to the future kataphagetai ('will consume'), shifting the reference from David's past experience to Jesus's future suffering. The disciples' 'remembering' (emnesthesan) is a characteristic Johannine device — Scripture is understood retrospectively in light of Jesus's actions (cf. 2:22, 12:16).
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 69:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The demand for a semeion ('sign') is ironic — Jesus has just performed a prophetic sign-act, but the authorities want a legitimizing credential. Their question assumes that only someone with recognized authority (the Messiah, a prophet) could act this way in the temple. The request for signs will become a recurring tension in the Gospel (cf. 4:48, 6:30).
19. Jesus uses naos ('temple sanctuary, inner shrine') rather than hieron ('temple complex'), a shift the authorities do not catch. The imperative lysate ('destroy') is not a command but a conditional challenge — 'if you destroy this temple.' The word egerō ('I will raise') is the standard resurrection verb, and Jesus claims the authority to do it himself. This statement will be cited at his trial (Mark 14:58) and mocked at the cross (Mark 15:29).
20. The forty-six years of construction dates from Herod the Great's temple renovation, which began approximately 20-19 BC, placing this exchange around AD 27-28. The temple was not actually completed until AD 63, only seven years before its destruction. The authorities take Jesus's statement at face value — they assume he is making an absurd claim about the physical building.
21. This is the narrator's interpretive aside, a characteristic feature of John's Gospel (cf. 7:39, 11:51-52, 12:33). The identification of Jesus's body as the naos ('sanctuary') makes an extraordinary theological claim: the physical temple where God's presence dwelt is being replaced by the incarnate body of Christ. After the resurrection, God's dwelling place among humanity is no longer a building but a person.
22. This is the second post-Easter retrospective in the chapter (cf. v. 17). The passive egerthe ('was raised') could be divine passive (God raised him) or middle voice (he rose). The pairing of 'the Scripture' (te graphe) and 'the word that Jesus spoke' (to logo) places Jesus's own words on par with sacred Scripture — a remarkable claim about his authority.
23. This is the first mention of signs (semeia, plural) performed in Jerusalem — John does not describe them individually, focusing instead on the response they provoked. The belief described here is sign-based faith, which the next verses will show to be inadequate. The imperfect epoiei ('was performing') suggests multiple signs over a period of time.
24. The verb episteuen ('entrust') is the same word as 'believe' (pisteuo) in verse 23 — creating a deliberate wordplay. They 'believed' in him, but he did not 'believe in/entrust himself to' them. Their faith was based on signs alone; his knowledge of them was deeper than their knowledge of him. The imperfect tense suggests an ongoing posture of reserve.
25. This verse attributes to Jesus a divine prerogative — knowing the human heart (cf. 1 Samuel 16:7, Jeremiah 17:10). The phrase ti en to anthropo ('what was in a person') is deliberately general — it applies to all humanity, not just the Jerusalem crowds. This divine knowledge of human interiority prepares for the Nicodemus encounter that follows immediately in chapter 3.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Samuel 16:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 17:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

3

Summary: *John 3 opens with Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Jewish ruling council, coming to Jesus at night. Their conversation moves from the necessity of being 'born from above' through the Spirit to one of the most quoted verses in Scripture (3:16), which declares that God's love for the world is the motivation for sending his Son. The chapter then transitions to John the Baptist's final testimony, in which the Baptist joyfully accepts his diminishing role as the 'friend of the bridegroom' and declares 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' The chapter concludes with a theological reflection on the relationship between the one who comes from above and the one who is from the earth.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Greek anōthen in verse 3 is a masterful double entendre — it means both 'again' and 'from above.' Nicodemus hears 'again' (and is confused); Jesus means 'from above' (and is revealing the divine origin of new birth). John 3:16 compresses the entire Gospel narrative — God's love, his sending of the Son, the world as the scope, belief as the means, and eternal life as the result — into a single sentence. The Baptist's self-designation as 'the friend of the bridegroom' (3:29) draws on ancient Near Eastern wedding customs where the friend managed the ceremony and then stepped aside for the groom.*

Translation Friction: *The boundary between Jesus's direct speech and the narrator's theological commentary is notoriously uncertain in this chapter. Most scholars place the transition somewhere between verses 12 and 21, with verses 16-21 possibly being John's own reflection rather than Jesus's words to Nicodemus. We render without quotation marks after verse 15, following the SBLGNT punctuation. Similarly, the Baptist's speech may end at verse 30, with verses 31-36 being the narrator's voice.*

Connections: *The 'born of water and Spirit' language connects to Ezekiel 36:25-27 (cleansing water and a new spirit). The bronze serpent reference (v. 14) connects to Numbers 21:4-9. The light-darkness judgment theme (vv. 19-21) echoes the Prologue (1:4-5). The bridegroom imagery (v. 29) connects to Old Testament depictions of God as Israel's husband (Hosea 2, Isaiah 54:5, Jeremiah 2:2). The 'wrath of God' in verse 36 is the only use of orge in John's Gospel.*

¹Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jewish people. ²He came to Jesus at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform these signs that you do unless God were with him." ³Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I tell you, unless a person is born from above, they cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴Nicodemus said to him, "How can a person be born when they are old? Can they enter their mother's womb a second time and be born?" ⁵Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I tell you, unless a person is born of water and the Spirit, they cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' ⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." ⁹Nicodemus answered him, "How can these things be?" ¹⁰Jesus answered him, "You are the teacher of Israel, and you do not understand these things? ¹¹Truly, truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but you do not accept our testimony. ¹²If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven — the Son of Man. ¹⁴As Moses raised up the serpent in the wilderness, in the same way the Son of Man be raised up:. ¹⁵so that everyone who believes in him will not be destroyed but will have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸The one who believes in him is not condemned, but the one who does not believe has been condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their works were evil. ²⁰For everyone who practices evil hates the light and does not come to the light, so that their works may not be exposed. ²¹But the one who practices the truth comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their

works have been done in God. ²²After this, Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent time there with them and was baptizing. ²³John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water there, and people were coming and being baptized. ²⁴For John had not yet been thrown into prison. ²⁵Now a dispute arose between some of John's disciples and a Jewish man about purification. ²⁶They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you testified — look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him." ²⁷John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it has been given to them from heaven. ²⁸You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent ahead of him.' ²⁹The one who has the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine is now complete. ³⁰He must increase, and I must decrease." ³¹The one who comes from above is above all. The one who is from the earth belongs to the earth and speaks from an earthly perspective. The one who comes from heaven is above all. ³²He testifies to what he has seen and heard, yet no one accepts his testimony. ³³The one who has accepted his testimony has certified that God is true. ³⁴For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. ³⁵The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hand. ³⁶The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who disobeys the Son will not see life — instead, the wrath of God remains on them.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Nicodemus is identified by three markers: he is a Pharisee (theological party), he has a Greek name meaning 'conqueror of the people,' and he is an archon ('ruler, leader') — likely a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish governing council. He appears three times in John (here, 7:50-52, 19:39), each time moving closer to faith. The connection to 2:25 is immediate — Jesus knows what is in a person, and now a specific person comes to him.
2. Nicodemus comes 'at night' (nyktos) — in John's symbolic world, night represents spiritual darkness and ignorance (cf. 9:4, 11:10, 13:30). Whether Nicodemus comes by night for secrecy, out of fear, or simply because rabbis often studied at night is debated, but the symbolic resonance is unmistakable. His use of the plural 'we know' (oidamen) may indicate he speaks for a group of sympathetic Pharisees. He acknowledges Jesus as a divinely authorized teacher based on the signs — precisely the inadequate sign-faith described in 2:23-25.
3. The Greek anōthen is deliberately ambiguous — it means both 'again' (a second time) and 'from above' (from a higher place, from God). Nicodemus hears the first meaning; Jesus intends the second (as confirmed by verse 31, where anōthen clearly means 'from above'). We render 'from above' to preserve Jesus's intended meaning, noting the wordplay. This is the only passage in John's Gospel where Jesus speaks of the 'kingdom of God' (basileia tou theou), a phrase dominant in the Synoptics but rare in John.
4. Nicodemus's response reveals he has heard anōthen as 'again' — he takes the statement with wooden literalism, imagining a physical re-entry into the womb. This misunderstanding is a Johannine literary device: a character takes Jesus's words at the surface level, prompting Jesus to explain the deeper spiritual meaning (cf. 4:11, 6:42, 8:33, 11:11-12). The word geron ('old man') may hint at Nicodemus's own age.
5. The phrase 'water and Spirit' (hydatos kai pneumatos) has been interpreted in numerous ways: (1) water baptism and the Holy Spirit, (2) natural birth (amniotic fluid) and spiritual birth, (3) an echo of Ezekiel 36:25-27 where God promises to sprinkle clean water and give a new spirit. The Ezekiel connection is strongest, given that Jesus expects Nicodemus as 'the teacher of Israel' (v. 10) to understand this reference. One preposition (ek) governs both nouns, suggesting water and Spirit are aspects of a single birth, not two separate events.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ezekiel 36:25-27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Jesus establishes a categorical distinction: flesh (sarx) produces flesh; Spirit (pneuma) produces spirit. Human effort cannot generate spiritual birth — it requires an entirely different source. 'Flesh' here does not mean 'sinful' (as often in Paul) but 'merely human, natural, limited.' The point is not that flesh is evil but that it cannot do what only the Spirit can accomplish.
7. The shift from singular 'you' (soi, addressing Nicodemus) to plural 'you' (hymas, 'you all must be born from above') indicates that the requirement is universal, not personal to Nicodemus. The verb dei ('must, it is necessary') expresses divine necessity — this is not optional spiritual advice but an absolute requirement. We maintain 'from above' for anōthen, consistent with verse 3.
8. The Greek pneuma means both 'wind' and 'spirit' — Jesus exploits this double meaning brilliantly. The wind/Spirit is real and observable in its effects but unpredictable and uncontrollable in its movements. The analogy teaches that spiritual birth, like wind, is sovereignly initiated by God, perceptible in its results but not subject to human management. The verb pnei ('blows') is etymologically related to pneuma, reinforcing the wordplay.
9. Nicodemus's third question ('How can these things be?') shows he remains at the level of human comprehension. His 'how' (pos) asks for mechanism — how does this work? — but spiritual birth is not a process to be understood and replicated. It is a divine act to be received. This is Nicodemus's last recorded word in this conversation; from this point, Jesus speaks alone.

10. The definite article is significant — ho didaskalos ('the teacher'), not merely 'a teacher.' Nicodemus holds a recognized position of authority in Israel's religious instruction. Jesus's mild rebuke implies that the Old Testament itself teaches spiritual renewal (Ezekiel 36-37, Jeremiah 31:31-34) — a scholar of Nicodemus's standing should already know this. The irony is that Israel's authorized teacher cannot grasp what the unauthorized teacher from Nazareth is explaining.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ezekiel 36-37 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The shift to the plural 'we' (oidamen, laloumen, heorakamen, martyroumen) is debated — it may be a majestic plural, or Jesus may be including the Spirit, or the narrator's voice may be beginning to merge with Jesus's. The plural 'you' (lambanete) indicates that the rejection extends beyond Nicodemus to the religious leadership as a whole. The vocabulary of seeing (heorakamen) and testifying (martyroumen) connects to the Gospel's central themes.
12. The distinction between 'earthly things' (ta epigeia) and 'heavenly things' (ta epourania) creates a vertical axis. The 'earthly things' are likely the analogy of wind/Spirit and the concept of new birth — observable realities used to explain spiritual truths. The 'heavenly things' are the divine realities themselves — God's love, the sending of the Son, the nature of judgment — which Jesus alone can reveal because he alone has been in heaven.
13. Jesus claims unique access to heavenly realities: no human has ascended to heaven to gain this knowledge — only the Son of Man, who came down from heaven, possesses it. The perfect tense anabebeken ('has ascended') may refer to Jesus's post-resurrection ascension, spoken from the narrator's post-Easter perspective, or may assert that no one has made the journey except the Son of Man. Some manuscripts add 'who is in heaven' (ho on en to ourano), but the SBLGNT omits this phrase.
14. The reference is to Numbers 21:4-9, where the Israelites bitten by poisonous serpents were healed by looking at a bronze serpent lifted up on a pole. The verb hypsothenai ('to be lifted up') carries a Johannine double meaning throughout the Gospel: it refers both to being lifted up on the cross (physical elevation) and to being exalted in glory (theological elevation). In John, the cross is simultaneously an instrument of death and the throne of glorification (cf. 8:28, 12:32-34).
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 21:4-9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The SBLGNT does not include 'should not perish' (me apoletai), which appears in some manuscripts under influence from verse 16. The parallel with Numbers 21 is complete: as the Israelites looked at the serpent and lived, so those who believe in the lifted-up Son of Man receive eternal life. 'Eternal life' (zoen aionion) in John is not merely endless duration but a quality of life — the life of the coming age experienced now through faith.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 21 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The adverb houtos ('so, in this way, thus') modifies the verb — it describes the manner or extent of God's love: 'God loved the world in this way' or 'to this degree.' The aorist edoken ('gave') points to a specific, decisive act of giving. The scope is universal — ton kosmon ('the world'), not merely Israel. The verb apoletai ('perish, be destroyed') indicates total loss, not merely death. This verse compresses the entire Gospel narrative into a single sentence: the motive (God's love), the act (giving the Son), the condition (belief), and the result (eternal life versus perishing).
16. Whether this verse is spoken by Jesus or is the narrator's theological commentary is debated. The SBLGNT does not use quotation marks, and the language shifts from second-person dialogue to third-person theological reflection.
17. The verb krine ('judge, condemn') introduces the judgment theme that will dominate verses 18-21. The purpose of the incarnation is salvation (sothe, 'be saved'), not condemnation — though condemnation will result for those who refuse the light. The threefold repetition of kosmos ('world') emphasizes the universal scope: God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but to save the world.
18. The judgment described here is not a future event awaiting a final tribunal but a present reality determined by one's response to the Son. The perfect tense kekritai ('has been condemned') and pepisteuken ('has believed') indicate settled states with present consequences. The structure creates a stark binary: belief or condemnation, with no middle ground. 'In the name' (eis to onoma) means trusting in the person and character the name represents.
19. The judgment is not an arbitrary decree but a self-executing reality — when light appears, those whose deeds are evil flee from it. The perfect tense elelythen ('has come') indicates the light's arrival is a settled fact with ongoing consequences. The verb egapesan ('loved') is striking — the same word used of God's love for the world in verse 16 is now used of humanity's love for darkness. The moral failure is a disordered love: choosing darkness over light.
20. The verb elegchthe ('be exposed, reproved, convicted') means to bring hidden things into the open. The present participle paula prasson ('practicing worthless/evil things') describes a habitual pattern, not isolated acts. The logic is psychological: evil deeds create an aversion to light because light reveals what people want hidden. This may retrospectively illuminate Nicodemus's choice to come 'at night' (v. 2).
21. The striking phrase 'practices the truth' (poion ten aletheian) combines action and truth — truth in John is not merely believed but done. This Hebrew-influenced idiom (cf. 1 John 1:6) treats truth as something lived out, not merely known. The passive phanerothe ('may be made visible') and the phrase en theo ('in God') indicate that righteous works originate from and are sustained by God — they are not independent human achievements but God-empowered deeds.

- 22.** The transition moves from Jerusalem (where the Nicodemus conversation took place) to the Judean countryside. The statement that Jesus 'was baptizing' (ebaptizen) is qualified in 4:2, which notes that Jesus himself did not baptize but his disciples did. The imperfect tense suggests an ongoing ministry period. This is the only Gospel to describe a period of overlapping baptismal ministries between Jesus and John.
- 23.** The location of Aenon ('springs') near Salim is debated — candidates include a site in the Jordan Valley and one in Samaria. The practical note about 'plenty of water' (hydata polla, literally 'many waters') indicates that immersion, not sprinkling, was the mode of baptism. The imperfect tenses (pareginonto, ebaptizonto) describe ongoing activity — people kept coming and being baptized.
- 24.** This parenthetical note synchronizes John's narrative with the Synoptic timeline, where Jesus's Galilean ministry begins after John's arrest (Mark 1:14). John's Gospel uniquely preserves this period of overlapping ministries before the Baptist's imprisonment.
- 25.** The SBLGNT reads the singular Ioudaiou ('a Jewish man') rather than the plural 'Jews' found in some manuscripts. The dispute about katharismou ('purification, cleansing') connects baptism to the broader Jewish purity system. The specific content of the dispute is not given — it serves primarily as the trigger for the question brought to John in the next verse.
- 26.** John's disciples report Jesus's growing popularity with evident concern — their teacher is losing followers. They carefully avoid using Jesus's name, referring to him only as 'the one who was with you' and 'the one you testified about.' The hyperbolic 'everyone' (pantes) expresses their alarm. The irony is that this is exactly what John predicted and intended (1:26-27).
- 27.** John's response begins with a statement of radical divine sovereignty — every role, every gift, every ministry is heaven's assignment. The principle applies both to Jesus (whose growing ministry is heaven-given) and to John himself (whose diminishing role is equally heaven-assigned). The perfect participle dedomenon ('having been given') emphasizes the settled, divine origin of each person's calling.
- 28.** John appeals to his own earlier testimony (1:20) — his disciples heard him say it. The phrase apostalmenos eimi ('I have been sent') uses the perfect passive, emphasizing that his role as forerunner was divinely appointed. John's identity is entirely defined by his relationship to the one who follows.
- 29.** The 'friend of the bridegroom' (ho philos tou nymphiou) was a recognized role in Jewish weddings — the shoshbin who arranged the wedding, guarded the bridal chamber, and announced the groom's arrival. His joy was in the groom's joy, not his own. John casts himself in this role: he prepared everything for the bridegroom's arrival, and now that the groom has come, his task is fulfilled. The bridegroom imagery echoes Old Testament depictions of God as Israel's husband (Hosea 2:16, Isaiah 62:5). The cognate accusative chara chairei ('rejoices with joy') is a Semitic intensifier expressing overwhelming gladness.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Hosea 2:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 62:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 30.** This is perhaps the most memorable statement of the Baptist in any Gospel. The verb dei ('must, it is necessary') again expresses divine necessity — this is not John's reluctant concession but his joyful acceptance of God's design. The verbs auxanein ('to grow, increase') and elattousthai ('to diminish, decrease') describe an inverse relationship: as Jesus's ministry expands, John's contracts. The present infinitives suggest an ongoing process, not a sudden event.
- 31.** Whether this is the Baptist's continued speech or the narrator's theological commentary is uncertain — the language closely resembles the narrator's voice throughout the Gospel. The word anōthen ('from above') echoes verse 3, where it was the word Nicodemus misunderstood. The contrast between 'from above' and 'from the earth' parallels the flesh/Spirit contrast of verse 6. The repetition of 'above all' (epano panton) creates an inclusio bracketing the earthly description.
- 32.** The perfect tense heoraken ('has seen') indicates firsthand, ongoing knowledge — the one from heaven testifies from direct experience of divine realities. The sweeping 'no one' (oudeis) is hyperbolic (as verse 33 immediately shows some do accept), expressing the general pattern of rejection that marks the Gospel's narrative. The language echoes verse 11, reinforcing whether this is narrator or Baptist speaking.
- 33.** The verb esphragisen ('has sealed, certified, attested') is a legal metaphor — to affix one's seal to a document was to authenticate it. Accepting Jesus's testimony is equivalent to affirming God's truthfulness, because Jesus speaks God's words. Conversely, rejecting Jesus's testimony makes God a liar (cf. 1 John 5:10).
- 34.** The phrase ou gar ek metrou ('not by measure, without limit') indicates that the Spirit is given to the Son without restriction or rationing. In rabbinic thought, the Spirit was given to prophets in limited portions for specific tasks; the Son receives the Spirit in unlimited fullness (cf. 1:32-33, where the Spirit 'remained' on Jesus). The subject of 'gives' (didōsin) could be God (giving the Spirit to the Son) or the Son (giving the Spirit to believers), but the former is more natural in context.
- 35.** The verb agapa ('loves') is the present tense of agapao, indicating the Father's continuous, active love for the Son. The perfect tense dedōken ('has given, has placed') indicates a completed transfer of authority with lasting effect. 'All things' (panta) is comprehensive — nothing is withheld. The metaphor 'in his hand' (en te cheiri) denotes authority, power, and possession — a Semitic idiom for total control.
- 36.** The present tense echei ('has') is significant — eternal life is a present possession, not merely a future hope, for those who believe. The contrasting verb apeithon ('disobeying, refusing to be persuaded') is stronger than 'not believing' — it implies active resistance, not mere ignorance. The word orge ('wrath') appears only here in John's Gospel. The verb menei ('remains, abides') is the same word used positively elsewhere for abiding in Christ — here it describes the settled, ongoing state of divine displeasure resting upon the disobedient. This verse serves as a summary of the entire chapter's theology: belief brings life, disobedience brings wrath.

4

Summary: *John 4 narrates Jesus's encounter with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well near Sychar. The conversation moves from physical water to 'living water,' from the woman's marital history to the nature of true worship, and culminates in Jesus's self-identification as the Messiah. The woman becomes the first evangelist in John's Gospel, bringing her town to Jesus. The chapter then transitions to a discourse on spiritual harvest with the disciples, and concludes with the healing of a royal official's son in Cana — the second sign in John's narrative.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This is the longest recorded conversation between Jesus and any individual in the Gospels. Jesus crosses three boundaries that a first-century Jewish teacher would normally observe: ethnic (Jew-Samaritan), gender (man-woman alone), and moral (righteous-sinful). The woman's progressive recognition of Jesus mirrors Nicodemus's failure to understand — she moves from 'a Jew' (v. 9) to 'sir' (v. 11) to 'prophet' (v. 19) to 'the Christ' (v. 29). The Messiah terminology in verse 25 is notable — the Samaritans awaited a Taheb ('restorer'), not a Davidic king, making this conversation cross-cultural at every level.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'living water' (hydor zon) carries a double meaning — it means 'running water' (as opposed to still cistern water) in ordinary usage, but Jesus uses it to mean the water that gives spiritual life. The woman's marital situation (five husbands and a current partner) has been read allegorically (representing the five foreign gods of 2 Kings 17:24-34) and literally. We render the text without imposing either reading. The worship discussion (vv. 20-24) addresses the Samaritan-Jewish dispute over the proper place of worship — Gerizim versus Jerusalem.*

Connections: *Jacob's well connects to the patriarch Jacob (Genesis 33:18-20). The 'living water' theme connects to Jeremiah 2:13 (God as the fountain of living water), Zechariah 14:8, and Ezekiel 47:1-12 (the river from the temple). The harvest imagery (vv. 35-38) connects to Joel 3:13 and Amos 9:13. The healing of the official's son parallels the Synoptic centurion's servant narrative (Matthew 8:5-13, Luke 7:1-10) but is likely a distinct event.*

¹Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard he was making and baptizing more disciples than John — ²(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his followers,). ³He departed Judaea, and departed again into Galilee. ⁴Now he had to pass through Samaria. ⁵So he came to a Samaritan town called Sychar, near the plot of land that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired from the journey, sat down beside the well. It was about noon. ⁷A Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." ⁸For his disciples had gone into the town to buy food. ⁹The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews do not share vessels with Samaritans.) ¹⁰Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." ¹¹The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket and the well is deep. Where then do you get this living water?" ¹²You are not greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave us this well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." ¹³Jesus answered her, "Everyone who drinks from this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴However, whosoever drinketh of the water that I will give him will never thirst. But the water that I will give him will be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. ¹⁵The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I will not be thirsty and will not have to keep coming here to draw water." ¹⁶He said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back here." ¹⁷The woman answered, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right to say, 'I have no husband,' ¹⁸For you have had five husbands. Then he whom you now hast is not your husband — in that saidst you truly. ¹⁹The woman said to him, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that Jerusalem is the place where people must worship." ²¹Jesus said to her, "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. ²²You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, because salvation is from the Jews. ²³But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. ²⁴God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ²⁵The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming" (the one called Christ). "When he comes, he will explain everything to us." ²⁶Jesus said to her, "I am he — the one

speaking to you." ²⁷Just then his disciples returned. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What are you looking for?" or "Why are you speaking with her?" ²⁸So the woman left her water jar and went back into the town and said to the people, ²⁹"Come, see a man who told me everything I have ever done! Could this be the Christ?" ³⁰They left the town and were coming to him. ³¹Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." ³²But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." ³³So the disciples said to one another, "No one brought him anything to eat, did they?" ³⁴Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to complete his work. ³⁵Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes and see the fields — they are already white for harvest. ³⁶Already the reaper is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may rejoice together. ³⁷For in this case the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' ³⁸I sent you to reap what you did not labor for. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." ³⁹Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony: "He told me everything I have ever done." ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. ⁴¹Numerous more believed because of his own word;. ⁴²Stated to the woman, Now we trust, not because of your declaring — since we have listened to him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. ⁴³After the two days he departed from there to Galilee. ⁴⁴For Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in his own hometown. ⁴⁵So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the festival, for they too had gone to the festival. ⁴⁶So he came again to Cana of Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. Now there was a royal official whose son was ill in Capernaum. ⁴⁷When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for the boy was about to die. ⁴⁸Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will never believe." ⁴⁹The royal official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, "Go — your son lives." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way. ⁵¹While he was still going down, his servants met him and told him that his boy was alive. ⁵²So he asked them the hour when his son began to recover, and they told him, "Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him." ⁵³The father realized that this was the exact hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, along with his entire household. ⁵⁴This was the second sign that Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT reads 'Jesus' (Iesous) rather than 'the Lord' (ho kyrios) found in some manuscripts. The Pharisees' attention to Jesus's growing movement creates the narrative motivation for his withdrawal northward through Samaria. The comparison with John frames the situation as a potential political complication.
2. This parenthetical correction qualifies 3:22 and 4:1. The narrator clarifies that Jesus directed the baptizing ministry but did not personally perform the rite. The distinction may reflect a theological concern about the relative authority of baptisms, or simply a factual correction.
3. Jesus withdraws from Judea to avoid premature confrontation with the Pharisees — his 'hour' has not yet come (cf. 2:4, 7:6, 7:30). The verb *apheken* ('left, departed from') suggests a deliberate decision, not flight.
4. The verb *edei* ('it was necessary') suggests more than geographical necessity — many Jews deliberately avoided Samaria by taking a longer route through Perea east of the Jordan. The 'necessity' may be divine — Jesus must pass through Samaria because there is a woman at a well whom the Father intends him to meet. The word carries the same divine compulsion as in 3:7, 3:14, 3:30.
5. Sychar is likely modern Askar, near ancient Shechem. The reference to Jacob's gift of land to Joseph connects to Genesis 33:19 and 48:22, and Joshua 24:32, where Joseph's bones were buried. The detail grounds the narrative in patriarchal history and establishes why this well is called 'Jacob's well' in the next verse.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 33:19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 24:32 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The word *page* ('spring, well, fountain') suggests a natural spring-fed well, though the site today is a deep cistern. The detail that Jesus was *kekopiakos* ('weary, exhausted') from the journey is a vivid human touch — the Word who became flesh (1:14) experiences genuine physical fatigue. The 'sixth hour' is noon by either Jewish or Roman reckoning, the hottest part of the day — an unusual time for a woman to come to draw water, suggesting she may have been avoiding the other women of the town.

7. Jesus initiates the conversation — a striking social reversal. A Jewish rabbi would not normally address an unknown woman in public, much less a Samaritan woman. The request 'Give me a drink' (dos moi peín) places Jesus in a position of need, creating an opening for dialogue. The verb antlesai ('to draw') is the same used at the Cana wedding (2:8), creating a subtle verbal link between the two water-related narratives.
8. The narrator explains why Jesus is alone — the disciples are away buying provisions. The detail that they purchase food in a Samaritan town implies a less rigid attitude toward Samaritan uncleanness than some Pharisaic standards would permit. The absence of the disciples allows the private conversation that follows.
9. The woman immediately identifies the social boundary Jesus has crossed. The parenthetical explanation *ou gar sunchrōntai Ioudaioi Samaritais* has been debated — *synchromai* may mean 'use together with' (share utensils) rather than 'have dealings with.' The issue is ritual purity: drinking from a Samaritan's vessel would render a Jew ceremonially unclean. The hostility between Jews and Samaritans dated to the Assyrian resettlement (2 Kings 17) and the destruction of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim in 128 BC.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Kings 17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Jesus reverses the dynamic — the one asking for water is actually the one who has water to give. The phrase *dorean tou theou* ('gift of God') is deliberately ambiguous: it could refer to the living water itself, to the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:38), or to Jesus himself. The term *hydor zon* ('living water') means 'running/flowing water' in ordinary usage (as opposed to stagnant cistern water) but carries a deeper meaning that Jesus will develop. The conditional construction (if you knew... you would have asked) implies the woman does not yet know, but could.
11. The woman hears 'living water' at the physical level — running water from a deep well requires equipment. Her address *kyrie* ('sir, lord') marks a step up from 'Jew' (v. 9) but remains at the level of polite address. The question *pothen* ('from where') is one of John's theological keywords — the question of Jesus's origin runs through the Gospel (cf. 2:9, 7:27-28, 8:14, 9:29-30, 19:9).
12. The Greek particle *me* introduces a question expecting a negative answer: 'You're not greater than Jacob, are you?' The irony is that the reader knows Jesus is indeed greater than Jacob. The woman claims Jacob as 'our father' — the Samaritans traced their lineage to the northern tribes and regarded the patriarchs as their ancestors. The mention of Jacob drinking from the well authenticates it by ancestral use.
13. Jesus now contrasts the water from Jacob's well — which satisfies temporarily — with the living water he offers. The future tense *dipsesei* ('will thirst') states an inevitable limitation: physical water cannot permanently satisfy. The 'this water' (*tou hydatos toutou*) refers specifically to the well water, creating a bridge to the contrast in the next verse.
14. The double negative *ou me dipsesei* ('will never, ever be thirsty') is the strongest possible negation in Greek. The water Jesus gives does not merely satisfy — it transforms the recipient into a source: it becomes 'a spring' (*pege*) within them. The verb *hallomenou* ('springing up, leaping, bubbling') conveys dynamic, self-renewing energy. The destination is 'eternal life' (*zōen aionion*), the quality of divine life that is John's central theme. The image anticipates 7:37-39, where Jesus explicitly connects living water to the Holy Spirit.
15. Like Nicodemus (3:4), the woman remains at the literal level — she wants water that eliminates the daily chore of coming to the well. Yet her request 'give me this water' (*dos moi touto to hydor*) echoes the language of genuine petition. John's irony operates on multiple levels: the woman asks for more than she understands, and what she is about to receive will far exceed what she requested.
16. The abrupt shift in topic is a deliberate pastoral strategy — Jesus moves from theological discussion to personal reality. The request to bring her husband will expose the woman's life situation and demonstrate Jesus's supernatural knowledge, paralleling the Nathanael encounter (1:47-48). The verb *phōneson* ('call, summon') indicates Jesus intends the husband to be present for what follows.
17. The woman's reply is technically true but evasive — she has no husband, but the full story is more complex. Jesus affirms her statement with *kalos eipas* ('you have spoken well/correctly') before revealing the deeper truth. The affirmation before the exposure demonstrates pastoral sensitivity.
18. Jesus reveals knowledge he could not have obtained naturally, demonstrating the same supernatural perception shown with Nathanael (1:47-48) and anticipated in 2:25. The five previous marriages could reflect widowhood, divorce, or a combination — the text does not moralize or explain. The current relationship is distinguished from marriage ('is not your husband'). Some scholars read the five husbands allegorically as the five foreign nations settled in Samaria (2 Kings 17:24), but the narrative functions powerfully at the literal level.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Kings 17:24 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The woman's identification of Jesus advances from 'Jew' (v. 9) to 'sir' (v. 11) to 'prophet' (v. 19). Her recognition is based on Jesus's supernatural knowledge of her personal history. The Samaritans expected a prophetic figure — the *Taheb* ('restorer') modeled on Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-18). Calling Jesus a prophet places him within this expectation.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 18:15-18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. 'This mountain' is Mount Gerizim, visible from Jacob's well, where the Samaritans had built their temple (destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 128 BC but still sacred). The Samaritan-Jewish dispute over the proper location of worship was one of the deepest divisions between the two communities. The woman may be testing the prophet with the central theological question of her tradition, or she may be deflecting from the personal topic Jesus has raised.
21. Jesus transcends the either/or framework of the woman's question. The coming 'hour' (*hora*) connects to the theological hour motif that runs through the Gospel (2:4, 7:30, 12:23) — the death and resurrection of Jesus will render both worship locations obsolete. The address 'woman' (*gynai*)

- is respectful, as in 2:4. The reference to 'the Father' (to patri) introduces a new dimension — worship is relational, directed to a Father, not merely performed at a location.
22. Jesus does not treat both traditions as equally valid — while transcending the location debate, he affirms the Jewish tradition's superiority in theological knowledge. The Samaritans accepted only the Torah (the five books of Moses) and rejected the Prophets and Writings, limiting their understanding of God. 'Salvation is from the Jews' (he soteria ek ton Ioudaion estin) is a remarkable statement given the Gospel's frequent criticism of 'the Jews' (religious leaders). Jesus identifies himself with Israel's heritage even as he transcends it.
 23. The phrase 'is coming and is now here' (erchetai hora kai nyn estin) collapses future and present — the new age of worship is both imminent and already inaugurated in Jesus's ministry. 'In spirit and truth' (en pneumati kai aletheia) does not mean 'sincerely' or 'from the heart' in a vague sense — pneuma likely refers to the Holy Spirit, and aletheia to the truth revealed in Jesus (14:6). True worship is Spirit-empowered and Christ-centered. The astonishing statement that 'the Father is seeking' (ho pater zetei) such worshipers portrays God as the active pursuer, not merely the recipient of worship.
 24. The statement pneuma ho theos ('God is spirit') is not a philosophical definition of God's essence but a statement about the nature of genuine encounter with God. Because God is spirit (not confined to physical locations), worship must be correspondingly spiritual — empowered by the Spirit, oriented toward truth. The verb dei ('must') expresses divine necessity: this is not one option among many but the only authentic mode of worship.
 25. This is the second of only two uses of the Aramaic 'Messiah' in the New Testament (cf. 1:41). The Samaritan expectation was for the Taheb ('restorer'), a prophet-like-Moses who would restore true worship and reveal all things. The woman's statement 'he will explain everything to us' (anangelei hemin hapanta) reflects this expectation of a revealer figure. John translates 'Messiah' as Christos for his Greek audience.
 26. The Greek ego eimi ('I am') is the first explicit 'I am' statement in the Gospel. On the surface, it means 'I am [the Messiah]' — a direct answer to the woman's expectation. But ego eimi also echoes the divine name revealed to Moses (Exodus 3:14, 'I AM WHO I AM') and will become Jesus's most characteristic self-identification in John (6:20, 8:24, 8:28, 8:58, 13:19, 18:5-6). This is the most explicit messianic self-declaration in any Gospel conversation — and it is given not to a Jewish leader but to a Samaritan woman.
 26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 3:14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
 27. The disciples' astonishment (ethaumazon) is at the gender boundary being crossed — rabbinic teaching discouraged extended conversation with women (Pirke Avot 1:5: 'Do not talk much with a woman'). The fact that she is also Samaritan compounds the surprise. Their silence — not asking 'what do you want?' or 'why are you talking to her?' — suggests a combination of respect and bewilderment.
 28. The detail that she 'left her water jar' (apheken ten hydrian) is vivid and significant — the original errand is forgotten in the urgency of her discovery. She came for physical water and leaves without it, having found something greater. The abandoned jar also ensures she will return (and perhaps serves as a pledge to Jesus that she will come back). She goes to tois anthropois ('the people'), not just the men — she evangelizes the entire town.
 29. Her invitation 'Come, see' (deute idete) echoes the invitation chain of chapter 1 (1:39, 1:46). The hyperbolic 'everything I have ever done' (panta hosa epoiesas) reflects the overwhelming impression of Jesus's supernatural knowledge. The question meti houtos estin ho christos ('Could this be the Christ?') uses the particle meti, which expects an uncertain or negative answer — she frames her testimony as a question, inviting investigation rather than demanding belief. This is remarkably effective evangelism.
 30. The imperfect erchonto ('were coming') describes the townspeople in process — they are on their way, creating a narrative pause during which Jesus will speak to his disciples about the harvest (vv. 31-38). The woman's testimony has set an entire town in motion toward Jesus.
 31. The imperfect eroton ('were urging, kept asking') suggests repeated requests. The disciples have returned with the food they purchased (v. 8) and are concerned about Jesus's physical needs. The conversation about food that follows will parallel the water conversation with the Samaritan woman — physical need becomes a springboard for spiritual teaching.
 32. As with the woman and water, Jesus transforms a physical topic (food) into a spiritual teaching. The word brosin ('food, nourishment') will be defined in verse 34. The disciples' ignorance ('that you do not know about') parallels the woman's incomprehension about living water.
 33. Like Nicodemus (3:4) and the Samaritan woman (4:11, 15), the disciples misunderstand by taking Jesus's words at the literal, physical level. The particle me expects a negative answer — they are fairly sure no one brought food but are puzzled. This triple pattern of misunderstanding reinforces John's theme that spiritual truth requires more than natural comprehension.
 34. Jesus defines his 'food' as obedience to the Father's mission. The verb teleiosas ('to complete, to bring to perfection') anticipates Jesus's dying word tetelestai ('it is finished,' 19:30). The phrase 'the one who sent me' (tou pempantos me) is a characteristic Johannine description of the Father, emphasizing Jesus's role as the authorized emissary. Doing God's will is not merely a duty but sustenance — it nourishes Jesus in the way food sustains the body.
 35. The 'four months until harvest' may be a common proverb or a literal time marker (placing this scene in December/January, four months before the April/May barley harvest). Jesus contrasts agricultural patience with spiritual urgency — the spiritual harvest is ready now. 'Lift up your eyes and see' may gesture toward the Samaritans walking toward them from the town (v. 30). The 'white fields' could refer to the white garments of approaching Samaritans or is simply harvest imagery.

36. In normal agriculture, sowing and reaping are separated by months; in the spiritual harvest, they overlap. The 'fruit' (karpon) gathered is people brought to faith — the harvest goal is 'eternal life' (zoen aionion). The shared rejoicing of sower and reaper transcends the proverb of verse 37, where they are separate. This may envision Old Testament prophets (sowers) and Jesus/his disciples (reapers) celebrating together.
37. Jesus quotes what appears to be a common proverb, usually carrying a negative sense (one person labors and another benefits). Jesus reframes it positively: the division of labor in God's harvest is by design, not injustice. The sower's work is essential to the reaper's harvest.
38. Jesus explicitly assigns the disciples the role of reapers. The 'others' (alloi) who labored before them likely include the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, and possibly Jesus himself. The verb kekopiakate ('have labored') uses the same root as the word describing Jesus's weariness at the well (v. 6, kekopiakos) — there is real toil in sowing, and the reapers inherit its fruit.
39. The woman's testimony (martyrouses, from martyreo) uses the same vocabulary applied to John the Baptist's witness (1:7, 15, 32, 34). A Samaritan woman becomes a credible witness whose word leads to faith — a remarkable statement in a culture where women's testimony was often discounted. Her simple report of personal experience ('He told me everything') proves more effective than theological argument.
40. The Samaritans' invitation to 'stay' (meinai) and Jesus's response of 'staying' (emeinen) use the theologically loaded Johannine verb meno ('abide, remain'). A Jewish teacher staying in a Samaritan town for two days would have been scandalous to many. The hospitality extended and accepted across ethnic lines anticipates the Gospel's universal scope.
41. The progression is from believing through the woman's testimony (v. 39) to believing through Jesus's own word (ton logon autou). The growth from 'many' to 'many more' shows the expanding impact of direct encounter with Jesus. John presents a model of evangelism: personal testimony brings people to Jesus, and Jesus's own word deepens and confirms their faith.
42. The title 'Savior of the world' (ho soter tou kosmou) is the climactic confession of the chapter. Remarkably, it comes from Samaritans — not from Jewish disciples or leaders. 'Savior' (soter) was used for God in the Old Testament (Isaiah 43:3, 11) and for emperors in Greco-Roman culture. The Samaritans claim Jesus for the whole world (tou kosmou), not just for Israel or Samaria. The SBLGNT does not include 'the Christ' (ho Christos), which appears in some manuscripts.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 43:3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. The narrative resumes the journey begun in verse 3. The two-day stay in Samaria delays but does not prevent the return to Galilee. The transition shifts from the Samaritan mission to the Galilean ministry.
44. This proverb (cf. Mark 6:4, Matthew 13:57, Luke 4:24) creates interpretive difficulty in context. If Galilee is Jesus's 'homeland' (patris), the statement seems to contradict the reception described in the next verse. Some scholars take 'homeland' as referring to Judea (the land of his birth in John's theology) or explain that the Galileans' reception is based on signs, not genuine honor. The proverb may serve as an ironic contrast: rejected at home, received abroad (in Samaria).
45. The Galileans' welcome is based on signs they witnessed in Jerusalem during Passover (cf. 2:23). This is the sign-based faith that Jesus did not trust (2:24-25) and that stands in contrast to the Samaritans' faith based on Jesus's word (4:41-42). The Galileans 'received' (edexanto) him, but the quality of their reception is ambiguous.
46. The return to Cana creates a literary frame with the first sign (2:1-11). The basilikos ('royal official') was likely an officer in the service of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee. The word could mean 'king's man' or 'nobleman.' His son is in Capernaum, roughly 16 miles from Cana — a significant distance that will become important to the story.
47. The imperfect erota ('kept asking, was begging') indicates persistent, urgent pleading. The verb katabee ('come down') is geographically precise — Cana sits higher in the hills than Capernaum on the lake shore. The father assumes Jesus must be physically present to heal, a limitation Jesus will soon transcend. The son's condition is critical: emellen apothneskein ('was about to die').
48. The plural 'you' (idete, pisteusete) indicates this is addressed not only to the official but to the Galileans generally — their faith is sign-dependent (cf. v. 45). The pairing of semeia kai terata ('signs and wonders') is unique in John; usually John uses semeia alone. The addition of terata ('wonders, portents') may carry a mildly negative connotation — seeking spectacle rather than understanding. The double negative ou me ('never') is emphatic.
49. The official ignores Jesus's theological challenge and presses his desperate request. The urgency of a parent facing a child's death overwhelms theological debate. The word paidion ('little child') is more affectionate than huios ('son') used in verse 46, revealing the father's emotional vulnerability. The repeated katabethi ('come down') shows he still assumes Jesus must be physically present.
50. Jesus heals at a distance, without going to Capernaum — his word alone is sufficient. The present tense ze ('lives') is not a promise but a declaration of present reality. The man's response marks a significant step: he 'believed the word' (episteusen to logo) — not a sign he could see, but a word he could only trust. This contrasts with the sign-dependent faith critiqued in verse 48. The verb eporeueto (imperfect, 'was going, started on his way') shows him acting on faith before receiving confirmation.
51. The servants use the same verb ze ('lives') that Jesus spoke in verse 50, creating a verbal link between the word of healing and its confirmation. The word pais ('boy, child, servant') is used here for the son, echoing the affectionate paidion of verse 49. The fact that the servants came out to meet him suggests the recovery was so dramatic they did not wait for his arrival.

52. The father investigates the timing to verify the connection between Jesus's word and the healing. The 'seventh hour' is 1:00 PM by Roman reckoning or 1:00 PM by Jewish reckoning (counting from sunrise at approximately 6:00 AM). The word 'yesterday' (echthes) indicates the official traveled overnight or stayed somewhere along the way — a detail suggesting he did not rush home in anxious unbelief but traveled at a normal pace, trusting Jesus's word.
53. The temporal correspondence confirms the healing was not coincidence but the direct effect of Jesus's word. The father's faith deepens — from initial desperate request (v. 47) to trusting Jesus's word (v. 50) to full belief confirmed by evidence (v. 53). The conversion of 'his entire household' (he oikia autou hole) reflects the ancient pattern where a household head's decision affected the whole family unit. This is the first 'household faith' in the Gospel.
54. John explicitly numbers this as the 'second sign' (deuteron semeion), connecting it to the first sign at Cana (2:11). Both signs occur in Cana, creating a geographic frame. Both involve transformation: water to wine, death to life. The numbering system will cease after this, though John continues to record signs. The phrase 'coming from Judea to Galilee' frames both signs as occurring in the context of Jesus's movement from the south to the north.

5

Summary: *John 5 opens with Jesus healing a man who had been disabled for thirty-eight years at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem on the Sabbath. When the Jewish leaders confront the healed man and then Jesus for violating Sabbath regulations, Jesus responds with a profound discourse on his relationship with the Father. He claims that 'my Father is still working, and I am working' — a statement the authorities correctly understand as a claim to equality with God. The extended discourse that follows develops themes of the Son's authority to give life and execute judgment, the reality of resurrection, and the witnesses that testify to Jesus's identity: John the Baptist, Jesus's own works, the Father himself, and the Scriptures.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Sabbath controversy triggers the most extended christological discourse in the first half of the Gospel. Jesus's claim that the Father 'shows' the Son everything he does (5:20) presents their relationship as one of intimate transparency. The authority claims escalate steadily: the Son gives life to whom he wills (v. 21), the Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son (v. 22), honoring the Son equals honoring the Father (v. 23), and the dead will hear the Son's voice and live (v. 25). The four witnesses (John, works, Father, Scripture) establish a legal case for Jesus's identity, using the courtroom language that pervades the Gospel.*

Translation Friction: *The SBLGNT omits verse 4 entirely (the angel stirring the water), regarding it as a later scribal addition. We follow the critical text. The thirty-eight years of the man's illness may allude to Israel's thirty-eight years of wilderness wandering (Deuteronomy 2:14), but this is uncertain. The transition from the healing narrative to the theological discourse is seamless in Greek, with no clear paragraph break. The 'works' Jesus refers to as witnesses (v. 36) likely include his signs but extend to his entire mission.*

Connections: *The Sabbath controversy connects to Genesis 2:2-3 (God's rest) and the ongoing Jewish debate about whether God observes the Sabbath. The resurrection theme connects to Daniel 12:2 and Ezekiel 37. The testimony of Scripture (vv. 39-47) specifically invokes Moses, connecting to Deuteronomy 18:15-18 and the entire Torah. The pool of Bethesda has been archaeologically confirmed, with its five-portico structure matching John's description.*

¹After this there was a festival of the Jewish people, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ²Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool called Bethzatha in Aramaic, which has five covered colonnades. ³In these lay a large number of disabled people — blind, lame, and paralyzed. ⁴One man was there who had been disabled for thirty-eight years. ⁵When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to get well?" ⁶The disabled man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. While I am trying to get there, someone else goes in ahead of me." ⁷Jesus said to him, "Get up, pick up your mat, and walk." ⁸Immediately the man was made well, and he picked up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a Sabbath. ⁹So the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to carry your mat." ¹⁰But he answered them, "The man who made me well told me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'" ¹¹They asked him, "Who is the man who told you, 'Pick it up and walk?'" ¹²But the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was

there. ¹⁴Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you." ¹⁵The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well. ¹⁶For this reason the Jewish leaders began persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. ¹⁷But Jesus answered them, "My Father is still working, and I also am working." ¹⁸For this reason the Jewish leaders were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the Sabbath but was also calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. ¹⁹So Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. ²⁰For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything that he himself is doing. And he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished. ²¹For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he wishes. ²²For the Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, ²³That all people should honour the Descendant, not even as they honour the Parent. He that honoureth not the Descendant honoureth not the Father which has dispatched him. ²⁴Truly, truly, I tell you, the one who hears my word and believes the one who sent me has eternal life and does not come under judgment but has passed from death to life. ²⁵Truly, truly, I tell you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ²⁶For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he has granted the Son to have life in himself. ²⁷Because he is the son of man, and has given him authority to execute judgment also. ²⁸Do not be astonished at this, for the hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹Indeed, will come forth. They that have done good, to the resurrection of life. Then they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation. ³⁰I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me. ³¹"If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. ³²There is another who testifies about me, and I know that the testimony he gives about me is true. ³³You sent messengers to John, and he has testified to the truth. ³⁴Not that I accept human testimony, but I say these things so that you may be saved. ³⁵He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice in his light for a while. ³⁶But I have a testimony greater than John's, for the works that the Father has given me to accomplish — the very works I am doing — testify about me that the Father has sent me. ³⁷And the Father who sent me has himself testified about me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, ³⁸You have not his word abiding in you — for whom he has dispatched, him you believe not. ³⁹You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, and it is they that testify about me. ⁴⁰You will not come to me, that you might have life. ⁴¹I do not accept glory from people. ⁴²But I know you — that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. ⁴³I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive that one. ⁴⁴How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? ⁴⁵Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father. The one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have placed your hope. ⁴⁶For if you believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me. ⁴⁷But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT reads *heorte* without the definite article ('a festival'), leaving the specific festival unidentified. Various proposals include Passover, Tabernacles, Pentecost, or Purim. The lack of specificity may be deliberate — John focuses on the event, not the calendar. The verb *anebe* ('went up') is the standard pilgrimage term for traveling to Jerusalem.
2. The SBLGNT reads 'Bethzatha' rather than 'Bethesda' (found in some manuscripts; the name means 'house of mercy') or 'Bethsaida.' The 'Sheep Gate' (*probatike*) is known from Nehemiah 3:1, 32; 12:39. Archaeological excavations near St. Anne's Church in Jerusalem have uncovered a pool with the five-colonnade structure John describes — four colonnades around the edges and one dividing the pool in two. The present tense *estin* ('there is') may suggest John writes before the pool's destruction in AD 70, or may simply be vivid narration.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Nehemiah 3:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The SBLGNT ends verse 3 after 'paralyzed' (*xeron*, literally 'withered, dried up'), omitting the phrase 'waiting for the moving of the water.' This phrase and all of verse 4 (about an angel stirring the water) are absent from the earliest and best manuscripts and are considered a later scribal addition explaining a local healing tradition. We follow the critical text. The three categories — blind, lame, paralyzed — represent the kinds of disabilities that Jesus will heal throughout the Gospel, echoing Isaiah 35:5-6.

3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 35:5-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
5. The duration of thirty-eight years exceeds any healing in the Synoptic Gospels and establishes the hopelessness of the man's condition. The possible allusion to Israel's thirty-eight years of wilderness wandering between Kadesh-Barnea and the crossing of the Wadi Zered (Deuteronomy 2:14) may suggest that this man represents Israel in its helpless, prolonged suffering. Verse 4 is omitted following the SBLGNT critical text.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 2:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Jesus takes the initiative — the man does not call out, does not know who Jesus is, and does not ask for healing. The verb *gnous* ('knowing') implies supernatural knowledge, as in 1:47-48, 2:24-25, 4:18. The question *theleis hygies genesthai* ('do you want to become well?') seems obvious but is probing — after thirty-eight years, the man's identity may be bound up with his illness. The question also establishes the man's will as a factor in the encounter.
7. The man's answer reveals his isolation (no one to help him) and his assumption that the pool itself is the source of healing. The reference to water being 'stirred up' (*tarachthe*) reflects the local tradition about the pool's intermittent spring, which archaeological evidence confirms — the pool was fed by a spring that flowed irregularly. The man answers Jesus's question about desire with a description of his helplessness — he wants healing but has no means to obtain it.
8. Three imperatives in rapid succession: *egire* ('get up, rise'), *aron* ('pick up, carry'), *peripatei* ('walk'). The command requires no intermediate steps — no washing in a pool, no waiting for stirred water. The word *krabatton* ('mat, pallet, cot') indicates a poor man's bedding, light enough to carry. The command to carry the mat will become the point of Sabbath controversy (v. 10), since carrying objects on the Sabbath was prohibited by rabbinic interpretation of Jeremiah 17:21-22.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 17:21-22 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The healing is instantaneous (*eutheos*, 'immediately') and complete (*hygiees*, 'sound, whole, healthy') — thirty-eight years of disability reversed in a moment. The man obeys all three commands. The narrator's final note — 'that day was a Sabbath' — is placed last for dramatic effect, signaling the conflict about to erupt. The Sabbath detail transforms a healing miracle into a legal controversy.
10. The prohibition against carrying objects on the Sabbath derives from Jeremiah 17:21-22 as interpreted by rabbinic tradition, particularly the Mishnah's listing of thirty-nine prohibited categories of work (Shabbat 7:2). The authorities focus on the legal violation rather than the miraculous healing — a priority that Jesus will address. They confront the healed man, not Jesus, whom they have not yet identified.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 17:21-22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The healed man shifts responsibility — he obeyed the one who healed him. His logic is implicit: if someone has the power to heal a thirty-eight-year disability, his authority to command actions on the Sabbath must be legitimate. The emphasis on 'the man who made me well' (*ho poiesas me hygie*) places the healing authority above the Sabbath regulation.
12. The authorities ask about the identity of the one who commanded the Sabbath violation, not the one who performed the healing. Their question focuses on the command to carry, not the miracle of restoration. The omission of the healing from their question reveals their theological priorities.
13. Unlike the Samaritan woman or Nathanael, this man does not know Jesus's identity even after being healed. The verb *exeneusen* ('turned aside, withdrew, slipped away') indicates Jesus deliberately avoided the attention. The crowd provided cover. This detail highlights the contrast with chapter 4 — the Samaritan woman sought out her community to tell them; this man cannot even identify his healer.
14. Jesus seeks the man out — the verb *heuriskei* ('finds') suggests a deliberate search. The warning 'do not sin anymore' (*meketi hamartane*) implies a connection between the man's past sin and his disability, though Jesus elsewhere denies a universal cause-and-effect between sin and suffering (9:3). The 'something worse' (*cheiron ti*) may refer to eschatological judgment rather than physical suffering. The man is now in the temple — having been healed, he can enter the sacred precincts from which his disability may have excluded him.
15. The man's action is ambiguous — is he naively reporting to those who asked (v. 12), or is he informing on Jesus? The verb *anengeilen* ('reported, announced') is neutral, but the result is that Jesus is now identified as the Sabbath violator. Unlike the Samaritan woman's testimony (4:29), which brings people to Jesus in faith, this man's report brings the authorities to Jesus in opposition.
16. The imperfect *ediokon* ('were persecuting, began to persecute') indicates the beginning of an ongoing campaign. The SBLGNT does not include 'and sought to kill him,' which appears in some manuscripts. The imperfect *epoiei* ('was doing') suggests a pattern of Sabbath activity, not just this single incident. The Sabbath issue becomes the initial flashpoint for the opposition that will eventually lead to the cross.
17. This is one of the most theologically explosive statements in the Gospel. The argument has a Jewish background: rabbis debated whether God himself observes the Sabbath. The prevailing view was that God continues to sustain creation (giving life, judging the dead) even on the Sabbath — if God stopped all work, the universe would collapse. Jesus claims to participate in this ongoing divine work. The phrase 'my Father' (*ho pater mou*) rather than 'our Father' claims a unique filial relationship. The conjunction *kago* ('and I also') places Jesus's work alongside and equivalent to the Father's.

18. The narrator confirms two charges: Sabbath violation and blasphemy. The phrase *patera idion* ('his own Father') with the adjective *idion* ('own, personal, particular') distinguishes Jesus's claim from the general Jewish understanding of God as Father of the nation. The authorities correctly perceive the implication: *ison heauton poion to theo* ('making himself equal with God'). Rather than deny this charge, Jesus's following discourse will elaborate and intensify it.
19. Jesus responds to the charge of 'making himself equal with God' not by denying equality but by clarifying its nature: the Son's equality is not independent autonomy but perfect dependent imitation. 'Cannot do nothing on his own' (*ou dynatai poiein aph' heautou ouden*) expresses not inability but the Son's chosen submission to the Father's will. The analogy reflects the ancient apprenticeship model — a son learns his father's trade by watching and replicating. The Son's works are the Father's works made visible.
20. The verb *philei* ('loves') is used here rather than *agapa* — in this context, *phileo* conveys intimate, personal affection between Father and Son. The 'greater works' (*meizona ergon*) that will astonish them are specified in what follows: giving life (v. 21) and executing judgment (v. 22). The Father's showing (*deiknusin*, present tense) is ongoing and complete — nothing is hidden from the Son.
21. Giving life to the dead (*zoopoiei*, 'makes alive') was universally acknowledged as God's exclusive prerogative in Jewish theology. Jesus claims this power for himself without qualification — 'to whom he wishes' (*hous thelei*) asserts sovereign freedom, not arbitrary caprice. This is one of the most direct claims to divine authority in the Gospel.
22. The second divine prerogative — judgment — is now entrusted entirely to the Son. The perfect tense *dedoken* ('has given') indicates a completed, permanent transfer of authority. The claim is breathtaking: the God of Israel does not judge directly but has delegated all judgment to the Son. This redefines the Jewish understanding of the final judgment — the Son stands at the center of eschatology.
23. The purpose of delegated judgment is that the Son receives the same honor (time) as the Father. The word *kathos* ('just as, to the same degree as') demands equivalent honor — not similar, not lesser, but identical. The negative corollary is equally strong: dishonoring the Son is dishonoring the Father. This makes christology inseparable from theology — one's relationship to God is determined by one's response to the Son.
24. This verse presents realized eschatology — the future judgment and resurrection are experienced in the present through faith. The present tense *echei* ('has') and the perfect tense *metabebeken* ('has crossed over, has passed') indicate that eternal life is a current possession and the transition from death to life has already occurred for the believer. The believer does not await a future verdict but has already been acquitted.
25. As in 4:23, the phrase 'is coming and is now here' (*erchetai hora kai nyn estin*) collapses future and present. 'The dead' (*hoi nekroi*) operates on two levels: the spiritually dead who hear Jesus now and come to life (present reality), and the physically dead who will be raised at the last day (future hope, developed in vv. 28-29). The title 'Son of God' (*tou huiou tou theou*) is the most exalted title used so far in this discourse.
26. This may be the most profound christological statement in the Gospel. 'Life in himself' (*zoe en heauto*) means self-existent, uncaused, underived life — the very definition of God. The Father possesses this life by nature; the Son possesses it by the Father's gift (*edoken*, 'has given, granted'). The paradox is deliberate: the Son's self-existent life is a gift — he is eternally begotten, not self-generated, yet possesses the same quality of life as the Father.
27. The Greek *huios anthropou* ('Son of Man') appears without the definite article, which is unusual and may echo Daniel 7:13 in the Septuagint. The authority to judge is connected to his identity as Son of Man — the figure in Daniel who receives dominion from the Ancient of Days. The combined claims of this discourse are staggering: the Son gives life (v. 21), receives all judgment (v. 22), possesses self-existent life (v. 26), and exercises judicial authority (v. 27).
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. Here the eschatology shifts from realized (v. 25, 'and is now here') to purely future ('the hour is coming' — without the 'and is now here' qualifier). The reference to 'all who are in the tombs' (*pantes hoi en tois mnemeios*) is unambiguously about physical resurrection, not spiritual awakening. The scope is universal — 'all' in the tombs, not merely believers.
29. This is the clearest statement of a dual resurrection in John's Gospel, echoing Daniel 12:2 ('some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt'). The distinction between 'resurrection of life' (*anastasin zoes*) and 'resurrection of judgment' (*anastasin kriseos*) describes two outcomes, not two events. The basis appears to be conduct ('done good' vs. 'practiced evil'), though this must be read alongside verse 24, where faith is the criterion for escaping judgment.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 12:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. Jesus returns to the theme of verse 19 — his dependent relationship with the Father. His judgment is just (*dikaia*) precisely because it is not autonomous but aligned with the Father's will. The phrase 'as I hear' (*kathos akouo*) parallels 'what he sees the Father doing' (v. 19) — the Son both sees and hears from the Father, indicating complete communication. This self-limitation is paradoxically the basis of his authority.
31. Jesus now shifts to a legal argument about witnesses, following the principle of Deuteronomy 19:15 that a single witness is insufficient. The concession is formal, not substantive — Jesus is not saying his self-testimony is false but that it would not be accepted as legally sufficient standing alone. The courtroom language (*martyro*, *martyria*) introduces the four-witness section that follows.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 19:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

32. The 'another' (allos) most likely refers to the Father (cf. v. 37), not to John the Baptist (who is mentioned separately in v. 33). Jesus asserts that the Father's testimony is true (alethes) — reliable and authoritative. This sets up the hierarchy of witnesses that follows: John the Baptist (human witness), Jesus's works (visible evidence), the Father (divine testimony), and the Scriptures (written witness).
33. Jesus references the delegation described in 1:19-27. The perfect tense memartyreiken ('has testified') indicates that John's testimony remains on the record — it is settled and permanent. The dative te aletheia ('to the truth') indicates that John's testimony aligned with and pointed toward the truth, which in John's Gospel is ultimately Jesus himself (14:6).
34. Jesus clarifies that he does not depend on human witnesses for his authority — he cites John the Baptist for the audience's benefit, not his own. The purpose clause 'so that you may be saved' (hina hymeis sothete) reveals a pastoral motive behind the legal argument. Even in the midst of controversy, Jesus's goal is the salvation of his opponents.
35. John the Baptist is called a lychnos ('lamp') — a portable, temporary, derivative light — not the phos ('light') that the Prologue attributes to Christ (1:4-5, 8-9). The distinction is deliberate: John was a lamp that burned with borrowed fire, not the source of light itself. The phrase 'for a while' (pros horan, 'for an hour') suggests the authorities' initial enthusiasm for John's ministry was temporary and superficial.
36. The second witness is Jesus's own works (ta erga) — the signs and the entire mission the Father has assigned. The verb teleioso ('to complete, accomplish, bring to perfection') echoes 4:34 and anticipates 19:30 (tetelestai, 'it is finished'). The works are not merely evidence of power but evidence of origin — they testify 'that the Father has sent me' (hoti ho pater me apostalken).
37. The third witness is the Father himself. The statement 'you have never heard his voice nor seen his form' is striking — did not Israel hear God's voice at Sinai? Jesus may be saying that his opponents have never truly heard or perceived God despite their religious activity. The word eidos ('form, appearance, shape') and phone ('voice') correspond to the two primary modes of divine revelation in the Old Testament — theophany and oracle. The audience has been blind and deaf to both.
38. The Johannine verb meno ('remaining, abiding') appears here negatively — God's word does not abide in them. The proof of this absence is their rejection of Jesus, whom God sent. The logic is circular by design: if they had God's word in them, they would recognize the one God sent; their failure to recognize him proves they do not have God's word.
39. The verb eraunate could be imperative ('Search!') or indicative ('You search'). We read it as indicative — Jesus is describing their practice, not commanding it. The fourth witness is Scripture itself. The irony is devastating: they study Scripture diligently believing it contains eternal life, and it does — but it points to Jesus, whom they refuse. The Scriptures are not an end in themselves but a witness that leads to the living Word.
40. The verb thelete ('you are willing, you want') frames the refusal as volitional — they do not come because they choose not to. The invitation remains open ('come to me') and the offer is unchanged ('to have life'), but the will is resistant. Jesus diagnoses the problem not as intellectual failure but as a failure of the will.
41. The word doxa ('glory, honor, praise') connects to the Prologue's theme (1:14). Jesus disclaims any need for human recognition — his glory comes from the Father alone. This sets up the contrast with his opponents in the next verse.
42. The perfect tense egnoka ('I have come to know, I know') asserts settled, deep knowledge. The 'love of God' (ten agapen tou theou) could mean their love for God or God's love in them — both senses may be intended. Their rejection of Jesus reveals an absence of love for God, despite their religious devotion. This is the root diagnosis beneath all the surface symptoms.
43. The contrast is between coming 'in my Father's name' (authorized by God) and coming 'in his own name' (self-authorized). The prediction that they will receive a self-appointed figure may refer to false messiahs generally or to specific historical figures. The irony is that the one with divine authorization is rejected while self-promoters are welcomed.
44. Jesus identifies the root obstacle to faith: a disordered desire for human approval. Those who live for peer recognition cannot receive the one who comes in God's name. The phrase tou monou theou ('the only God') echoes Deuteronomy 6:4 (the Shema) and is both a theological affirmation and an implicit charge — they claim to serve the only God but their honor system serves human opinion.
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 6:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
45. The courtroom language continues — kategoreso ('I will accuse') is a legal term for formal prosecution. Jesus will not need to accuse them because their own champion, Moses, will do so. The perfect tense elpikate ('have hoped, have placed your hope') indicates their settled trust in Moses and the Torah. The irony is that the very authority they claim will condemn them.
46. Jesus claims that Moses's writings point to him — not tangentially but centrally. The conditional construction (ei episteuete... episteuete an) is contrary to fact in the present: 'if you were believing Moses (but you are not), you would be believing me (but you are not)'. The specific Mosaic texts Jesus has in mind likely include Deuteronomy 18:15-18 (the prophet like Moses) and perhaps Genesis 3:15, 12:3, and 49:10.
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 18:15-18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
46. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 3:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

47. The discourse ends with a devastating rhetorical question. The distinction between grammatsin ('writings, letters') and remasin ('words, spoken utterances') contrasts Moses's written Torah with Jesus's oral teaching. If they cannot believe the written, established, revered text of Moses, how will they believe the spoken words of the one Moses wrote about? The question has no answer — it is an indictment that hangs in the air.

6

Summary: *John 6 is the longest chapter in the Gospel, centered on the fourth sign — the feeding of five thousand — and the extended Bread of Life discourse that follows. After feeding the crowd with five barley loaves and two fish, Jesus walks on the Sea of Galilee to his disciples. The next day, the crowd pursues him to Capernaum, and Jesus delivers the Bread of Life discourse, declaring 'I am the bread of life' — the first of the great 'I am' statements with predicate. The discourse escalates from spiritual bread to eating his flesh and drinking his blood, provoking widespread desertion. The chapter ends with Peter's confession and Jesus's identification of one of the Twelve as 'a devil.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle (aside from the resurrection) recorded in all four Gospels, making it central to early Christian memory. John alone records the walking on water as occurring in direct sequence, creating a Moses typology: as Moses provided manna and crossed the sea, so Jesus provides bread and masters the water. The Bread of Life discourse is structured as a synagogue homily on Exodus 16 (the manna), following a pattern of quotation, explanation, and application. The ego eimi ('I am') statement 'I am the bread of life' (6:35, 48) inaugurates the series of seven 'I am' declarations that define the Gospel.*

Translation Friction: *The eucharistic language of verses 53-58 ('eat my flesh,' 'drink my blood') has been interpreted sacramentally (referring to the Lord's Supper), metaphorically (referring to faith in Jesus's death), and both simultaneously. We render the Greek without imposing either reading. The verb trogo ('to chew, to munch') in verses 54-58 is more visceral than the earlier phago ('to eat'), intensifying the scandal. The mass desertion of disciples (v. 66) and Jesus's identification of Judas as 'a devil' (v. 70) create one of the Gospel's darkest moments.*

Connections: *The entire chapter is structured around Exodus 16 (manna) and Psalm 78:24 ('He gave them bread from heaven to eat'). The walking on water echoes Exodus 14 (the Red Sea crossing) and Psalm 77:19 ('Your way was through the sea'). The Bread of Life discourse connects to the Last Supper tradition (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) and to Wisdom's invitation to eat (Proverbs 9:5, Sirach 24:21). Peter's confession parallels the Synoptic confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27-30).*

¹After this, Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee, that is, the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him because they were seeing the signs he was performing on the sick. ³Jesus went up on the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jewish people, was near. ⁵When Jesus looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get even a little." ⁸Says to him,, one of his followers, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁹"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these among so many people?" ¹⁰Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was plenty of grass in that place. So the men sat down, numbering about five thousand. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and after giving thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated. He did the same with the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he said to his disciples, "Gather up the leftover pieces, so that nothing is wasted." ¹³So they gathered them up and filled twelve baskets with pieces from the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had performed, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who is coming into the world!" ¹⁵So Jesus, knowing that they were about to come and seize him to make him king by force, withdrew again to the mountain by himself alone. ¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, ¹⁷Went into into a ship, and traveled over the lake toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not arrive to them. ¹⁸The sea was becoming rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the

boat, and they were frightened. ²⁰But he said to them, "I am — do not be afraid." ²¹They were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land where they were heading. ²²The next day the crowd that had remained on the other side of the sea noticed that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not gotten into the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. ²³However, boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. ²⁴So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. ²⁵When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" ²⁶Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. ²⁷Do not work for food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has set his seal." ²⁸Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" ²⁹Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God: that you believe in the one he has sent." ³⁰So they said to him, "Then what sign do you perform, so that we may see it and believe you? What work do you do? ³¹Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³²Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." ³⁴They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." ³⁵Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶But I told you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. ³⁷Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never drive away, ³⁸For I arrived down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that dispatched me. ³⁹And this is the will of the one who sent me: that I should not lose any of all that he has given me, but raise them up on the last day. ⁴⁰For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day." ⁴¹Then the Jewish leaders began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴²They were saying, "Is this not Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" ⁴³Jesus answered them, "Stop grumbling among yourselves. ⁴⁴No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up on the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the Prophets: 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. ⁴⁶Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God — he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷Truly, truly, I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I myself am the living bread. ⁴⁹Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that a person may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, they will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh." ⁵²The Jewish leaders then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" ⁵³So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day. ⁵⁵For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will also live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven — not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. The one who feeds on this bread will live forever." ⁵⁹He said these things while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. ⁶⁰When many of his disciples heard this, they said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?" ⁶¹But Jesus, knowing within himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Does this offend you? ⁶²Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴But there are some among you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who the ones were that did not believe, and who would betray him. ⁶⁵And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted to them by the Father." ⁶⁶After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. ⁶⁷So Jesus said to the Twelve, "You do not want to leave too, do you?" ⁶⁸Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹And we have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." ⁷⁰Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil." ⁷¹He was speaking of Judas son of Simon

Iscariot, for he, one of the Twelve, was going to betray him.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The double designation — 'Sea of Galilee' (the traditional Jewish name) and 'Sea of Tiberias' (the Roman name, from the city Herod Antipas built and named for Emperor Tiberius) — accommodates both Jewish and Gentile readers. A considerable time gap separates chapters 5 and 6; Jesus has moved from Jerusalem back to Galilee.
2. The imperfect tenses *ekolouthēi* ('kept following') and *etheoroun* ('were seeing') indicate ongoing action — the crowd's pursuit is persistent. Their motivation is the signs (*semeia*), confirming the pattern of sign-based faith that Jesus has questioned (2:23-25, 4:48). John mentions healing signs not described in his narrative, indicating selectivity in his account.
3. The definite article to *oros* ('the mountain') may indicate a specific well-known hill on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, or may evoke Mount Sinai, where Moses received the Torah and the manna provision was first given. Jesus's posture of sitting (*ekatheto*) is the position of a teacher in Jewish tradition.
4. This is the second Passover in John's Gospel (cf. 2:13), providing the theological backdrop for the entire chapter. The feeding miracle and the Bread of Life discourse gain their deepest meaning against the Passover context — Jesus is the new Passover bread, the true manna from heaven. The note 'festival of the Jewish people' continues John's practice of explaining Jewish customs for a mixed audience.
5. Jesus initiates the encounter with a question — as with the woman at the well (4:7), he begins from a point of human need. The question is addressed specifically to Philip, possibly because Philip was from Bethsaida (1:44), near the likely location. The word *pothen* ('where, from what source') echoes the theological question of origins that runs through the Gospel (cf. 2:9, 4:11, 7:27-28).
6. The narrator's aside reveals that Jesus's question is not born of uncertainty but serves as a test (*peirazōn*, 'testing, proving') of Philip's faith. The verb *edei* ('he knew') attributes supernatural foreknowledge to Jesus, consistent with 1:48, 2:24-25. The test exposes whether Philip will think in human or divine categories.
7. Philip answers in economic terms — two hundred denarii represents roughly eight months' wages for a laborer. His calculation is practical but faithless; he evaluates the problem from a purely human resource perspective. The response fails the test: Philip sees only the impossibility rather than the one who is asking the question.
8. Andrew is again identified through his relationship to Simon Peter (cf. 1:40). Andrew's contribution, while modest, at least brings available resources to Jesus's attention — a pattern consistent with his role as the disciple who brings people to Jesus (1:41-42, 12:22).
9. The word *paidarion* ('boy, young lad') is a diminutive, emphasizing the smallness of the source. Barley loaves (*artos krithinous*) were the bread of the poor — wheat was more expensive. The detail echoes the Elisha miracle in 2 Kings 4:42-44, where twenty barley loaves fed a hundred men. Andrew's question 'what are these among so many?' expresses the same logic as Philip's calculation — human resources are comically inadequate.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Kings 4:42-44. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The detail 'plenty of grass' (*chortos polys*) is an eyewitness memory consistent with springtime near Passover. The number five thousand (*pentakischilioi*) counts only the men (*andres*), as Matthew 14:21 explicitly notes ('besides women and children'). The verb *anapesein* ('to recline, to sit down') is the posture for a formal meal, suggesting Jesus is hosting a banquet — the messianic banquet prefigured.
11. The verb *eucharistesas* ('having given thanks') is the root of 'Eucharist' and creates a clear connection to the Last Supper tradition and early Christian meal practice. In John's account, Jesus distributes directly to the crowd (unlike the Synoptics, where the disciples serve as intermediaries). The phrase *hoson ethelon* ('as much as they wanted') emphasizes abundance — there is no rationing.
12. The verb *eneplesthesan* ('were satisfied, were filled') indicates complete satiation, not mere taste. The command to gather leftovers (*ta perisseusanta klasmata*, 'the surplus fragments') serves both a practical and symbolic function. The verb *apoletai* ('be lost, be wasted, perish') is the same word used in 3:16 for perishing — John may intend a deeper resonance about God's intention that nothing and no one be lost.
13. The twelve baskets (*dodeka kophinous*) likely correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel — the provision is abundant enough for all God's people with surplus to spare. The *kophinos* was a large wicker basket distinctively Jewish in use. Five loaves produce twelve baskets of surplus — the mathematics of divine provision inverts human calculation.
14. The crowd identifies Jesus as 'the Prophet' (*ho prophetes*) — the Moses-like figure promised in Deuteronomy 18:15-18. The connection is logical: Moses gave manna, Jesus gives bread. But as the discourse will show, their understanding is superficial — they want a political deliverer who provides free food, not the bread of life that gives eternal sustenance.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 18:15-18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The verb *harpazein* ('to seize, to snatch, to take by force') reveals the crowd's intention to impose a political kingship on Jesus. This confirms that their identification of Jesus as 'the Prophet' (v. 14) was politically motivated. Jesus withdraws to prevent the misappropriation of his mission — he will be king, but not on their terms. The phrase 'by himself alone' (*autos monos*) emphasizes his solitary retreat, possibly for prayer (cf. Mark 6:46).
16. The transition to the walking-on-water narrative begins. The disciples descend from the mountain to the lake shore without Jesus. The sequence — bread in the wilderness, crossing the sea — mirrors the Exodus pattern (manna in Exodus 16, Red Sea crossing in Exodus 14), though in reverse

chronological order.

16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The note that it was 'already dark' (skotia ede egegenei) carries Johannine symbolic weight — darkness represents the absence of Jesus, who is the light (1:4-5, 8:12). The phrase 'Jesus had not yet come to them' heightens the sense of vulnerability and separation.
18. The Sea of Galilee (actually a large freshwater lake, about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide) is susceptible to sudden, violent storms when cool air from the surrounding hills descends onto the warm lake surface. The imperfect diegeireto ('was being stirred up, was becoming rough') describes an escalating danger.
19. Twenty-five to thirty stadia equals approximately three to four miles — roughly halfway across the lake at its widest point. They are in the middle of the sea, in the dark, in a storm. The phrase peripatounta epi tes thalasses ('walking on the sea') is unambiguous — epi with the genitive means 'on, upon.' The word ephobethesan ('they were frightened') captures the terror of seeing a figure walking on water in a storm at night. The Old Testament presents walking on water as a divine prerogative (Job 9:8, Psalm 77:19).
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Job 9:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 77:19. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The phrase ego eimi ('I am') functions on two levels: as simple self-identification ('It is I') and as a divine self-declaration echoing the divine name (Exodus 3:14). In context — walking on water during a storm, a divine prerogative — the deeper resonance is unmistakable. The command 'do not be afraid' (me phobeisthe) echoes the Old Testament theophany pattern, where God's appearance is typically accompanied by reassurance (Genesis 15:1, Isaiah 41:10, 43:1).
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 3:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 15:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 41:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. John adds a detail absent from the Synoptic accounts: the boat immediately (eutheos) arrived at shore. This may be another miraculous element — instantaneous transportation — or may simply mean the remainder of the crossing passed quickly once Jesus was aboard. The verb ethelon ('were willing, wanted to') suggests their fear gave way to welcome.
22. This complicated verse establishes the crowd's perplexity — they know Jesus did not board the only available boat with his disciples. How then did he get to Capernaum? John leaves the question unanswered for the crowd, letting the mystery of the sea-walking remain implicit rather than narrated publicly.
23. This parenthetical explains how the crowd was able to follow Jesus across the lake — additional boats arrived from the city of Tiberias. The phrase 'after the Lord had given thanks' (eucharistesantos tou kyriou) recalls 6:11 and is the narrator's characteristic use of the title kyrios ('Lord') for Jesus.
24. The crowd pursues Jesus across the lake, motivated by the sign they witnessed. The verb zetountes ('seeking, looking for') will be picked up by Jesus in verse 26 — they seek him, but for the wrong reasons.
25. The crowd's question 'when did you get here?' implicitly asks 'how did you get here?' — since they know he did not take the only boat. Jesus does not answer their question but redirects the conversation to their true motivations.
26. Jesus exposes their motivation: they did not come because they understood the signs (semeia, pointing to Jesus's identity) but because they got a free meal. They saw 'signs' but did not truly 'see' them — the miraculous provision did not lead them to perceive who Jesus is. The verb echortasthete ('were filled, were satisfied') is the same word used for feeding animals in some contexts, suggesting consumption without comprehension.
27. Jesus redirects their effort (ergazesthe, 'work, labor') from temporal food to eternal food. The contrast between 'food that perishes' (ten brosin ten apollymenen) and 'food that endures' (ten brosin ten menousan) echoes the water conversation with the Samaritan woman (4:13-14). The Son of Man is both the giver and the gift. The 'seal' (esphragisen) is a mark of authentication and ownership — God has certified Jesus as the authorized source of eternal nourishment.
28. The crowd's question assumes that obtaining this food requires human effort — 'works of God' (ta erga tou theou) means 'the works God requires.' They think in terms of religious performance. Jesus's answer will subvert their entire framework.
29. Jesus reduces the plural 'works' to a single 'work' (to ergon) — faith. The many required works collapse into one: believing in Jesus. The present subjunctive pisteuete ('that you believe, keep believing') suggests ongoing faith, not a one-time decision. This answer redefines the entire religious economy: the 'work' God requires is not human effort but receptive trust in God's sent one.
30. The demand for a sign is remarkable — they have just witnessed the feeding of five thousand and crossed the lake to find Jesus because of it. Yet they ask for another sign. The logic seems to be: Moses gave manna for forty years; you gave bread once. If you claim to surpass Moses, prove it with an ongoing provision. Their faith is transactional: they will believe if given sufficient evidence, on their terms.

31. The crowd cites Psalm 78:24 (or possibly Exodus 16:4, 15; Nehemiah 9:15). The quotation becomes the text for Jesus's discourse — he will offer a rabbinic-style commentary on 'bread from heaven.' The crowd uses the manna tradition to challenge Jesus: Moses gave bread from heaven for decades; what can you offer that compares?
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 16:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 78:24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Nehemiah 9:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. Jesus corrects two errors in their argument: (1) Moses was not the source — God was; (2) the manna was not the true bread from heaven — it was a pointer to the reality now being revealed. The shift from past tense *dedoken* ('gave') to present tense *didosin* ('gives') is significant: the true bread is being given now, in the present moment. The adjective *alethinon* ('true, genuine, real') distinguishes the ultimate reality from the type that foreshadowed it.
33. The participle *katabainon* ('the one coming down') shifts from neuter ('that which comes down') to masculine — the bread is a person, not a substance. The scope is again universal: 'life to the world' (*zoen to kosmo*), not merely to Israel. The manna fed Israel in the wilderness; this bread gives life to the entire world.
34. Like the Samaritan woman's 'give me this water' (4:15), the crowd requests the gift while still understanding it physically. The adverb *pantote* ('always, at all times') reveals their desire for a permanent food supply. They will soon learn that the bread Jesus offers is himself — a claim that will divide them.
35. This is the first of the seven great 'I am' statements with a predicate in John's Gospel: *ego eimi ho artos tes zoes* ('I am the bread of life'). Jesus does not merely provide bread — he is the bread. 'Coming' and 'believing' are parallel actions describing the same movement of faith. The double negative *ou me* ('never') is the strongest possible assurance of permanent satisfaction.
36. Seeing and not believing is the persistent failure of the crowd. They have seen both the sign (feeding) and the sign-giver (Jesus himself), yet refuse the faith that seeing should produce. This verse transitions into the theological section about the Father's drawing and the Son's preservation of those who come.
37. This verse holds two realities in tension: divine initiative (the Father 'gives' people to the Son) and human responsibility (the one who 'comes'). The neuter *pan* ('everything, all') in the first clause treats those given as a collective whole; the masculine *ton erchomenon* ('the one coming') in the second clause treats each person individually. The double negative *ou me ekbalō* ('I will never cast out') is an absolute guarantee of reception.
38. The perfect tense *katabebeka* ('I have come down') indicates a completed descent with ongoing presence. Jesus's will is entirely submitted to the Father's will — a claim of perfect obedience that echoes 4:34 and 5:30. This verse provides the theological basis for the assurance of verse 37: Jesus will never reject anyone the Father sends because rejecting them would be disobeying the Father.
39. The Father's will is stated with crystalline clarity: zero loss and final resurrection. The verb *apoleso* ('lose, destroy') is the same word as 'perish' in 3:16 — what God wills is that none of his given ones perish. The phrase *te eschate hemera* ('on the last day') introduces future eschatology alongside the realized eschatology of verse 24. The resurrection promise will be repeated four times in this discourse (vv. 39, 40, 44, 54).
40. Verse 39 stated the Father's will in terms of preservation (not losing any); verse 40 states it in terms of human response (seeing and believing). Both perspectives are true simultaneously — divine keeping and human believing are not alternatives but complementary. The verb *theoron* ('seeing, beholding') implies more than glancing — it means perceiving, contemplating, recognizing Jesus for who he is.
41. The verb *egongyzon* ('were grumbling, were murmuring') deliberately echoes Israel's murmuring against Moses in the wilderness (Exodus 16:2, 7-9; Numbers 11:1). The typological parallel is precise: as Israel grumbled against Moses when given bread from heaven, so these leaders grumble against Jesus when he claims to be the bread from heaven. History repeats its pattern of unbelief.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 16:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 11:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
42. The objection is based on familiarity — they know his human family and therefore reject his heavenly origin. The question 'whose father and mother we know' assumes that known parentage excludes divine origin. The irony is thick: they think they know his father (Joseph), but they do not know his true Father (God). This is the same stumbling block Nathanael initially faced ('Can anything good come from Nazareth?' 1:46).
43. The command *me goggызete* ('stop grumbling') directly echoes Moses's rebuke of Israel in Exodus 16:8-9. Jesus assumes Moses's role in the wilderness narrative, further establishing the typological parallel.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 16:8-9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

44. The verb *helkyse* ('draws, attracts, drags') is a strong word — it is used for drawing a net (21:6), drawing a sword (18:10), and drawing Paul through the streets (Acts 16:19). This is not gentle persuasion but decisive, powerful attraction. The claim is that coming to Jesus requires divine initiative — apart from the Father's drawing, no one can come. The third repetition of 'I will raise them up on the last day' reinforces the resurrection promise.
45. The quotation is from Isaiah 54:13, part of the new covenant vision. Being 'taught by God' (*didaktoi theou*) means direct divine instruction — those who are open to God's teaching recognize Jesus. The logic is: if you have truly heard and learned from the Father, you will come to the Son, because the Father's teaching leads to the Son.
45. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 54:13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
46. Jesus qualifies verse 45: being 'taught by God' does not mean anyone has seen God directly. Only the one who is 'from God' (*para tou theou*) — Jesus himself — has seen the Father (cf. 1:18). All human knowledge of God is mediated through the Son.
47. The statement is stark in its simplicity: belief equals eternal life, present tense. The SBLGNT does not include 'in me' (*eis eme*) though some manuscripts add it; the object of belief is clear from context. This is a restatement of 3:16 and 5:24 in its most compressed form.
48. The 'I am' statement from verse 35 is repeated, now functioning as the transition to the more scandalous claims that follow. The repetition creates emphasis and marks the beginning of the discourse's intensification.
49. The manna's limitation is stated bluntly: those who ate it died. Physical bread, even miraculously given, cannot prevent death. This establishes the need for a different kind of bread — one that conquers death itself.
50. The bread from heaven surpasses the manna in its essential quality: it prevents death. The phrase *me apothane* ('not die') refers to spiritual/eternal death, not physical death — Jesus's followers still die physically, but death no longer has the final word.
51. The discourse reaches its most provocative claim: the bread is his flesh (*he sarx mou*). The word *sarx* ('flesh') echoes 1:14 ('the Word became flesh') and now receives a sacrificial dimension — this flesh is given 'for the life of the world' (*hyper tes tou kosmou zoes*). The preposition *hyper* ('for, on behalf of') indicates substitutionary sacrifice. The shift from metaphor to shocking literalism sets up the controversy of the next verses.
52. The verb *emachonto* ('were fighting, were disputing') indicates heated argument, not merely questioning. Their question 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' takes Jesus's words at face value and finds them absurd and offensive. Eating human flesh would violate every dietary and moral law they knew. Jesus does not soften the claim in response — he intensifies it.
53. Rather than moderating the offensive claim, Jesus escalates it by adding 'drink his blood' — an absolute prohibition in Jewish law (Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 17:10-14). The double requirement (eating flesh and drinking blood) and the negative conditional (unless... you have no life) make this the most scandalous statement in Jesus's public ministry. Whether understood sacramentally (Eucharist), metaphorically (total appropriation of Jesus's sacrificial death by faith), or both, the language is deliberately confrontational.
53. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 9:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
53. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 17:10-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
54. The verb shifts from *phago* ('to eat,' used earlier) to *trogo* ('to chew, to munch, to gnaw') — a more visceral, physical word that intensifies the scandal. This is the fourth occurrence of 'I will raise them up on the last day' (cf. vv. 39, 40, 44), making the resurrection promise the drumbeat of the entire discourse.
55. The adjective *alethes* ('true, genuine') in the SBLGNT (some manuscripts read *alethōs*, 'truly') means that Jesus's flesh and blood are the authentic reality of which all other food and drink are shadows. This is not metaphor diminishing into symbol but reality claiming its full weight.
56. The mutual indwelling language — 'remains in me and I in them' (*en emoi menei kago en auto*) — introduces the abiding theme that will be fully developed in the Farewell Discourse (chapters 14-17, especially 15:1-11). Eating and drinking create a relationship of mutual inhabitation between the believer and Christ.
57. The chain of life is explicit: the Father (source of life) gives life to the Son, and the Son gives life to the believer. The phrase 'the living Father' (*ho zon pater*) is unique in the New Testament and identifies the Father as the ultimate source of all life. The preposition *dia* ('because of, through') indicates that Jesus's life is derived from the Father, and the believer's life is derived from Jesus.
58. The discourse concludes by returning to its starting point — the contrast with the manna — creating an *inclusio*. The manna sustained life temporarily; this bread gives life forever. The verb *trogo* ('feeds on') maintains the visceral language to the end. The final promise — *zesei eis ton aiona* ('will live forever') — is the discourse's ultimate claim.
59. The narrator identifies the setting: a synagogue in Capernaum. This context confirms that the Bread of Life discourse is a formal teaching, delivered in a liturgical setting where Scripture would have been read and expounded. The synagogue setting makes the desertion that follows even more dramatic — these are not casual listeners but members of the worshiping community.
60. The word *skleros* ('hard, harsh, offensive') does not mean difficult to understand but difficult to accept. They understand the claim well enough — and find it intolerable. The 'disciples' (*mathetai*) here are the broader group of followers, not just the Twelve. The question 'who can hear it?' (*tis dynatai autou akouein*) means 'who can bear to listen to this?'

- 61.** The verb *skandalizei* ('offend, cause to stumble, shock') is strong — the teaching is a stumbling block, an obstacle to continued following. Jesus knows their reaction before they express it (cf. 2:25) and addresses it directly without softening the teaching.
- 62.** The sentence is deliberately incomplete — Jesus leaves the conclusion unstated. Will the ascension confirm or resolve their offense? The phrase 'where he was before' (*hopou en to proteron*) asserts pre-existence: the Son of Man was in heaven before his descent. The ascension will prove that his heavenly origin claims are true.
- 63.** This verse is the interpretive key to the entire discourse. 'The flesh is of no help' (*he sarx ouk ophelei ouden*) does not retract the flesh-eating language but clarifies the mode of reception: the discourse cannot be understood at the level of flesh (human reasoning, physical consumption) but only through the Spirit. Jesus's words are 'spirit and life' — they carry the Spirit's life-giving power and must be received in the Spirit.
- 64.** The narrator's aside reveals that Jesus's knowledge extends to the identity of the unbelievers within his own circle and to the identity of his future betrayer. The phrase *ex arches* ('from the beginning') indicates this was not a gradual discovery but foreknowledge. The first mention of betrayal (*paradoson*, 'the one who would hand over') in John's Gospel — an ominous foreshadowing.
- 65.** Jesus restates the divine initiative of verse 44 — coming to him is not a human achievement but a divine gift. The perfect passive participle *dedomenon* ('having been given, granted') emphasizes that the ability to come is God's prior work. The 'therefore' (*dia touto*) connects unbelief to the absence of this divine enablement.
- 66.** The phrase *apelthon eis ta opiso* ('went back, turned away') is the language of apostasy — they reverse course and abandon discipleship. The imperfect *periepatoun* ('were walking') with the negative *ouketi* ('no longer') indicates a permanent departure, not a temporary wavering. This is the greatest crisis of faith in Jesus's ministry as John narrates it.
- 67.** This is the only place in John's Gospel where 'the Twelve' (*tois dodeka*) are mentioned as a distinct group. The question *me kai hymeis thelete* ('you don't want to go too, do you?') uses the particle *me*, which expects a negative answer, but the possibility is real. Jesus does not compel anyone to stay — he offers the freedom to leave.
- 68.** Peter's response is not a triumphant confession but an honest acknowledgment of having no alternative. The question 'to whom would we go?' admits the difficulty of the teaching while recognizing that there is no other source of 'words of eternal life' (*remata zoes aioniou*). Peter does not say 'we understand' but 'we have nowhere else to go.' This is faith in the face of incomprehension.
- 69.** The SBLGNT reads 'the Holy One of God' (*ho hagios tou theou*) rather than 'the Christ, the Son of the living God' found in some manuscripts (influenced by Matthew 16:16). The title 'Holy One of God' appears in Mark 1:24 on the lips of a demon. The perfect tenses *pepistukamen* ('we have believed') and *egnokamen* ('we have known') indicate settled, ongoing conviction. The order is significant: belief leads to knowledge, not the reverse.
- 70.** The word *diabolos* ('devil, accuser, slanderer') is shocking when applied to a disciple. Jesus affirms that he chose all twelve deliberately (*exelexamen, 'I selected'*), including the one who will betray him. The divine foreknowledge of verse 64 is now applied directly. The presence of a betrayer within the chosen circle is a mystery Jesus acknowledges but does not explain.
- 71.** The narrator identifies the betrayer by full name: Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. The designation 'Iscariot' (*Iskariōtou*) may derive from the Hebrew *ish-Qeriyot* ('man of Kerioth'), indicating Judas's origin in a Judean town — making him possibly the only non-Galilean among the Twelve. The phrase 'one of the Twelve' (*heis on ek ton dodeka*) emphasizes the insider nature of the betrayal. The imperfect *emellen* ('was going to') indicates this was settled in advance.

7

Summary: *John 7 takes place during the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) in Jerusalem. Jesus initially stays in Galilee while his brothers urge him to go public in Judea, then travels to Jerusalem secretly and teaches in the temple midway through the festival. The chapter is structured around escalating division: the crowds are split over whether Jesus is a good man or a deceiver, whether he could be the Christ, and whether the authorities want to arrest or believe him. On the last day of the feast, Jesus makes his climactic declaration: 'If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me and drink' — a claim the narrator connects to the Holy Spirit. The chapter ends with the Pharisees and chief priests failing to arrest him, and Nicodemus making a cautious defense.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Feast of Tabernacles provides the symbolic backdrop for Jesus's teaching. The festival celebrated the wilderness wandering with water-pouring ceremonies (commemorating the water from the rock) and light ceremonies (commemorating the pillar of fire). Jesus's 'living water' declaration (7:37-39) directly engages the water-pouring ritual, and his 'light of the world' declaration in 8:12 engages the light ceremony. The division among the people (*schisma*, 7:43) becomes a structural element — Jesus is the great divider, forcing a decision. The officers sent to arrest him return empty-handed, declaring 'No one ever spoke like this man' (7:46).*

Translation Friction: The punctuation of 7:37-38 is heavily debated. The traditional reading makes the believer the source of living water ('Out of their heart will flow rivers'). An alternative reading makes Jesus the source ('Out of his heart will flow rivers'). We follow the traditional punctuation while noting the alternative. The reference to 'Scripture' in 7:38 does not correspond to any single Old Testament passage — it may be a composite allusion to Isaiah 55:1, Ezekiel 47:1-12, and Zechariah 14:8. Jesus's brothers' unbelief (7:5) and the confused expectations of the crowd create a portrait of widespread misunderstanding.

Connections: The Feast of Tabernacles connects to Leviticus 23:33-43, Nehemiah 8:14-18, and Zechariah 14:16-19. The water-pouring ceremony connects to Isaiah 12:3 ('With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation'). The crowd's debate about whether the Christ comes from Bethlehem (7:42) ironically confirms Jesus's qualification — they do not know he was born there. Nicodemus's reappearance (7:50-52) continues his arc from chapter 3.

¹After this, Jesus traveled around in Galilee. He did not want to travel in Judea because the Jewish leaders were seeking to kill him. ²Now the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was near. ³So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, so that your disciples there can also see the works you are doing. ⁴For no one does anything in secret if they want to be known publicly. If you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." ⁵For not even his brothers believed in him. ⁶So Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. ⁷The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil. ⁸You go up to the festival. I am not going up to this festival because my time has not yet been fulfilled." ⁹After saying this, he stayed behind in Galilee. ¹⁰But after his brothers had gone up to the festival, then he also went up — not publicly but in secret. ¹¹The Jewish leaders were looking for him at the festival, saying, "Where is that man?" ¹²There was much whispering about him among the crowds. Some were saying, "He is a good man," while others were saying, "No, he is leading the people astray." ¹³Yet no one spoke openly about him for fear of the Jewish leaders. ¹⁴When the festival was already half over, Jesus went up to the temple and began teaching. ¹⁵The Jewish leaders were astonished, saying, "How does this man know Scripture without having been formally educated?" ¹⁶Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not my own but comes from the one who sent me. ¹⁷If anyone chooses to do God's will, they will know whether this teaching is from God or whether I speak on my own authority. ¹⁸The one who speaks on their own authority seeks their own glory, but the one who seeks the glory of the one who sent him — this person is true, and there is no falsehood in them. ¹⁹Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you seeking to kill me?" ²⁰The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?" ²¹Jesus answered them, "I did one work, and all of you are astonished. ²²Moses gave you circumcision — not that it originated with Moses but with the patriarchs — and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. ²³If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses is not broken, are you angry with me because I made an entire man well on the Sabbath? ²⁴Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." ²⁵Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is this not the man they are trying to kill? ²⁶And look — he is speaking publicly and they say nothing to him! Could it be that the rulers really know that this is the Christ? ²⁷But we know where this man is from. When the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from." ²⁸Then Jesus cried out in the temple as he was teaching, "You know me, and you know where I am from! But I have not come on my own. The one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. ²⁹I know him, because I am from him and he sent me." ³⁰So they tried to arrest him, but no one laid a hand on him because his hour had not yet come. ³¹But many in the crowd believed in him. They were saying, "When the Christ comes, will he perform more signs than this man has done?" ³²The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering these things about him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple officers to arrest him. ³³So Jesus said, "I will be with you only a little while longer, and then I am going to the one who sent me. ³⁴You will look for me and will not find me, and where I am you cannot come." ³⁵The Jewish leaders said among themselves, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? He does not intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks, does he? ³⁶What does he mean by saying, 'You will look for me and will not find me, and where I am you cannot come'?" ³⁷On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and cried out, "If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me and drink. ³⁸Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of their heart will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were going to receive, for the Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been glorified. ⁴⁰When some in the crowd heard

these words, they said, "This man is truly the Prophet." ⁴¹Others were saying, "This is the Christ." But some were saying, "Surely the Christ does not come from Galilee, does he? ⁴²Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David and from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?" ⁴³So there was a division among the crowd because of him. ⁴⁴Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. ⁴⁵The temple officers then returned to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why did you not bring him in?" ⁴⁶The officers answered, "No one has ever spoken like this man." ⁴⁷The Pharisees answered them, "Have you been deceived too? ⁴⁸Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees put their trust in him? ⁴⁹But this crowd that does not know the law — they are cursed!" ⁵⁰Nicodemus — the one who had come to Jesus earlier, and who was one of them — said to them, ⁵¹"Does our law condemn a man without first hearing from him and finding out what he is doing?" ⁵²They answered him, "You are not from Galilee too, are you? Search and see — no prophet arises from Galilee!" ⁵³Then each of them went to his own home.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *periepatei* ('was walking around, was traveling') indicates a period of itinerant ministry in Galilee. The reason for avoiding Judea is explicit: the authorities were seeking to kill him (cf. 5:18). The narrative tension between Galilee (relative safety) and Jerusalem (mortal danger) structures the chapter.
2. The *skenopegia* ('Feast of Tabernacles, Feast of Booths') was one of the three pilgrimage festivals (with Passover and Pentecost) requiring attendance in Jerusalem. Celebrated in September/October (Tishri 15-22), it commemorated Israel's wilderness wandering and gave thanks for the autumn harvest. It was the most joyful of the festivals, involving temporary shelters (*sukkot*), torch-lit processions, and water-drawing ceremonies.
3. Jesus's brothers (*adelphoi*, cf. 2:12) urge him to go public on the largest possible stage. Their advice is worldly wisdom: if you want followers, perform in the capital during the biggest festival. The reference to 'your disciples' in Judea distinguishes the broader circle of followers from the Galilean group.
4. The brothers' logic is strategic: public figures need public platforms. The contrast between *en krypto* ('in secret') and *en parresia* ('openly, publicly, with boldness') frames the issue as marketing. The conditional 'if you are doing these things' (*ei tauta poieis*) may carry a note of doubt — they are not entirely sure about his works. The command 'show yourself to the world' (*phaneroson se auton to kosmo*) echoes the narrator's role-description of signs as 'revelations' (2:11).
5. The narrator's blunt assessment — 'not even his brothers believed' (*oude gar hoi adelphoi autou episteuon*) — is one of the most poignant notes in the Gospel. The imperfect tense *episteuon* indicates their unbelief at this point in time; Acts 1:14 shows them among the believers after the resurrection. The word 'even' (*oude*) emphasizes the scandal: those closest to him by blood do not believe.
6. The word *kairos* ('time, opportune moment') is distinct from *chronos* ('chronological time'). Jesus operates on a divine timetable; his brothers can go to Jerusalem whenever they choose because nothing of cosmic significance depends on their timing. The phrase *oupo parestin* ('has not yet arrived') connects to the 'hour' motif (2:4, 7:30, 8:20) — Jesus's movements are determined by the Father's schedule, not human advice.
7. The world (*kosmos*) has no reason to hate Jesus's brothers — they share its values and pose no threat to its order. Jesus provokes hatred because he exposes evil (cf. 3:19-20). The verb *martyro* ('I testify') places Jesus in the role of witness against the world — his very presence is an indictment of human darkness.
8. The SBLGNT reads *ouk* ('not') rather than *oupo* ('not yet'), which some manuscripts have. With *ouk*, Jesus says flatly 'I am not going' — then goes secretly (v. 10). This is not deception but a refusal to go on their terms and their timetable. The perfect tense *peplerotai* ('has been fulfilled') indicates that the *kairos* is not yet complete — God's timing has not yet arrived for a public appearance.
9. Jesus remains (*emeinen*) in Galilee — temporarily. His brothers go ahead publicly; he will follow privately. The verb *meno* ('to stay, to remain') carries its usual Johannine weight of deliberate, purposeful presence.
10. Jesus goes to Jerusalem, but on his own terms — *en krypto* ('in secret'), the opposite of the *en parresia* ('publicly') his brothers demanded (v. 4). He will make a public appearance, but at the time and in the manner the Father determines, not as a publicity stunt orchestrated by unbelieving family members.
11. The imperfect *ezetoun* ('were looking for') indicates an ongoing search. The demonstrative *ekeinos* ('that one, that man') can be either neutral or disdainful — they refer to Jesus without naming him. The authorities expect him at the festival and are prepared to act.
12. The word *goggysmos* ('murmuring, whispering') indicates guarded, secretive conversation — people are afraid to speak openly (v. 13). The division is between those who see Jesus as 'good' (*agathos*) and those who see him as a deceiver who 'leads astray' (*plana*, the root of 'planet' — one who wanders and causes others to wander). This division (*schisma*) will deepen throughout the chapter.
13. The word *parresia* ('openly, boldly, with freedom of speech') contrasts with the secretive whispering of verse 12. Fear of the authorities (*ton phobon ton Ioudaion*) suppresses public discourse about Jesus. This fear of the authorities recurs in 9:22, 12:42, 19:38, 20:19, revealing the coercive power of the religious establishment.

14. Jesus makes his public appearance on his own schedule — midway through the seven-day festival (approximately day three or four). He teaches in the temple (hieron, the temple complex), the most public forum in Jerusalem. The imperfect edidasken ('was teaching, began teaching') indicates sustained instruction, not a single statement.
15. The phrase grammata oiden ('knows letters/learning') refers not to basic literacy but to the formal study of Scripture under a recognized rabbi. Jesus had no rabbinic credentials — he had not studied under any recognized teacher. The verb memathekas ('having learned, having studied') is from the same root as mathetes ('disciple'). Their astonishment acknowledges his competence while questioning his credentials.
16. Jesus explains his lack of formal credentials by identifying the source of his teaching: the Father who sent him. His teaching is not self-generated (ouk estin eme) but received from God. This continues the pattern of the Son doing nothing on his own but only what the Father gives (5:19, 30).
17. Jesus offers an epistemological principle: obedience is the pathway to knowledge. Those who are willing to do God's will (to thelema autou poiein) will be able to discern whether Jesus's teaching comes from God. The willingness to obey precedes the ability to evaluate — moral alignment opens the way to theological understanding.
18. Jesus provides a test for authenticating a teacher: examine whose glory they seek. Self-promoters seek their own glory (ten doxan ten idian); an authentic teacher seeks the glory of the one who commissioned them. The word adikia ('unrighteousness, falsehood, injustice') here carries the sense of dishonesty or deception — the teacher who seeks God's glory is trustworthy.
19. Jesus turns the tables: they claim to follow Moses's law, yet they are plotting murder — which the law forbids (Exodus 20:13). The argument is devastating: the very law they accuse Jesus of violating (Sabbath regulations) condemns their own intent to kill. The phrase oudeis ex hymon poiei ton nomon ('none of you keeps the law') is either hyperbolic or a specific charge about the murder plot.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 20:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The crowd (ochlos), as opposed to the authorities (Ioudaioi), appears unaware of the murder plot. Their accusation 'you have a demon' (daimonion echeis) attributes Jesus's claims to insanity or demonic influence — a charge that will recur (8:48, 52, 10:20). The crowd's ignorance of the leadership's intentions reveals a disconnect between the people and their rulers.
21. The 'one work' (hen ergon) refers to the Sabbath healing at the pool of Bethesda (5:1-9), which triggered the persecution. Jesus returns to the unfinished argument from chapter 5. The verb thaumazete ('you are astonished/troubled') indicates the Sabbath healing still provokes them.
22. Jesus constructs a rabbinic argument from lesser to greater (qal vahomer). Circumcision predates Moses (Genesis 17) but was incorporated into Mosaic law (Leviticus 12:3). When the eighth day after birth falls on a Sabbath, circumcision proceeds — the obligation to circumcise overrides the Sabbath prohibition of work. This was settled Jewish law (cf. Mishnah Shabbat 18:3, 19:2).
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 12:3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The argument from lesser to greater: if circumcision (which benefits one part of the body) can override the Sabbath, how much more should healing the whole person (holon anthropon hygie, 'an entire person well') override it? The word cholate ('are angry, are furious') is unusually strong — suggesting that Jesus perceives their opposition as irrational rage rather than principled disagreement.
24. Jesus concludes with a general principle: judgment (krisis) should be based on reality (dikaia, 'righteous, just, correct'), not surface appearances (kat opsin, 'according to the face/sight'). Applied to the Sabbath controversy: judging Jesus as a Sabbath-breaker is a superficial verdict that fails to see the deeper reality of what God is doing through him.
25. The 'people of Jerusalem' (Hierosolymitōn) are distinct from the festival crowds (who are pilgrims from elsewhere). The residents know about the authorities' intentions, confirming Jesus's claim in verse 19. Their question implies surprise that Jesus is teaching publicly unmolested.
26. The crowd speculates that the authorities' inaction might mean they have secretly concluded Jesus is the Christ. The adverb parresia ('publicly, boldly') is the very quality his brothers demanded (v. 4) — now Jesus displays it, but on the Father's timetable. The particle mepote ('could it be that?') introduces a tentative, almost hopeful possibility.
27. The crowd dismisses their own suggestion based on a popular belief about the Christ's hidden origin — some Jewish traditions held that the Messiah would appear suddenly and mysteriously (cf. 1 Enoch 48:6, 4 Ezra 13:51-52). Since they know where Jesus is from (Galilee/Nazareth), he cannot be the Christ. The irony is multilayered: they think they know his origin, but they do not know his true origin (from the Father, from heaven, as the Prologue declares).
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezra 13:51-52. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The verb ekraxen ('cried out, shouted') indicates a public proclamation — Jesus raises his voice to address the crowd's discussion about his origins. His response is both concessive and corrective: yes, you know my human identity, but you do not know the one who sent me. The claim 'I have not come on my own' (ap emautou ouk elelyta) asserts divine commissioning. The accusation 'you do not know him' (hon hymeis ouk oidate) is devastating to a people who pride themselves on knowing God.

- 29.** Jesus claims two things: personal knowledge of God (ego oida auton, 'I know him') and origin from God (par autou eimi, 'I am from him'). The preposition para ('from the side of, from the presence of') indicates intimate proximity — Jesus comes from God's very presence. The aorist apeteilen ('sent') marks a specific, decisive commissioning.
- 30.** The attempt to arrest (piasai, 'to seize, to arrest') fails — not because of human protection but because of divine timing. The narrator's explanation 'his hour had not yet come' (oupo elythei he hora autou) indicates that the 'hour' of Jesus's death is determined by the Father, not by his enemies. No human action can advance or prevent the divinely appointed hour.
- 31.** The question expects a negative answer: the Christ will not do more signs than Jesus has done. The logic is simple: if the Messiah will be identified by his works, and no one could surpass Jesus's works, then Jesus must be the Messiah. This is sign-based faith, which John presents as genuine but incomplete.
- 32.** The growing popular support alarms the authorities. The coalition of 'chief priests and Pharisees' (hoi archiereis kai hoi Pharisaioi) represents both the Sadducean temple establishment and the Pharisaic party — political rivals united against Jesus. The hyperetas ('officers, servants, attendants') are the temple police, authorized to make arrests within the temple precincts.
- 33.** Jesus speaks past the immediate crisis to his impending departure — the 'going to the one who sent me' refers to his return to the Father through death, resurrection, and ascension. The phrase chronon mikron ('a little while') introduces the temporal urgency that marks the second half of the Gospel. His presence is temporary; the opportunity to respond is limited.
- 34.** This enigmatic statement will be repeated in 8:21 and 13:33. The meaning is that after his departure, those who rejected him will seek him in vain. 'Where I am' (hopou eimi ego) refers to the Father's presence — a destination accessible only through faith in the Son. The inability to come (ou dynaste elthein) reflects spiritual incapacity, not physical distance.
- 35.** The 'Dispersion' (diaspora) refers to Jews living outside the land of Israel among Greek-speaking populations. Their speculation is ironic — while meant dismissively, it prophetically anticipates the mission to the Gentile world that will follow Jesus's departure. The word Hellenas ('Greeks') here means Gentiles generally, not merely Greek nationals.
- 36.** The leaders repeat Jesus's words but cannot penetrate their meaning. Their incomprehension is a recurring Johannine pattern — Jesus speaks on a heavenly register and his listeners hear on an earthly one. The irony persists throughout: they cannot understand because they do not know the one who sent him (v. 28).
- 37.** The 'last and greatest day' (te eschate hemera te megale) is either the seventh day (the climax of the water-pouring ceremonies) or the eighth day (a closing assembly, Leviticus 23:36). During the festival, priests processed from the Pool of Siloam to the temple altar, pouring water as a prayer for rain and a commemoration of the water from the rock (Exodus 17:1-7). At this precise liturgical moment, Jesus stands (heistekei, the posture of proclamation) and cries out (ekraxen), offering himself as the fulfillment of everything the water ceremony signified.
- 37.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 23:36. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 37.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 17:1-7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 38.** The punctuation of verses 37-38 is heavily debated. The traditional reading (which we follow) makes the believer the source of living water: 'Whoever believes in me... out of their heart will flow rivers.' An alternative reading makes Jesus the source: 'Let the one who believes in me drink. As the Scripture said, out of his (Jesus's) heart will flow rivers.' Both readings are theologically sound. The word koilia ('belly, inner being, heart') refers to the innermost part of a person. No single Old Testament verse matches this quotation exactly — it may be a composite of Isaiah 55:1, 58:11, Ezekiel 47:1-12, and Zechariah 14:8.
- 38.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 55:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 38.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 47:1-12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 38.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 14:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 39.** The narrator provides the authoritative interpretation: 'living water' = the Holy Spirit. The startling phrase oupo gar en pneuma ('for the Spirit was not yet') does not mean the Spirit did not exist but that the Spirit had not yet been given in the post-resurrection, post-glorification manner. The Spirit's full giving awaits Jesus's glorification (his death, resurrection, and ascension). This is fulfilled in 20:22, where the risen Jesus breathes the Spirit on his disciples.
- 40.** The crowd identifies Jesus as 'the Prophet' (ho prophetes) — the Moses-like figure promised in Deuteronomy 18:15-18, the same identification made after the feeding miracle (6:14). The adverb alethos ('truly, really') indicates conviction. But as in 6:14, this identification, while correct as far as it goes, falls short of the full truth.
- 40.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 18:15-18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

41. The schisma (division) deepens: some affirm Jesus as the Christ, others object on geographical grounds. The particle *me* introduces a question expecting a negative answer — 'the Christ doesn't come from Galilee, does he?' The objection assumes Jesus's Galilean origin, not knowing about his birth in Bethlehem.
42. The crowd cites Micah 5:2 (the Messiah from Bethlehem) and 2 Samuel 7:12-16 (the Messiah from David's line). The irony is devastating: the very Scripture they cite to disqualify Jesus actually confirms his identity. Matthew and Luke both record Jesus's birth in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1, Luke 2:4-7). John does not correct the crowd's error — he lets the dramatic irony stand for the reader to appreciate.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Micah 5:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Samuel 7:12-16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. The word *schisma* ('division, split, tear') is emphatic — Jesus divides the crowd into irreconcilable camps. This is the first of three uses of *schisma* in John (cf. 9:16, 10:19), each time caused by Jesus's words or actions. The preposition *di auton* ('because of him') makes Jesus the cause of the division.
44. For the second time (cf. v. 30), an attempt to seize Jesus fails. The repeated failure underscores the principle that Jesus's 'hour' is divinely protected. No human agency can touch him before the appointed time.
45. The officers sent in verse 32 return empty-handed. The authorities demand an explanation for the failed arrest. The scene shifts from the public forum to the private council, revealing the frustration of the leadership.
46. The temple police — trained professionals, not easily impressed — testify that Jesus's speech is without parallel. The adverb *oudepote* ('never, at no time') and *houtos* ('in this way, like this') combine to declare Jesus's teaching absolutely unique. Their testimony is unintentionally profound: the Word made flesh (1:14) speaks as no mere human can.
47. The Pharisees respond with contempt — *me kai hymeis peplanesthe* ('surely you too have not been led astray?') uses the same verb (*planao*, 'to lead astray, deceive') from verse 12, where some accused Jesus of 'leading the people astray.' The irony is that the officers were affected not by deception but by the truth of Jesus's teaching.
48. The question expects a negative answer and uses social status as the criterion for truth: if no authorities believe, the teaching must be false. This is an argument from institutional authority, not from evidence. The irony is that Nicodemus — a ruler and a Pharisee — is about to speak up (v. 50).
49. The Pharisees dismiss the common people (*ho ochlos houtos*) as ignorant of the law and therefore cursed (*eparatoi*, 'accursed'). The term reflects the rabbinic category of *am ha-aretz* ('people of the land') — the uneducated masses whom some Pharisees regarded as ritually and morally deficient. The arrogance of the statement is staggering and is immediately challenged by one of their own.
50. Nicodemus reappears for the second of his three appearances in John (3:1-21, 7:50-52, 19:39). The narrator identifies him as 'the one who had come to Jesus earlier' (*ho elthon pros auton proteron*), linking back to the nighttime visit in chapter 3. The phrase 'one of them' (*heis on ex auton*) emphasizes that dissent comes from within the Pharisaic party itself — contradicting their claim in verse 48.
51. Nicodemus's intervention is careful and procedural rather than confessional — he does not defend Jesus directly but appeals to legal process. The principle is from Deuteronomy 1:16-17 and 17:2-6: proper judgment requires hearing the accused. By invoking 'our law' (*ho nomos hemon*), Nicodemus turns the Pharisees' own weapon against them — they who accused the crowd of not knowing the law are themselves violating its procedures.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 1:16-17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
52. The Pharisees respond with personal attack rather than legal argument — they sarcastically ask if Nicodemus is a Galilean sympathizer. Their claim that 'no prophet arises from Galilee' (*ek tes Galilaias prophetes ouk egeiretai*) is historically inaccurate — Jonah was from Gath-hepher in Galilee (2 Kings 14:25), and possibly other prophets as well. Some manuscripts read 'the prophet does not arise' (*ho prophetes*, with the article), specifically denying the Prophet-like-Moses from Galilee. The scene ends with the council in deadlock.
52. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 14:25. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
53. This verse is included in the SBLGNT as the conclusion to chapter 7, though it is often grouped with the Pericope Adulterae (7:53-8:11) in many manuscripts. The verse itself simply narrates the council dispersing — without resolution, without arresting Jesus, and without answering Nicodemus's legal challenge. The chapter ends with the authorities frustrated, the crowd divided, and Jesus unharmed.

Summary: *John 8 opens with the Pericope Adulterae (7:53-8:11), in which a woman caught in adultery is brought before Jesus as a legal trap — he disarms the accusers with 'Let the one without sin throw the first stone.' The remainder of the chapter records an extended confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in the temple courts, centered on Jesus's identity and authority. Jesus declares himself the light of the world (8:12), claims that the Father testifies on his behalf, warns that those who reject him will die in their sins, and reveals his divine origin. The chapter climaxes with the explosive declaration 'Before Abraham was, I AM' (8:58), prompting an attempt to stone him.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Pericope Adulterae (7:53-8:11) is one of the most textually disputed passages in the New Testament — absent from the earliest and most reliable Greek manuscripts (P66, P75, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus), it appears in various locations across later manuscripts. The SBLGNT does not include it in the main text. We include it here with full textual notation, as it has been part of the received tradition for centuries. The ego eimi ('I AM') declaration in 8:58 is the chapter's theological summit — Jesus uses the absolute form of the divine self-identification from Exodus 3:14, and his audience understands the claim immediately, responding with attempted execution for blasphemy.*

Translation Friction: *The textual status of 7:53-8:11 requires transparent handling. The ego eimi statements throughout this chapter carry varying force — some are ordinary predicate uses ('I am the light'), while 8:58 is the absolute, divine-name usage. We render all as 'I am' but note the distinction. The dialogue in 8:31-59 involves escalating hostility that modern readers may find harsh; we render the Greek as given without softening.*

Connections: *The 'I AM' declaration connects to Exodus 3:14 (the divine name revealed to Moses), Isaiah 41:4 and 43:10-13 (the LORD's self-identification), and John's own Prologue (1:1-18). The light-of-the-world claim connects to Isaiah 9:2, 42:6, and 49:6. The discussion of Abraham connects to Genesis 12-22 and the covenant promises. The theme of judgment and testimony connects to Deuteronomy 17:6 and 19:15 (the two-witness requirement).*

⁵³Then each of them went to his own house, ¹Jesus traveled to the mount of Olives. ²At dawn he went again to the temple, and all the people came to him. He sat down and began teaching them. ³The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. They made her stand in the middle of the group ⁴They say to him, Teacher, this lady was removed in adultery, in the very act. ⁵In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" ⁶They said this to test him, so that they would have grounds to accuse him. But Jesus bent down and began writing on the ground with his finger. ⁷When they kept pressing him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." ⁸Then he bent down again and continued writing on the ground. ⁹When they heard this, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders, until Jesus was left alone with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹She said, "No one, Lord." Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore." ¹²Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." ¹³So the Pharisees said to him, "You are testifying about yourself — your testimony is not valid." ¹⁴Jesus answered them, "Even if I testify about myself, my testimony is valid, because I know where I came from and where I am going. But you do not know where I came from or where I am going. ¹⁵You judge by human standards. I judge no one. ¹⁶Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, because I am not alone — I and the Father who sent me judge together. ¹⁷In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. ¹⁸I am the one who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me." ¹⁹Then they said to him, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father as well." ²⁰He spoke these words while teaching in the treasury area of the temple. Yet no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come. ²¹Then he said to them again, "I am going away, and you will look for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come." ²²So the Jewish leaders said, "Is he going to kill himself? Is that why he

says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'" ²³He said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴That is why I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins." ²⁵They said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "What I have been telling you from the beginning. ²⁶I have much to say about you and much to judge. But the one who sent me is true, and what I have heard from him — these things I speak to the world." ²⁷They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. ²⁸So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but I speak just as the Father taught me. ²⁹The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do what pleases him." ³⁰As he was saying these things, many believed in him. ³¹So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you remain in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³²You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. ³³They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be set free'?" ³⁴Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵A slave does not remain in the household forever, but a son remains forever. ³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you will be truly free. ³⁷I know that you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are seeking to kill me because my word finds no room in you. ³⁸I speak of what I have seen in the presence of the Father, and you do what you have heard from your father." ³⁹They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did. ⁴⁰But now you are seeking to kill me — a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. ⁴¹You are doing the works of your father." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father — God." ⁴²Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me. ⁴³Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴You are of your father the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and has not stood in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. ⁴⁶Which of you can convict me of sin? If I speak the truth, why do you not believe me? ⁴⁷The one who is from God hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear is that you are not from God." ⁴⁸The Jewish leaders answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" ⁴⁹Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon. On the contrary, I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰I do not seek my own glory. There is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. ⁵¹Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." ⁵²The Jewish leaders said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets died, yet you say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.' ⁵³Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too. Who do you make yourself out to be?" ⁵⁴Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me — the one you claim is your God. ⁵⁵You have not known him, but I know him. If I said I did not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, and I keep his word. ⁵⁶Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad." ⁵⁷So the Jewish leaders said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM." ⁵⁹So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

- 53.** This verse concludes the scene of 7:45-52 in the traditional placement. The Greek is straightforward narrative transition. The Pericope Adulterae begins here in manuscripts that include it.
1. The Mount of Olives is mentioned frequently in the Synoptic Gospels but only here in John (another indicator of the passage's non-Johannine origin). The contrast between 'each to his own house' and Jesus going to the mount suggests he had no home in Jerusalem.
 2. The Greek orthrou ('at dawn') indicates very early morning. The posture of sitting (kathisas) was the standard teaching position for a Jewish rabbi — the teacher sat while the audience stood or sat around him.
 3. The Greek kateilēmmenēn ('having been caught, seized') is a perfect passive participle indicating she was caught in the very act. The public shaming of placing her 'in the middle' (en mesō) is deliberate humiliation designed to pressure Jesus into a ruling.
 4. The Greek ep' autophōrō ('in the very act, red-handed') is emphatic — they stress that there is no ambiguity about her guilt. The address 'Teacher' (Didaskale) frames the encounter as a legal question put to a rabbi. Notably absent is the man involved, though the law required both parties to be

present (Leviticus 20:10).

4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 20:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The reference is to Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22-24, which prescribe death for adultery (though the specific method of stoning is debated — Deuteronomy 22:24 specifies stoning for a betrothed virgin). The trap is designed to force Jesus into a dilemma: upholding the law would conflict with Roman authority (Jews could not execute), while showing mercy would appear to dismiss Moses.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 20:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 22:22-24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The verb *peirazontes* ('testing') reveals their motive — this is entrapment, not a sincere legal question. The Greek *kategraphein* ('to write down') is used only here in the New Testament. What Jesus wrote has been the subject of endless speculation — the text does not say, and we do not speculate. The KJV's addition 'as though he heard them not' is not in the Greek manuscripts.
7. The Greek *anamatētos* ('without sin') appears only here in the New Testament. Jesus does not deny the law's validity or the woman's guilt — he redirects the moral scrutiny to the accusers themselves. Under Deuteronomy 17:7, the witnesses were required to cast the first stones, so Jesus's statement may also challenge whether legitimate witnesses are present.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 17:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The imperfect *egraphen* ('was writing, continued to write') suggests ongoing action — Jesus did not write briefly and stop but continued writing while the accusers processed his words. The repetition of the writing gesture frames the central pronouncement.
9. The detail 'beginning with the elders' (*arxamenoi apo tōn presbyterōn*) is psychologically acute — the oldest, presumably with the most accumulated guilt or the most wisdom, leave first. The KJV's 'convicted by their own conscience' is an addition not found in the best manuscripts of this passage; the Greek simply says they left after hearing.
10. The address *gynai* ('woman') is respectful in Greek, not dismissive — the same form Jesus uses to address his mother at Cana (2:4) and from the cross (19:26). The verb *katekrinen* ('condemned') is a legal term — Jesus asks whether any formal judgment has been rendered.
11. Jesus's response is neither legal acquittal nor moral indifference — he declines to condemn (*katakrinō*) while commanding a changed life. The phrase *apo tou nyn* ('from now on') marks a turning point. The imperative *mēketi hamartane* ('sin no more') is a present imperative with the negative, meaning 'stop the ongoing practice of sinning.' Grace and moral demand stand together without tension.
12. This is the second of John's seven 'I am' statements with a predicate (following 6:35). The double negative *ou mē* ('never, by no means') is the strongest negation in Greek. If this discourse occurs during the Feast of Tabernacles (cf. 7:2), the four giant candelabra lit in the Court of Women provide a vivid backdrop — Jesus claims to be what the festival rituals symbolized.
13. The Pharisees invoke the legal principle of Deuteronomy 19:15: no one can serve as their own witness. The Greek *alēthēs* here means 'valid, legally admissible' rather than 'factually true' — they are challenging the admissibility of self-testimony, not calling Jesus a liar. This directly engages the two-witness law that governs Jewish legal proceedings.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 19:15: — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Jesus's defense rests on his unique origin and destiny — his knowledge of his divine origin (*pothen elthon*, 'where I came from') and divine destination (*pou hypagō*, 'where I am going') validates his self-testimony in a way that applies to no ordinary witness. This appears to contradict 5:31 ('If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid') but the contexts differ: there Jesus was speaking hypothetically about isolated self-testimony, while here he argues that his testimony is never truly isolated because the Father always testifies with him.
15. The phrase *kata tēn sarka* ('according to the flesh') means by external, superficial, merely human criteria. Jesus's statement 'I judge no one' seems to conflict with other Johannine statements about judgment (5:22, 9:39); the resolution is that Jesus does not judge in the flawed, appearance-based way his opponents do.
16. The word *alēthinē* ('true, genuine, real') differs from *alēthēs* in verse 13 — it implies not merely factual accuracy but genuine, ultimate reality. Jesus grounds the validity of his judgment in his unity with the Father, introducing the two-witness theme that he develops in the next verse.
17. Jesus cites Deuteronomy 17:6 or 19:15 (the two-witness requirement). The phrase 'your law' (*tō hymetero nomō*) does not mean Jesus disowns the Torah — the pronoun 'your' appeals to an authority his opponents accept. The argument is: you require two witnesses; I have two — myself and my Father.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 17:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

18. The ego eimi ('I am') here functions as a simple copula ('I am the one who...') rather than the absolute divine claim, but John may intend a double resonance — Jesus identifies himself as a witness while using the phrase that will carry divine force in verse 58.
19. The question 'Where is your Father?' may be a genuine misunderstanding (thinking of a human father) or a veiled insult about Jesus's parentage. Jesus's response links knowledge of himself inseparably to knowledge of the Father — a recurring Johannine theme (cf. 14:7). The conditional ei ēdeite ('if you knew') uses the imperfect, indicating they do not currently know.
20. The gazophylakion ('treasury') was located in the Court of Women, a public area of the temple — Jesus was teaching openly, not in hiding. The phrase 'his hour' (hē hōra autou) is a key Johannine motif referring to the appointed time of Jesus's death and glorification (cf. 2:4, 7:30, 12:23, 13:1, 17:1). John presents Jesus's safety as divinely governed, not circumstantial.
21. The singular 'sin' (hamartia, not the plural hamartiais as in verse 24) may refer to the specific sin of rejecting Jesus rather than sins in general. The statement 'where I am going, you cannot come' echoes 7:34 and provokes the same confusion — his opponents think in geographical terms while Jesus speaks of his return to the Father.
22. The Greek mēti introduces a question expecting a negative answer, but with ironic uncertainty. The suggestion of suicide is deeply offensive in a Jewish context, where it was viewed as a sin that would consign someone to the lowest part of Sheol — they are inadvertently suggesting Jesus would go where they truly cannot follow. We render hoi Ioudaioi as 'Jewish leaders' since the context indicates the religious authorities in debate with Jesus, not the Jewish people broadly.
23. The spatial dualism — below/above, this world/not of this world — is characteristic of John's theology. The Greek ek tōn katō ('from the things below') and ek tōn anō ('from the things above') establish an ontological distinction, not merely a moral one. Jesus claims a fundamentally different origin from his opponents.
24. The phrase ego eimi ('I am') here stands without a predicate — 'I am he' is supplied by English translators for grammatical sense, but the Greek is absolute: 'unless you believe that I AM.' This is the first instance in the chapter of the potentially divine-name usage of ego eimi. The plural 'sins' (hamartiais) replaces the singular of verse 21, broadening the reference.
25. Jesus's response (tēn archēn ho ti kai lalō hymin) is one of the most debated phrases in the Gospel. It could mean: (1) 'What I have been telling you from the start,' (2) 'Why do I speak to you at all?' (taking tēn archēn as 'at all'), or (3) 'I am the beginning — what I tell you.' We follow the first reading as most contextually natural, but the ambiguity may be intentional.
26. Jesus restrains himself from full judgment ('I have much to say and judge') and instead speaks only what he has received from the Father. The adjective alēthēs ('true, truthful') applied to the Father affirms the reliability of everything Jesus has been commissioned to say.
27. John's editorial comment highlights the persistent misunderstanding that characterizes the opponents throughout this chapter — they hear Jesus's words but cannot grasp that 'the one who sent me' refers to God as his Father.
28. The verb hypsōsete ('lift up') carries a deliberate double meaning in John: physical lifting up on the cross and exaltation to glory (cf. 3:14, 12:32-34). The 'you' (hymeis) makes the opponents themselves the agents of the lifting up — they will crucify him, and that very act will reveal his identity. The ego eimi ('I am he') is again absolute, with the full meaning to become clear only at the cross.
29. The claim 'I always do what pleases him' (ta aresta autō poiō pantote) is an extraordinary assertion of perfect moral alignment with God. This is not a boast but a statement of the Son's complete dependence on and obedience to the Father — the basis for their unity.
30. The verb episteusan ('believed') uses the aorist tense, which may indicate an initial response rather than deep, lasting faith — as the following verses will test. John often distinguishes between shallow and genuine belief (cf. 2:23-25, 6:60-66).
31. Jesus addresses those who 'believed' (pepisteukotas, perfect participle — 'who had come to believe') but immediately sets a condition: genuine discipleship requires remaining (meinēte, aorist subjunctive of menō) in his word. The verb menō ('remain, abide') is central to Johannine theology (cf. ch. 15). The shift from initial belief to tested commitment drives the rest of this conversation.
32. One of the most quoted verses in the Gospel. The Greek alētheia ('truth') in John is not abstract philosophical truth but the revealed reality of God embodied in Jesus (cf. 14:6). The verb eleutherōsei ('will set free, will liberate') points forward to the freedom from sin discussed in verses 34-36. The future tense gnōsethe ('you will know') makes knowledge the result of abiding, not its prerequisite.
33. The claim 'we have never been enslaved to anyone' (oudenī dedouleukamen pōpote) is historically astonishing — they had been slaves in Egypt, exiles in Babylon, and were currently under Roman occupation. The statement likely reflects a theological self-understanding: as Abraham's seed, they considered themselves spiritually free regardless of political circumstances. The perfect tense dedouleukamen ('have been enslaved') emphasizes their ongoing status claim.
34. The double amēn ('truly, truly') is unique to John's Gospel and marks solemn, authoritative declarations. The present participle ho poiōn ('the one who practices, who keeps on doing') indicates habitual action, not a single lapse. The Greek doulos ('slave') is stronger than the KJV's 'servant' — Jesus speaks of genuine bondage, directly countering their claim of freedom.
35. Jesus draws a contrast between the legal status of a slave and a son within a household. The slave has no permanent rights; the son has an enduring place. The Greek oikia ('house, household') and the verb menei ('remains, abides') carry double meaning — the earthly household analogy points to the Father's house and the permanent standing of those who belong to the Son. The phrase eis ton aionā ('into the age, forever') echoes the Hebrew olam.

36. The adverb *ontōs* ('truly, really, in reality') contrasts with their illusory sense of freedom in verse 33. The Son's freedom is the only genuine freedom — ontological liberation from sin's mastery, not merely political or social freedom. This verse completes the thought begun in verse 32: the truth (embodied in the Son) produces real freedom.
37. Jesus concedes their physical descent from Abraham (*sperma Abraam*) while denying its spiritual significance. The verb *chōrei* ('has room, makes progress, finds place') suggests that Jesus's word cannot penetrate or advance within them — there is no space for it. This is not a failure of the word but of the hearers.
38. The contrast between 'my Father' (*tō patri*, with the article — the Father) and 'your father' (*tou patros*, without possessive in some manuscripts) introduces the devastating paternity argument that dominates the rest of the chapter. Jesus speaks from direct vision (*heōraka*, perfect of *horaō*, 'I have seen') of the Father; they act on what they received from their father — whose identity Jesus will soon reveal.
39. Jesus shifts from *sperma* ('seed, descendant' — physical lineage, v. 37) to *tekna* ('children' — relational belonging). Physical descent is not denied, but spiritual sonship requires doing Abraham's works. The imperfect *epoiete* ('you would be doing') is a contrary-to-fact condition — they are not doing Abraham's works, therefore they are not truly his children in the way that matters.
40. Jesus identifies himself as *anthrōpon* ('a man') — the one who has spoken truth from God — and notes that Abraham, who welcomed divine messengers (Genesis 18), would never have sought to kill someone bringing God's word. The contrast is damning: those who claim Abraham as father act in ways Abraham never would.
40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The Greek *porneias* ('sexual immorality, fornication') may carry a double edge: (1) they are asserting spiritual legitimacy — unlike the Samaritans, they are not 'illegitimate' children of God through syncretism; (2) some interpreters see a veiled attack on Jesus's own birth — rumors about his parentage (cf. Mark 6:3 where Jesus is called 'son of Mary' rather than 'son of Joseph'). They escalate from Abraham to God himself as their father.
42. The conditional *ei... ēn* ('if he were') with the imperfect is a second-class (contrary to fact) condition — Jesus directly states that God is not their father. The verbs *exēlthon* ('came out from') and *hēkō* ('I am here, I have arrived') describe both origin and present reality. The verb *apestellen* ('sent') is the root of 'apostle' — Jesus is God's authorized emissary.
43. Jesus distinguishes between *lalia* ('speech, manner of speaking') and *logos* ('word, message') — they fail to grasp even the surface level of his speech because they cannot receive the deeper reality of his message. The verb *dynamai* ('to be able') suggests an incapacity, not merely an unwillingness — their spiritual condition renders them unable to hear.
44. This is the sharpest language in the chapter. The Greek *diabolos* ('devil, slanderer, accuser') literally means 'the one who throws across' — the one who creates division. The title *anthrōpoktonos* ('murderer, man-killer') is a compound word used only here and in 1 John 3:15 in the NT, linking the devil to the first murder (Cain, Genesis 4) or to the introduction of death through deception (Genesis 3). The phrase 'father of lies' (*ho patrēr autou*, lit. 'his father') is ambiguous — it could mean the devil is 'the father of the lie' or 'the father of the liar.' We follow the traditional reading.
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
45. The irony is sharp: the very fact that Jesus speaks truth is the reason they reject him — those aligned with the father of lies find truth intolerable. The Greek construction (*hoti tēn alētheian legō*) makes truth-telling itself the cause of disbelief.
46. The verb *elenchei* ('convict, expose, prove guilty') is a legal term — Jesus issues an open challenge to prove any sin against him. The question is rhetorical: no one can. The logic is: if you cannot convict me of sin, then I am a truthful witness; and if I speak truth, your refusal to believe is inexcusable.
47. Jesus completes the argument: hearing God's words is the natural capacity of those who belong to God. Their inability to hear is diagnostic — it reveals their origin. The Greek *ek tou theou* ('from God') uses the same preposition (*ek*, 'from, out of') that described their origin from the devil in verse 44.
48. The double insult — 'Samaritan' (heretic, impure lineage) and 'demon-possessed' (insane, deluded) — represents their most hostile response yet. Calling someone a Samaritan accused them of being a religious half-breed who worshiped God wrongly. The charge of demon-possession was a standard way of dismissing someone whose claims seemed outrageous (cf. 7:20, 10:20).
49. Jesus addresses only the demon charge, not the 'Samaritan' label — whether by silence he refuses to dignify the ethnic slur or whether the distinction between true and false worship (cf. 4:21-24) makes the label irrelevant. The contrast between *timō* ('I honor') and *atimazete* ('you dishonor') is a deliberate wordplay using the same root (*timē*, 'honor') with and without the alpha-privative.
50. Jesus disclaims self-promotion (*ou zētō tēn doxan mou*) while affirming that the Father actively seeks Jesus's glory and renders judgment on those who dishonor him. The participle *krinōn* ('the one who judges') warns that rejecting Jesus carries consequences determined by God himself.
51. The double *amēn* again marks a solemn pronouncement. The verb *tērēsē* ('keeps, guards, obeys') implies more than intellectual assent — it requires active obedience and faithful preservation of Jesus's word. The double negative *ou mē* with *theōrēsē* ('see, experience') is the strongest possible denial: such a person will absolutely never experience death. Jesus means spiritual/eternal death, but his opponents will take it literally in the next verse.

52. Their response reveals the misunderstanding: they hear Jesus's spiritual claim in purely physical terms. They shift from theōreō ('see') to geuomai ('taste'), perhaps intensifying the imagery — not even a taste of death. The argument from Abraham and the prophets is logical within their framework: if the greatest figures in Israel's history died, who is this man to promise immortality?
53. The particle mē expects a negative answer ('You're not greater than Abraham, are you?'), but John's irony is that the correct answer is yes. The question 'Who do you make yourself out to be?' (tina seauton poieis) is the central question of the chapter — and Jesus is about to answer it definitively.
54. Jesus returns to the theme of verse 50: he does not seek his own glory. The verb doxazō ('glorify') and noun doxa ('glory') correspond to the Hebrew kavod. The pointed phrase 'whom you say is your God' (hon hymeis legete hoti theos hēmōn estin) challenges their claim to know God while rejecting the one God sent.
55. Jesus uses two different Greek words for 'know': egnōkate (ginosko, 'come to know through experience') for their lack of knowledge, and oida ('know intuitively, know with certainty') for his own knowledge. The distinction suggests Jesus's knowledge of the Father is innate and direct, not acquired. Calling them 'liars' (pseustēs) connects back to verse 44 — they resemble the father of lies.
56. The verb ēgalliasato ('rejoiced, exulted') is strong — Abraham's joy was exuberant. 'My day' (tēn hēmeran tēn emēn) most likely refers to the day of the Messiah's coming. Jewish tradition held that Abraham was given a vision of future ages (cf. 2 Esdras 3:14, Apocalypse of Abraham 31). The statement that Abraham 'saw it and was glad' implies Abraham had prophetic knowledge of Christ's coming — a claim that prepares for the explosive verse 58.
57. The number fifty (pentēkonta) is a round number, not a precise indication of Jesus's age. Some manuscripts read 'forty' instead. Their objection focuses on chronological impossibility — Abraham lived roughly two thousand years before Jesus. They miss the deeper claim entirely: Jesus is not saying he saw Abraham but that Abraham saw him.
58. The contrast between genesthai (aorist infinitive of ginomai, 'to come into being') for Abraham and eimi (present indicative of eimi, 'I am') for Jesus is theologically precise: Abraham came into existence at a point in time; Jesus simply IS, without beginning. The double amēn underscores the gravity. This is the climactic ego eimi of chapter 8, completing the sequence begun in verses 24 and 28.
59. Stoning was the prescribed punishment for blasphemy (Leviticus 24:16), confirming that they understood Jesus's ego eimi as a divine claim. The Greek ekrybē ('hid himself') is passive — whether Jesus physically hid or was divinely concealed is left ambiguous. The KJV adds 'going through the midst of them, and so passed by,' which is not in the earliest manuscripts. The SBLGNT ends the verse at 'went out of the temple.'
59. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 24:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

9

Summary: *John 9 tells the story of a man born blind whom Jesus heals by making mud with saliva and sending him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The healing triggers an escalating investigation by the Pharisees, who interrogate the man, his parents, and the man again. The narrative functions as both a literal sign and a profound metaphor: the man born blind progressively gains spiritual sight (calling Jesus a man, a prophet, someone from God, and finally Lord), while the Pharisees who claim to see become progressively more blind. The chapter closes with Jesus's declaration that he came into the world for judgment — so that the blind might see and those who see might become blind.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This is one of the most carefully structured narratives in the Fourth Gospel, built on dramatic irony. Seven scenes alternate between the healed man's growing insight and the Pharisees' deepening blindness. The man's progression of faith — from identifying Jesus as 'the man called Jesus' (v. 11) to 'a prophet' (v. 17) to 'from God' (v. 33) to worshiping him as 'Lord' (v. 38) — is one of the clearest discipleship trajectories in the Gospels. The Pharisees, meanwhile, move from division (v. 16) to suspicion (v. 18) to hostility (v. 28) to excommunication (v. 34). The healing on the Sabbath connects to the broader conflict about Jesus's authority over Sabbath law (cf. 5:1-18).*

Translation Friction: *The Pool of Siloam was archaeologically confirmed in 2004, giving historical grounding to the narrative. The Greek Siloam (Silōam) translates the Hebrew Shiloach, and John provides the etymology 'Sent' (apestalmenos), connecting the pool's name to Jesus as the one 'sent' by the Father. The parents' fear of excommunication (v. 22) reflects a later historical situation (the Birkat ha-Minim) that many scholars date after Jesus's lifetime, though others argue synagogue exclusion was possible in Jesus's era.*

Connections: The healing connects to 8:12 ('I am the light of the world') — now demonstrated in giving sight to the blind. The Sabbath controversy connects to 5:1-18. The expulsion from the synagogue foreshadows 16:2. The theme of spiritual blindness connects to Isaiah 6:9-10 (quoted in John 12:40) and Isaiah 42:7 (the Servant opens blind eyes). The judgment theme connects to 3:17-21 and 5:22-30.

¹As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned — this man or his parents — that he was born blind?" ³Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴We must do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵I am the light in the world, and as long as I am in the world. ⁶After saying this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he spread the mud on the man's eyes ⁷Stated to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, dispatched.) He traveled his way therefore, and washed, and arrived seeing. ⁸His neighbors and those who had previously seen him as a beggar said, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹Some said, "It is him." Others said, "No, but he looks like him." He kept saying, "I am the one." ¹⁰So they asked him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" ¹¹He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud and spread it on my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received my sight." ¹²They asked him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." ¹³They brought the man who had formerly been blind to the Pharisees. ¹⁴Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵So the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He told them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see." ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And there was a division among them. ¹⁷So they asked the blind man again, "What do you say about him, since he opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." ¹⁸The Jewish leaders did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight. ¹⁹They asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How is it that he now sees?" ²⁰His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. ²¹But how he now sees, we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him — he is of age. He can speak for himself." ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, for the Jewish leaders had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus as the Christ would be expelled from the synagogue. ²³That is why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." ²⁴So for a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵He answered, "Whether he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I see." ²⁶They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷He answered them, "I already told you, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" ²⁸They reviled him and said, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses! ²⁹We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." ³⁰The man answered them, "This is remarkable! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is devout and does his will, God listens to that person. ³²Never since the world began has anyone been heard of who opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³He could do nothing, and if this man were not of God. ³⁴They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and you are trying to teach us?" And they threw him out. ³⁵Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and finding him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" ³⁶He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" ³⁷Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking with you." ³⁸I believe, he said, Lord. And he worshipped him. ³⁹Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, so that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Are we blind too?" ⁴¹Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The narrative connects directly to 8:59 — Jesus has just left the temple. The phrase *ek genetēs* ('from birth') is crucial: this is not acquired blindness but a congenital condition, ruling out any connection to the man's own sin and setting up the theological question of verse 2.

2. The disciples assume a direct causal link between sin and suffering, reflecting a common Jewish theology of retribution (cf. Exodus 20:5, Ezekiel 18:20). The question about whether the man himself sinned before birth may reflect belief in prenatal sin (attested in some rabbinic texts) or simply reveals the logical absurdity their framework produces when confronted with congenital conditions.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 20:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 18:20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. Jesus rejects the entire sin-causation framework for this case. The hina ('so that') clause does not mean God caused the blindness in order to heal it later (a common misreading); it redirects the question from cause to purpose — whatever the origin of the blindness, its purpose now is to reveal God's works. The verb phanerōthē ('be made visible, displayed') connects to the light/sight theme of the chapter.
4. The SBLGNT reads hēmas ('we') rather than eme ('I'), including the disciples in the mission. 'Day' and 'night' function metaphorically: day is the time of Jesus's active ministry; night is his departure through death. The urgency (dei, 'it is necessary') reflects divine mandate, not mere preference.
5. This repeats the claim of 8:12 but adds the temporal qualifier hotan ('as long as, whenever'). The light-of-the-world declaration immediately precedes giving sight to a blind man — the metaphor is about to become literal. The implicit corollary is that after Jesus's departure, the disciples must carry the light (cf. Matthew 5:14).
6. The act of making mud (pēlon, 'clay, mud') echoes Genesis 2:7 where God forms man from the ground — Jesus performs a creative act. Saliva was believed to have healing properties in the ancient world (cf. Mark 7:33, 8:23). The verb epechrisein ('smeared, anointed') may carry overtones of the christos/anointing theme. Making mud on the Sabbath would constitute 'kneading,' one of the thirty-nine categories of prohibited Sabbath work in the Mishnah.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 2:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. John provides the etymology of Siloam (Silōam from Hebrew Shiloach, related to shalach, 'to send') as apostalmenos ('sent'), connecting the pool's name to Jesus as the one 'sent' by the Father — a recurring Johannine theme (cf. 3:17, 5:36, 6:29, 7:29). The man's obedience is immediate and unquestioning, reminiscent of Naaman washing in the Jordan (2 Kings 5:10-14). The simple statement 'came back seeing' (ēlthen blepōn) is understated for the magnitude of the miracle — a lifetime of blindness ends in a single washing.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 5:10-14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The SBLGNT reads prosaitēs ('beggar') rather than typhlos ('blind'), though some manuscripts have 'blind.' The question introduces the first of several investigations — even the man's identity is disputed, setting up a narrative in which seeing and knowing are constantly in question.
9. The man's ego eimi ('I am') is an ordinary identification ('I am the one'), not a divine claim — but John may intend an ironic echo of Jesus's ego eimi statements in chapter 8. The imperfect elegen ('kept saying') suggests he had to assert his identity repeatedly against doubt.
10. The passive ēneōchthēsan ('were opened') is a divine passive — the question inadvertently acknowledges that the healing came from a power beyond the man himself. This is the first of three times the man will be asked to explain how he was healed (cf. vv. 15, 26).
11. The man's first identification of Jesus is minimal: ho anthrōpos ho legomenos Iēsous ('the man called Jesus'). He knows a name and an action but nothing more. This is the starting point of his progressive understanding. The verb aneblepsa ('I received sight, I looked up') can mean both 'to see again' and 'to see for the first time' — here it must mean the latter, since he was born blind.
12. The man does not know where Jesus is — he was sent to the pool and returned to find Jesus gone. This physical separation mirrors his theological distance: he knows Jesus by name and action but does not yet know him as prophet, as from God, or as Lord.
13. The phrase ton pote typhlon ('the one formerly blind') is John's editorial confirmation that the healing was real and complete. The Pharisees function as the investigative authority — the neighbors bring the case to them for evaluation.
14. John withholds this critical detail until verse 14, after the healing and the neighbors' investigation — a masterful narrative technique that raises the stakes retroactively. The Sabbath issue transforms the healing from a wonder to a legal problem. Making mud (kneading) and possibly healing (which some rabbis classified as work) both potentially violated Sabbath regulations.
15. The man's account becomes more compressed with each retelling — the three-step process (mud, wash, see) is stated with increasing economy. The present tense blepō ('I see') is emphatic: the evidence stands before them. This is the second interrogation (cf. v. 10).
16. The schisma ('division, split') among the Pharisees reveals two competing theological principles: (1) a true prophet would keep the Sabbath, therefore Jesus cannot be from God; (2) a sinner cannot perform genuine miracles, therefore Jesus must be from God. John uses the word sēmeia ('signs') — his preferred term for Jesus's miracles, emphasizing their revelatory function. This internal Pharisaic debate mirrors the broader division Jesus causes throughout the Gospel (cf. 7:43, 10:19).
17. The man's understanding has advanced: from 'the man called Jesus' (v. 11) to prophētēs ('a prophet'). A prophet is one who speaks and acts with divine authority — the man draws the logical conclusion from the evidence of his own healing. This is the second stage in his progressive recognition

of Jesus.

18. Unable to refute the healing theologically, the opponents shift to challenging the facts — perhaps the man was never really blind. The term *hoi Ioudaioi* ('the Jews') here refers to the investigating authorities, not the Jewish people generally. The calling of the parents introduces a new phase of the investigation.
19. The three questions embedded in this verse — (1) Is this your son? (2) Was he born blind? (3) How does he now see? — are designed to find a crack in the testimony. The phrase 'who you say was born blind' (*hon hymeis legete hoti typhlos egennēthē*) subtly casts doubt on the parents' claim, as if the blindness itself might be fabricated.
20. The parents confirm two of the three points with certainty (*oidamen*, 'we know'): identity and congenital blindness. They will deflect the third question — how he now sees — out of fear, as the next verses explain.
21. The parents' threefold 'we do not know' (*ouk oidamen*) is evasive rather than honest — they redirect all inquiry to their son. The phrase *hēlikian echei* ('he is of age, he has maturity') indicates he is old enough to give legal testimony on his own behalf, likely meaning he is over thirteen (the age of legal responsibility in Jewish law).
22. John provides the narrator's explanation for the parents' evasion: fear of excommunication. The term *aposynagōgos* ('expelled from the synagogue, put out of the synagogue') appears only in John (here, 12:42, 16:2) and describes formal exclusion from the Jewish worshiping community — a devastating social and religious penalty. The verb *synetethento* ('had agreed, had decided together') indicates a formal policy decision by the authorities.
23. John repeats the parents' deflection to underscore its motivation: fear, not ignorance, drives their evasion. The contrast with their son's increasing boldness is deliberate — the parents protect themselves while their son faces the authorities alone.
24. The phrase *dos doxan tō theō* ('give glory to God') is a solemn adjuration equivalent to 'tell the truth before God' (cf. Joshua 7:19, where Joshua uses the same phrase to compel Achan's confession). The Pharisees have already reached their verdict — 'we know' (*hēmeis oidamen*) — and are pressuring the man to confirm it. The irony is thick: they claim knowledge while demonstrating blindness.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joshua 7:19. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. One of the most memorable lines in the Gospel. The man refuses to be drawn into theological debate and stands on the irrefutable evidence of his own experience. The contrast between their claimed knowledge ('we know he is a sinner') and his actual knowledge ('one thing I know') is the chapter's central irony — the formerly blind man sees more clearly than the experts.
26. This is the third time the man is asked to recount the healing (cf. vv. 10, 15). The repetition serves the Pharisees' investigative purpose — they hope to find an inconsistency — and also serves John's literary purpose of highlighting the futility of their resistance to evident truth.
27. The man's boldness escalates — the *mē* particle expects a negative answer ('you don't want to become his disciples too, do you?'), but the question is deliberately provocative. The word 'also' (*kai*) implies the man already considers himself a disciple, though he has not yet met the risen Jesus. The verb *ēkousate* ('you did not hear/listen') carries the Johannine double meaning: they physically heard but did not truly receive.
28. The verb *eloidorēsan* ('reviled, insulted, heaped abuse on') marks the shift from investigation to hostility. They draw a sharp line: his loyalty to Jesus versus their loyalty to Moses. The pronoun emphasis (*sy/hēmeis*, 'you/we') makes the division absolute. Ironically, Jesus has already claimed that Moses wrote about him (5:46).
29. Their confession 'we do not know where he comes from' (*ouk oidamen pothen estin*) is deeply ironic in John's framework — Jesus's origin (*pothen*, 'from where') is one of the Gospel's central questions (cf. 7:27-28, 8:14, 19:9). They think their ignorance of his origin discredits Jesus; in reality, it reveals their own spiritual blindness.
30. The man's argument is devastatingly simple: the evidence of the miracle should resolve any uncertainty about Jesus's origin. The adjective *thaumaston* ('remarkable, amazing, astonishing') is used with sharp irony — what is truly astonishing is not the healing but the leaders' refusal to draw the obvious conclusion from it.
31. The man uses their own theological framework against them: the principle that God hears the righteous but not sinners is widely attested in Scripture (cf. Psalm 66:18, Proverbs 15:29, Isaiah 1:15). The adjective *theosebēs* ('God-fearing, devout') appears only here in the NT. His logic is irresistible within their system: God answered Jesus's act, therefore Jesus must be devout and obedient to God's will.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 66:18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 15:29. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 1:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The phrase *ek tou aiōnos* ('from the age, since the world began') emphasizes the unprecedented nature of the miracle. While there are Old Testament healings and even resurrections, there is no recorded case of congenital blindness being healed — this is a creative act, not merely a restorative one. The man's theological reasoning is more sophisticated than his opponents'.

33. The man's conclusion — *para theou* ('from God') — represents his third stage of recognition (after 'the man called Jesus' in v. 11 and 'a prophet' in v. 17). The conditional is contrary to fact: since Jesus has done something (opened blind eyes), the only possible conclusion is that he is from God. The former beggar out-argues the trained theologians.
34. Their response reveals the very theology Jesus rejected in verse 3 — they revert to the assumption that his congenital blindness proves his sinfulness. The phrase *en hamartiais... holos* ('entirely in sins') is contemptuous: you are nothing but sin from birth. The irony is complete: the religious experts resort to the argument Jesus already dismantled. The verb *exebalon* ('threw out, cast out') likely refers to formal expulsion from the synagogue (cf. v. 22), not merely physical ejection from the room.
35. The SBLGNT reads *ton huion tou anthrōpou* ('the Son of Man') rather than *ton huion tou theou* ('the Son of God') found in some later manuscripts. We follow the critical text. Jesus seeks out the expelled man — the shepherd finds the one cast out by the religious establishment. The question is not whether the man believes in Jesus generally but whether he believes in the Son of Man — a title with eschatological and divine connotations from Daniel 7:13-14.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 7:13-14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The address *kyrie* could mean either 'sir' (a polite form of address) or 'Lord' (a confessional title). At this point in the conversation, the man does not yet know who the Son of Man is, so 'sir' is the more natural rendering here. The willingness in his question — 'that I may believe' (*hina pisteusō*) — shows readiness, not resistance.
37. The verb *heōrakas* ('you have seen') carries profound irony: the man who was born blind has now not only received physical sight but is using that sight to see the Son of Man himself. The self-revelation follows the pattern of John 4:26 (the Samaritan woman) — Jesus discloses his identity to an outsider who has shown faith.
38. Now *kyrie* is clearly 'Lord' — a confessional title, not mere politeness. The verb *prosekynēsen* ('worshiped, bowed down before') is the same word used for worship of God throughout the Septuagint and New Testament. This is the man's final stage of recognition: from 'the man called Jesus' (v. 11) to 'a prophet' (v. 17) to 'from God' (v. 33) to worshiping him as Lord. The progression is complete — the man born blind now sees more clearly than anyone in the chapter.
39. This statement appears to contradict 3:17 ('God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world') but the tension is deliberate: Jesus's primary purpose is salvation, but his coming inevitably produces judgment because it forces a response. The *krima* ('judgment, verdict') is not condemnation imposed from outside but the self-sorting that occurs when light enters darkness (cf. 3:19-21). The chapter has enacted this principle: the blind man now sees; the seeing Pharisees are now blind.
40. The *mē* particle expects a negative answer ('we aren't blind too, are we?'), revealing their confidence in their own spiritual sight. The irony is that their very confidence is the proof of their blindness — they cannot even conceive that Jesus's words might apply to them.
41. Jesus's final statement inverts their assumption completely: genuine blindness (acknowledged ignorance) would remove culpability; claimed sight (self-assured knowledge) locks them into sin. The verb *menei* ('remains, abides') is the same word used positively of abiding in Jesus (15:4) — here it describes sin's permanent residence in those who refuse to acknowledge their blindness. The chapter ends with the devastating conclusion: those who claim to see are the truly blind, and their condition is incurable precisely because they refuse the diagnosis.

10

Summary: *John 10 contains Jesus's extended shepherd discourse, in which he identifies himself as both the gate of the sheepfold and the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. The chapter opens with a parable about shepherds and thieves (vv. 1-6), followed by two 'I am' declarations: 'I am the gate' (vv. 7-10) and 'I am the good shepherd' (vv. 11-18). Jesus distinguishes himself from hired hands who flee when wolves attack. He speaks of 'other sheep' not of this fold whom he must also bring. The discourse provokes yet another division (vv. 19-21). At the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah), the Jewish leaders confront Jesus directly about whether he is the Christ, leading to Jesus's declaration 'I and the Father are one' (v. 30) and a second attempt to stone him (v. 31). The chapter closes with Jesus withdrawing beyond the Jordan.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The shepherd imagery draws on deep Old Testament roots: God as shepherd (Psalm 23, Isaiah 40:11), David as shepherd-king (2 Samuel 5:2), and Ezekiel's devastating critique of Israel's failed shepherds (Ezekiel 34), where God promises to shepherd his people himself and raise up 'my servant David.' Jesus's claim to be the good shepherd is simultaneously a claim to fulfill Ezekiel 34 and to embody God's own shepherding. The 'I and the Father are one' declaration (v. 30) is the theological climax — neuter *hen* ('one thing') rather than masculine *heis* ('one person'), indicating unity of purpose and being without collapsing the distinction between Father and Son.*

Translation Friction: The relationship between 10:1-21 and the preceding chapter is debated — some scholars see it as a continuation of the post-chapter-9 dialogue, others as an independent discourse. The Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) setting in verse 22 marks a chronological shift (roughly December, two months after Tabernacles). The 'other sheep' (v. 16) is traditionally interpreted as referring to Gentile believers, though the text does not specify. Jesus's scriptural argument from Psalm 82:6 (vv. 34-36) is complex and has been interpreted in various ways.

Connections: The shepherd discourse connects to Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, Zechariah 11:4-17, and Isaiah 40:11. The gate imagery connects to Psalm 118:20. The 'I and the Father are one' declaration connects to the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4) and to Jesus's prayer in John 17:11, 22. The laying down of life anticipates the cross narrative (chs. 18-19). The Hanukkah setting (rededication of the temple) provides ironic context for Jesus's claim that the Father 'consecrated' him (v. 36).

¹"Truly, truly, I say to you, the one who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a robber. ²The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will never follow a stranger but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers." ⁶Jesus told them this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷So Jesus said again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. If anyone enters through me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came so that they may have life, and have it abundantly. ¹¹I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and runs away — and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³The hireling fleeth, on account of the fact that he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, ¹⁵Indeed, as the Father knows me, even so know I the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice. There will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me — because I lay down my life so that I may take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father." ¹⁹There was again a division among the Jewish people because of these words. ²⁰Many of them said, "He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen to him?" ²¹Others said, "These are not the words of someone possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" ²²Then came the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem. It was winter, ²³Jesus walked in the sanctuary in Solomon's porch. ²⁴So the Jewish leaders surrounded him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." ²⁵Jesus answered them, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify about me, ²⁶But you trust not, because you are not of my sheep, as I stated to you. ²⁷My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, then they Come, follow me: ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ³⁰I and the Father are one." ³¹The Jewish leaders picked up stones again to stone him. ³²Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these works are you going to stone me?" ³³The Jewish leaders answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, make yourself God." ³⁴You are gods?, Jesus responded them, Is it not written in your law, I said. ³⁵If he known as them gods, to whom the word of God arrived, and the scripture cannot be broken: ³⁶Say you of him, whom the Father has sanctified, and dispatched into the world, you blasphemest. Because I stated, I am the Son of God? ³⁷If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. ³⁸But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." ³⁹So they tried again to arrest him, but he escaped from their grasp. ⁴⁰He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptizing at first, and he stayed there. ⁴¹Many came to him and said, "John performed no sign, but everything John said about this man was true." ⁴²Numerous believed on him there.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The double amēn marks solemn declaration. The aulē tōn probatōn ('sheepfold, courtyard of the sheep') refers to an enclosed area, often a stone-walled courtyard with a single entrance, used to protect sheep at night. John distinguishes between kleptēs ('thief,' one who steals by stealth) and lēstēs ('robber, bandit,' one who uses violence). The parable follows directly from the expulsion of the blind man in chapter 9 — the Pharisees are the false shepherds.
2. The Greek thyra ('door, gate') is the legitimate entry point. The poimēn ('shepherd') enters openly, with nothing to hide. The contrast is between legitimacy (through the gate) and illegitimacy (any other way).
3. The identity of the thurōros ('gatekeeper, doorkeeper') is not explained and should not be allegorized — the focus is on the shepherd's relationship with his sheep. The phrase phōnei kat' onoma ('calls by name') reflects actual Palestinian shepherding practice, where shepherds knew and named individual sheep. The sheep recognize and respond to the shepherd's specific voice — an image of intimate, personal relationship.
4. The verb ekbalē ('brought out, put forth') is the same word used in 9:34 for the Pharisees casting out the healed man — a deliberate contrast. The Pharisees 'cast out'; the shepherd 'leads out.' Middle Eastern shepherds lead from the front rather than driving from behind — the sheep follow voluntarily because they recognize the shepherd. The verb oidasin ('they know') indicates deep, experiential knowledge.
5. The double negative ou mē ('never, by no means') with the future akolouthēsousin ('will follow') is emphatic. The allotriō ('stranger, outsider') is not the same as the thief/robber — it is anyone whose voice the sheep do not recognize. The sheep's discernment is instinctive, based on relationship rather than analysis.
6. John calls this a paroimia ('figure of speech, proverb, riddle') rather than parabolē ('parable'). The paroimia in John is an enigmatic saying that requires interpretation (cf. 16:25, 29). The audience's failure to understand sets up Jesus's explanatory statements in the following verses.
7. This is the third of John's 'I am' statements with a predicate. Jesus identifies himself not as the shepherd (that comes in v. 11) but as the thyra ('gate, door') — the point of access and protection. In some shepherding practices, the shepherd himself would lie across the opening of the fold at night, literally becoming the gate. We render thyra as 'gate' rather than 'door' to maintain the pastoral setting.
8. The sweeping statement 'all who came before me' (pantes hosoi ēlthon pro emou) cannot refer to Moses and the prophets (whom Jesus affirms elsewhere) but to false leaders who claimed authority over God's flock without legitimate commission — the failed shepherds of Ezekiel 34. Some manuscripts omit 'before me' (pro emou), which would change the sense to 'all who came [apart from me].'
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 34 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The three-fold promise — salvation (sōthēsetai), freedom of movement (eiseleusetai kai exeleusetai, 'will go in and out'), and sustenance (nomēn heurēsei, 'will find pasture') — describes the complete provision of the shepherd through the gate. 'Going in and out' is a Hebrew idiom for living freely and securely (cf. Numbers 27:17, Deuteronomy 28:6, Psalm 121:8).
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 27:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 28:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 121:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The three verbs describing the thief — klepsē ('steal'), thysē ('slaughter, sacrifice'), apolesē ('destroy') — escalate in violence. The verb thysē is the same word used for ritual sacrifice, adding bitter irony: the thief 'sacrifices' the sheep for his own benefit. Against this, Jesus's purpose is stated in two stages: life (zōēn) and abundance (perisson, 'surplus, overflow, more than enough'). The Greek perisson means not barely adequate life but overflowing life.
11. The fourth 'I am' statement with predicate. The adjective kalos ('good, noble, beautiful, excellent') means more than morally good — it connotes the ideal, the model, the shepherd as he was meant to be. The phrase tēn psychēn autou tithēsīn ('lays down his life') uses the deliberate act of placing (tithēmi) — this is not accidental death but voluntary sacrifice. The preposition hyper ('for, on behalf of') indicates substitutionary action.
12. The misthotos ('hired hand, wage worker') is not a villain like the thief — he is simply not the owner. His relationship to the sheep is economic, not relational. When danger comes (the lykos, 'wolf'), the cost-benefit analysis favors flight. The verbs harpazei ('snatches, seizes by force') and skorpizei ('scatters') describe the devastation that follows failed leadership.
13. The phrase ou melei autō ('it does not matter to him, he does not care') reveals the hired hand's fundamental deficiency: lack of genuine care (cf. Mark 4:38, where the same phrase appears). The issue is not competence but commitment — the hired hand may be skilled but lacks the ownership-stake that produces sacrificial devotion.
14. The verb ginōskō ('know') here describes deep, mutual, relational knowledge — not mere awareness but intimate acquaintance. The reciprocity (I know them / they know me) echoes the covenant relationship pattern: God knows his people, and they know him (cf. Jeremiah 31:34). The next verse will ground this mutual knowledge in the relationship between Father and Son.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 31:34. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

15. The comparison *kathōs* ('just as') is extraordinary: the mutual knowledge between shepherd and sheep is patterned on the mutual knowledge between Father and Son. This elevates the shepherd-sheep relationship to a divine model. The second clause returns to the theme of voluntary death (*tēn psychēn mou tithēmi*, 'I lay down my life'), now grounded in the Father-Son relationship that motivates it.
16. The 'other sheep' (*alla probata*) not of 'this fold' (*tēs aulēs tautēs*) is traditionally understood as Gentile believers who will be gathered into one community with Jewish believers. The *dei* ('must, it is necessary') indicates divine compulsion — this is part of God's plan, not optional. Note the critical distinction: 'one flock' (*mia poimnē*) not 'one fold' (*mia aulē*) — the KJV's 'one fold' is a mistranslation. The unity is in the flock (the people under one shepherd), not in a single enclosure (one institution).
17. The Father's love (*agapa*) for the Son is connected to the Son's willingness to die and rise. The verb *tithēmi* ('lay down, place') followed by *labō* ('take up, receive back') describes a voluntary, temporary surrender — death followed by resurrection. The 'again' (*palin*) points to resurrection as the completion of the act, not its reversal.
18. The Greek *exousia* ('authority, right, power') appears twice, asserting Jesus's sovereign control over both his death and his resurrection. The verb *airei* ('takes away') is negated absolutely (*oudeis*, 'no one') — Jesus's death is not imposed but chosen. Yet this sovereign freedom operates within the Father's command (*entolē*) — Jesus freely does what the Father has ordained. The tension between freedom and obedience is resolved in perfect alignment of wills.
19. The schisma ('division, split') recurs from 9:16 and 7:43 — Jesus's words consistently divide his audience. The adverb *palin* ('again') indicates this is a pattern, not an anomaly.
20. The charge of demon possession (*daimonion echei*) repeats from 7:20 and 8:48. The verb *mainetai* ('is mad, is insane') adds a new charge — raving madness. The combination suggests they hear his claims as the ravings of a possessed person. Their dismissive question ('why listen?') attempts to shut down the conversation.
21. The counter-argument has two parts: (1) Jesus's words are too coherent and meaningful to be demonic ravings, and (2) the healing of the blind man in chapter 9 provides concrete evidence that his power comes from God, not demons. The *mē* particle expects a negative answer: 'a demon can't open blind eyes, can it?' The reference back to the blind man's healing links chapters 9 and 10.
22. The *egkainia* ('Dedication, Renewal') is Hanukkah, commemorating the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in 164 BC after its desecration by Antiochus IV Epiphanes (1 Maccabees 4:36-59). The festival falls in Kislev (November-December). The note 'it was winter' (*cheimōn ēn*) may be simply calendrical or may carry symbolic weight — the season of cold and darkness as the theological conflict intensifies.
23. Solomon's Colonnade (*stoa tou Solomōnos*) was a covered portico on the eastern side of the temple mount, believed to date to Solomon's original temple. It was a common gathering place for teaching and debate (cf. Acts 3:11, 5:12). The location is public and prominent.
24. The verb *ekyklōsan* ('surrounded, encircled') suggests both physical and psychological pressure — they close in on him. The idiom *tēn psychēn hēmōn aireis* (lit. 'you take away our soul/life') means 'you hold us in suspense' or 'you keep us agitated.' The demand for *parrhēsia* ('plainness, openness, boldness') reflects their frustration with Jesus's indirect self-revelation. During Hanukkah, the question of messianic identity would carry particular weight — the festival commemorates a military deliverer.
25. Jesus's response reframes the problem: the issue is not insufficient evidence but insufficient faith. He has told them (*eipon hymin*) — through his 'I am' statements and his signs — and they have not believed. The works (*erga*, including healings, signs, and teaching) done 'in my Father's name' (*en tō onomati tou patros*) carry the Father's own authority and serve as testimony.
26. The logic is direct: unbelief is the evidence that they do not belong to Jesus's flock, not the cause of being excluded from it. The phrase *ek tōn probatōn tōn emōn* ('from my sheep') connects their unbelief to the shepherd discourse — they cannot hear his voice because they are not his sheep (cf. 8:47).
27. Three marks of the true sheep: they hear (*akouousin*, present tense — ongoing hearing), they are known by the shepherd (*ginōskō*, personal relational knowledge), and they follow (*akolouthousin*, habitual following). The order matters: hearing precedes knowing precedes following.
28. Three assurances correspond to the three marks of verse 27: eternal life is given (*didōmi*, present tense — ongoing gift), they will never perish (*ou mē apolōntai*, the strongest possible negation), and no one can forcibly remove them (*ouch harpasei*, 'will not snatch' — the same verb used of the wolf in v. 12). The security of the sheep rests in the shepherd's power, not in the sheep's strength.
29. The textual tradition here is complex — some manuscripts read 'what my Father has given me is greater than all' (emphasizing the gift), others 'my Father who has given them to me is greater than all' (emphasizing the Father). The theological point is the same: the sheep are doubly secure, held in both the Son's hand (v. 28) and the Father's hand. No external force can overcome either.
30. This is the theological summit of the chapter. The statement is concise to the point of explosive — five Greek words that generated centuries of theological debate. The audience's response (picking up stones, v. 31) confirms they hear this as a divine claim. The statement follows logically from vv. 28-29: if the sheep are equally secure in the Son's hand and the Father's hand, the two hands must be one.
31. The adverb *palin* ('again') connects to the stoning attempt in 8:59. The verb *ebastasan* ('picked up, carried') suggests they found stones in the temple precincts — possibly from ongoing construction work on the temple complex. Their intent to stone him for blasphemy (cf. v. 33) confirms they understood verse 30 as a divine claim, not merely a statement of prophetic alignment.

32. The adjective *kala* ('good, noble, beautiful') for the works echoes *kalos* in 'good shepherd' (v. 11) — the works are beautiful, noble, worthy of praise. The question forces them to identify which specific act merits death — the absurdity of stoning someone for doing good is laid bare.
33. The charge is explicit: *blasphēmia* ('blasphemy') — and the specific form of blasphemy is that a human being (*anthrōpos ōn*, 'being a man') claims to be *theon* ('God'). The phrase *poieis seauton theon* ('make yourself God') is how they interpret 'I and the Father are one.' They understand the claim correctly; what they dispute is Jesus's right to make it.
34. Jesus quotes Psalm 82:6, where God addresses the divine council or Israel's judges as 'gods' (*theoi*). The phrase 'your Law' (*tō nomō hymōn*) uses 'Law' broadly to include the Psalms (the entire Hebrew Scripture). Jesus's argument is a *qal wahomer* ('lesser to greater'): if Scripture itself applies the word 'gods' to human beings, how can it be blasphemy for the one the Father consecrated and sent to call himself God's Son?
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 82:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. The parenthetical 'Scripture cannot be broken' (*ou dynatai lythēnai hē graphē*) is a significant assertion of the authority and inviolability of the written text. The verb *lythēnai* ('broken, loosened, dissolved') means Scripture cannot be invalidated or set aside. 'To whom the word of God came' identifies the 'gods' of Psalm 82 as recipients of divine revelation — mere humans who were nonetheless called 'gods' by God's own word.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 82 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. The verb *hēgiasen* ('consecrated, set apart, sanctified') is particularly resonant during the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah), which celebrates the rededication/consecration of the temple. Jesus implies he is the true consecrated one — the living temple (cf. 2:19-21). Note that Jesus says 'Son of God' (*huios tou theou*) here, not 'God' — he reframes their charge. The argument is: if Scripture calls humans 'gods,' how much more appropriate for the one the Father himself consecrated to say 'I am the Son of God'?
37. Jesus offers a falsifiable test: his works are the evidence. If they do not bear the character of the Father's works, disbelief is warranted. This is not an appeal to blind faith but to observable evidence — the signs and works he has performed throughout the Gospel.
38. The phrase 'the Father is in me and I am in the Father' (*en emoi ho patēr kagō en tō patri*) expresses mutual indwelling — a concept developed further in 14:10-11 and 17:21. The two verbs *gnōte kai ginōskēte* ('know and keep knowing') move from initial recognition (aorist) to ongoing understanding (present). Jesus offers the works as an entry point for those who cannot yet accept his word directly.
39. The verb *piasai* ('arrest, seize') indicates an official arrest attempt, not merely stoning. The phrase *exēlthen ek tēs cheiros autōn* ('went out from their hand') echoes the shepherd discourse: no one can snatch from the Father's hand (v. 29), and no one can seize the shepherd either. Jesus's escape is narrated without explanation — divine protection is implied.
40. Jesus returns to the location of his ministry's beginning (cf. 1:28) — a geographic and thematic return to origins. The verb *emeinen* ('stayed, remained') uses the key Johannine verb *menō*. The withdrawal beyond the Jordan is strategic, removing himself from Jerusalem's immediate danger while remaining accessible.
41. The contrast between John (no signs) and Jesus (many signs) highlights that John's authority was prophetic testimony, not miraculous power. Yet John's testimony is vindicated — 'everything John said about this man was true' (*alēthē ēn*). This verse connects the end of chapter 10 back to the beginning of the Gospel (1:19-34) and John the Baptist's witness.
42. The chapter ends on a note of faith — 'many believed' (*polloi episteusan*). In contrast to the rejection in Jerusalem, the people beyond the Jordan receive Jesus. The adverb *ekei* ('there') is emphatic: away from Jerusalem, away from the religious establishment, faith flourishes. This provides a hopeful conclusion before the Lazarus narrative in chapter 11.

11

Summary: *John 11 narrates the raising of Lazarus from the dead — the climactic seventh sign in John's Gospel. When Jesus receives word that his friend Lazarus is ill, he deliberately delays two days before traveling to Bethany, where he finds Lazarus already four days dead. Martha meets Jesus with a statement of faith and grievance: 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' Jesus declares 'I am the resurrection and the life' and asks if she believes. At the tomb, Jesus weeps, then commands the stone removed and calls Lazarus out of the grave. The raising triggers two opposite responses: many believe, but the Sanhedrin convenes to plot Jesus's death. Caiaphas unwittingly prophesies that Jesus will die for the nation. The chapter closes with Jesus withdrawing to Ephraim as the authorities issue orders for his arrest.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This is the longest sustained narrative in John's Gospel and the most theologically dense sign. The raising of Lazarus functions simultaneously as a historical event, a demonstration of Jesus's power over death, a prophetic sign of the general resurrection, and a catalyst for the crucifixion — the one who raises from death is sentenced to death precisely because he raises from death. The 'I am the resurrection and the life' declaration (v. 25) is the fifth 'I am' with predicate and*

arguably the most sweeping. Jesus's weeping at the tomb (v. 35, the shortest verse in the Bible) reveals the fully human emotional life of the one who has just claimed divine authority over death. Caiaphas's unwitting prophecy (vv. 49-52) is one of John's most brilliant ironies.

Translation Friction: The four-day delay is crucial — Jewish tradition held that the soul lingered near the body for three days, meaning by the fourth day decomposition confirmed death was irreversible. Jesus's emotional response involves two Greek words: dakryō ('shed tears,' v. 35) and embrimaomai ('deeply moved/indignant,' vv. 33, 38). The latter may indicate anger — at death itself, at the grief it causes, or at unbelief — rather than mere sadness. Lazarus's raising is not mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels, a significant omission that has generated extensive scholarly discussion.

Connections: The raising connects to Jesus's earlier claims about giving life (5:21, 25-29), the bread of life discourse (6:39-40, 54), and the good shepherd who lays down his life (10:11-18). Martha's confession (v. 27) parallels Peter's confession in the Synoptics (Matthew 16:16). The unwinding of grave cloths (v. 44) anticipates the resurrection narrative (20:6-7). Caiaphas's prophecy connects to Isaiah 53 (the servant dying for the people) and to John's understanding of the cross as gathering (cf. 12:32).

¹Now a man named Lazarus was ill. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ²Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill. ³So the sisters sent word to him, saying, "Lord, the one you love is ill." ⁴When Jesus heard this, he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." ⁵And Lazarus, now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister. ⁶So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed where he was for two more days. ⁷Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jewish leaders were just now trying to stone you, and you are going there again?" ⁹Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If anyone walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰But if anyone walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." ¹¹After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him up." ¹²The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." ¹³Jesus had spoken about his death, but they thought he was talking about ordinary sleep. ¹⁴So then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died. ¹⁵And for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." ¹⁶So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, so that we may die with him." ¹⁷When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away, ¹⁹Numerous of the Jews arrived to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. ²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, but Mary stayed seated in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." ²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live, ²⁶Whosoever liveth and believes in me will never die. Believest you this? ²⁷So he said to her, "Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one coming into the world." ²⁸After saying this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying quietly, "The Teacher is here and is asking for you." ²⁹When she heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰Jesus had not yet come into the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹When the Jewish people who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her, assuming she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³²When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." ³³When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jewish people who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and troubled. ³⁴He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." ³⁵Indeed, Jesus wept. ³⁶So the Jewish people said, "See how he loved him!" ³⁷But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept Lazarus from dying?" ³⁸Then Jesus, deeply moved again within himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days." ⁴⁰Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" ⁴¹So they removed the stone. Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I knew

that you always hear me, but I said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³ After saying this, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go." ⁴⁵ Many of the Jewish people who had come to Mary and had seen what he did believed in him. ⁴⁶ But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷ So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council meeting and said, "What are we going to do? For this man is performing many signs. ⁴⁸ If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." ⁴⁹ But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all. ⁵⁰ You do not consider that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." ⁵¹ He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, ⁵² Not for that nation sole, but that as well he should gather as one in one the God's children that were scattered abroad. ⁵³ So from that day on they plotted to put him to death. ⁵⁴ Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jewish leaders but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and he stayed there with his disciples. ⁵⁵ Now the Passover of the Jewish people was near, and many went up to Jerusalem from the countryside before the Passover to purify themselves. ⁵⁶ They were looking for Jesus and asking one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? Surely he will not come to the feast?" ⁵⁷ Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who knew where he was should report it, so that they could arrest him.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Lazarus (Greek Lazaros from Hebrew Eleazar, 'God has helped') is introduced by his illness, his hometown, and his sisters. Bethany was a village about two miles east of Jerusalem on the slopes of the Mount of Olives (cf. v. 18). John identifies the village by its residents rather than its geography, suggesting the sisters were well known to his audience.
2. John identifies Mary by an event he has not yet narrated (the anointing occurs in 12:1-8), suggesting his readers already knew the story. The detail 'wiped his feet with her hair' distinguishes this Mary from other anointing accounts in the Synoptics. The parenthetical identification reinforces the family connection: Lazarus is defined in relation to his sisters.
3. The message is restrained — no explicit request, only a statement of fact that assumes Jesus will act. The verb *phileis* ('you love,' from *phileō*) indicates personal affection and friendship. The sisters trust that the information alone will be sufficient to move Jesus to come.
4. Jesus's statement is true at a deeper level than it appears: Lazarus will die, but his death is not the final destination — it serves the glory (*doxa*) of God. The purpose clause *hina doxasthē* ('so that he may be glorified') connects the sign to its ultimate meaning. The phrase 'the Son of God' (*ho huios tou theou*) appears rarely in John as a self-designation and carries full Christological weight here.
5. The verb *ēgapa* (from *agapaō*) is used here rather than *phileō* (v. 3). John uses both verbs for Jesus's love without a clear semantic distinction in this passage. The sentence is placed before the delay, emphasizing that Jesus's decision to wait is not a failure of love but operates within it.
6. The conjunction *oun* ('so, therefore') is startling — 'therefore he stayed.' The delay is deliberate, not accidental. Combined with one day's travel each way, the two-day delay ensures Lazarus will have been dead four days when Jesus arrives. The delay serves the sign: a four-day-dead man is beyond any natural recovery, making the miracle unmistakable.
7. The verb *agōmen* ('let us go') is a hortatory subjunctive, inviting the disciples to join him. The adverb *palin* ('again') recalls the danger — they had just fled Judea after the stoning attempt (10:31, 39). The return to Judea is a return to danger.
8. The adverb *nyn* ('just now, recently') emphasizes the immediacy of the danger — the stoning attempt was not ancient history but recent experience. The disciples' question reveals understandable fear mixed with incredulity.
9. The question is rhetorical: daylight hours are appointed and sufficient. The metaphor means Jesus has an appointed time for his work, and while that time lasts, he cannot be stopped. 'The light of this world' (to *phōs tou kosmou toutou*) here refers to the sun, but John's readers would hear the echo of 8:12 and 9:5 where Jesus is the light of the world.
10. The shift from 'sees the light of this world' (external light, v. 9) to 'the light is not in him' (internal light, v. 10) is significant. The one who walks in darkness stumbles not merely because it is dark outside but because there is no light within. This connects to the Johannine theme of internal illumination through faith.
11. Jesus uses the metaphor of sleep (*kekoimētai*, perfect of *koimaō*, 'has fallen asleep') for death — a common biblical euphemism (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, Daniel 12:2) that takes on literal force when spoken by the one who can reverse death. The perfect tense indicates a completed state: Lazarus is currently in the state of having fallen asleep. The verb *exypnisō* ('wake up') shows Jesus views death as a temporary condition he can reverse.

11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 12:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The disciples understand Jesus literally: if Lazarus is sleeping, sleep is healing, and he will get better (*sōthēsetai*, 'he will be saved/healed'). The misunderstanding is typically Johannine — the audience takes Jesus's words at face value while the deeper meaning escapes them.
13. John provides the narrator's clarification, as he often does after misunderstandings (cf. 2:21, 6:71, 7:39, 12:33). The phrase *koimēseōs tou hypnou* ('the rest of sleep') is emphatic — literal, physical sleep, not the metaphorical sleep of death.
14. The adverb *parrēsia* ('plainly, openly') contrasts with the figurative language of verse 11. The blunt statement *Lazaros apethanen* ('Lazarus died') uses the aorist — a completed event. Jesus knows Lazarus is dead without having been told, demonstrating the supernatural knowledge that characterizes John's portrayal of Jesus.
15. Jesus's gladness (*chairō*) is not callousness about Lazarus's death but satisfaction that the disciples will witness a sign that deepens their faith. His absence was deliberate (cf. v. 6): had he been present, he would have healed Lazarus, and the disciples would have seen another healing. Instead, they will see a resurrection — a sign of a completely different order.
16. Thomas (Aramaic for 'twin,' translated by the Greek *Didymos*) appears here with characteristic blunt pessimism (cf. 14:5, 20:25). His statement is darkly loyal: he expects the trip to Judea to result in death but is willing to share it. The 'him' (*autou*) is ambiguous — it could mean 'die with Jesus' or 'die with Lazarus.' Most naturally it refers to Jesus, since the danger is in Judea.
17. The four days (*tessaras hēmeras*) is theologically significant: Jewish tradition held that the soul departed the body definitively after three days, when decomposition set in (cf. v. 39). By the fourth day, death was considered irreversible. Jesus arrives when human hope has been exhausted.
18. The Greek *stadiōn dekapente* ('fifteen stadia') equals approximately 1.7 miles (2.8 km). We render with the approximate modern equivalent for clarity. The proximity to Jerusalem explains both the presence of many mourners from the city (v. 19) and the rapid report of the miracle to the authorities (v. 46).
19. The verb *paramythēsōntai* ('console, comfort, encourage') describes the formal Jewish mourning practice of visiting the bereaved. Here *hoi Ioudaioi* refers to Jewish people from Jerusalem generally (neighbors and acquaintances), not the hostile authorities. The pluperfect *elēlytheisan* ('had come') indicates they were already present when Jesus arrived.
20. The sisters' responses are consistent with their characterizations in Luke 10:38-42: Martha is active and initiative-taking; Mary remains seated. The verb *ekathezeto* ('was sitting, remained seated') may indicate mourning posture — mourners traditionally sat on low seats or the ground during the shiva period.
21. The conditional *ei ēs hōde* ('if you had been here') is a contrary-to-fact condition expressing both grief and implicit trust — she believes Jesus could have prevented the death. Mary will say the identical words in verse 32, suggesting the sisters had spoken these words to each other during the waiting period. The address *Kyrie* ('Lord') carries genuine reverence.
22. The phrase *alla kai nyn* ('but even now') pushes beyond grief to tentative hope. Martha does not explicitly ask for resurrection, but her words leave the door open. The verb *aitēsē* ('ask, request') and the confident *oida* ('I know') express a faith that does not fully grasp what is about to happen but trusts in Jesus's relationship with God.
23. The verb *anastēsetai* ('will rise') is deliberately ambiguous — it could refer to the general resurrection at the last day (as Martha takes it in v. 24) or to an imminent, present-tense rising. Jesus's statements in John frequently operate on multiple levels simultaneously.
24. Martha's response is orthodox Pharisaic theology — belief in bodily resurrection at the eschaton (cf. Daniel 12:2, 2 Maccabees 7:9). Her *oida* ('I know') is theologically correct but inadequate to the moment: she knows about future resurrection but does not yet grasp that the resurrection stands before her in person. Jesus will redirect her from eschatological hope to present encounter.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 12:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The fifth 'I am' statement with predicate. By identifying himself as both *hē anastasis* ('the resurrection') and *hē zōē* ('the life'), Jesus claims to be the source and embodiment of both. The sequence 'even if he dies, will live' addresses physical death: faith in Jesus does not prevent physical death but renders it temporary.
26. The second clause addresses the living: those who believe in Jesus will never experience the ultimate death (*ou mē apothanē eis ton aiōna*, 'will absolutely never die into the age'). Verse 25 addresses those who have already died; verse 26 addresses those now living. Together they cover all cases. The direct question 'Do you believe this?' (*pisteueis touto*) shifts from theological declaration to personal challenge — Martha must respond.
27. Martha's confession is one of the most complete in the Gospels, paralleling Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16. Three titles: *ho Christos* ('the Christ/Messiah'), *ho huios tou theou* ('the Son of God'), and *ho eis ton kosmon erchomenos* ('the one coming into the world'). The perfect tense *pepisteuka* ('I have believed and continue to believe') indicates settled, enduring faith. This is the confession the Fourth Gospel aims to produce in its readers (cf. 20:31).
28. Martha calls Jesus *ho didaskalos* ('the Teacher') — a title of respect and intimacy. The adverb *lathra* ('secretly, quietly') suggests discretion: Martha does not want the mourners to follow and create a commotion before Mary and Jesus can meet privately. The verb *phonei* ('calls, summons') indicates a specific request from Jesus to see Mary.

29. The adverb tachy ('quickly') shows Mary's eager response — she does not hesitate. The passive ēgerthē ('was raised, got up') uses the same verb root (egeirō) that describes resurrection, a coincidence John may intend: Mary rises from mourning at the Teacher's call.
30. This geographical note explains why Mary must go out to Jesus rather than Jesus coming to her. He remained outside the village, perhaps deliberately — the encounter will eventually move to the tomb, which was also outside the village.
31. The mourners' assumption (doxantes, 'supposing, assuming') is wrong but natural — a bereaved sister rushing out would typically be going to the tomb to grieve. Their following creates an audience for the miracle, fulfilling the narrative requirement that many witnesses be present (cf. vv. 45-46).
32. Mary's words are identical to Martha's in verse 21, but her posture differs — she falls at Jesus's feet (epesen autou pros tous podas), a gesture of both reverence and grief. Unlike Martha, Mary does not add any expression of continued hope (cf. Martha's v. 22). Her grief is raw and unqualified. This is the same posture she will take in 12:3 when she anoints Jesus's feet.
33. The verb enebrimēsato (from embrimaomai) is difficult to translate: it denotes a deep, forceful emotion — sometimes anger, indignation, or a snorting like a horse. The most likely sense here is a combination of grief at the devastation death causes and anger at death itself as an enemy. The reflexive etaraxen heauton ('troubled himself') indicates this was not involuntary emotion but something Jesus allowed himself to feel fully. The same verb (tarassō) appears at 12:27 and 13:21.
34. Jesus's question 'Where have you laid him?' does not indicate ignorance (he already knew of Lazarus's death in v. 14) but draws the mourners into active participation in what is about to happen. The invitation 'come and see' (erchou kai ide) echoes the invitation in 1:39 and 1:46 — words that in John lead to revelation.
35. The shortest verse in the Bible, but among the most theologically significant. The verb edakrysen (from dakryō, 'to shed tears') is distinct from the loud wailing (klaiō) used of Mary and the mourners. Jesus's tears are quiet and controlled but genuine. The one who has just claimed to be the resurrection and the life weeps at the tomb of his friend — the fully divine one is fully human. The rendering matches the KJV because the Greek is so simple and direct that there is no meaningfully different modern rendering.
36. The mourners' observation is genuine and correct — ephilei ('he loved,' imperfect of phileō) indicates ongoing personal affection. The imperfect tense captures habitual, characteristic love. Even Jesus's opponents recognize the depth of his friendship with Lazarus.
37. The reference to opening blind eyes connects directly to chapter 9. The question is logical: if Jesus can heal congenital blindness, why not prevent death? The implied criticism is that Jesus's power (or willingness) has limits. The answer will come in the next few verses — Jesus's power exceeds their imagination.
38. The second occurrence of embrimaomai (cf. v. 33) underscores the intensity of Jesus's emotional engagement. The tomb is described as a spēlaion ('cave') with a stone placed against (epekeito, 'was lying upon/against') the entrance — a typical first-century Jewish rock-cut tomb sealed with a rolling stone or blocking stone.
39. Martha's objection is practical and visceral: ozei ('it stinks, there is an odor') refers to the decomposition of a four-day-old corpse. The term tetartaïos ('fourth-day,' an adjective meaning 'of the fourth day') confirms what the narrative has established — Lazarus is unambiguously dead and decomposing. Martha's faith (v. 27) does not yet encompass the immediate possibility of resurrection.
40. Jesus refers back to verse 4 (the illness is for God's glory) and verse 25 (the resurrection claim), though neither statement was made directly to Martha in those exact words — the reference may encompass the message sent through the sisters (v. 4) and the conversation of vv. 25-26. The conditional ean pisteusēs ('if you believe') makes sight dependent on faith, not faith on sight.
41. The prayer begins with eucharistō ('I thank, I give thanks') — not petition but thanksgiving, as if the outcome is already settled. The aorist ēkousas ('you heard') treats the hearing as a completed event. Jesus's prayer is not a request but an acknowledgment that the Father has already answered.
42. Jesus explains that the audible prayer is pedagogical — the crowd needs to hear it so they understand the miracle's source. The phrase pantote mou akoueis ('you always hear me') asserts a permanent, unbroken communion between Father and Son. The purpose clause hina pisteusōsin ('so that they may believe') reveals that the entire event — including the delay, the grief, and the miracle — serves the mission of bringing people to faith.
43. The verb ekraugasen ('cried out, shouted') with phōnē megalē ('a great/loud voice') describes a commanding shout — not a whisper or a prayer but a sovereign summons to the dead. The command deuro exō ('come out here') is simple, direct, and imperative. Augustine famously noted that Jesus specified 'Lazarus' by name because, had he simply said 'come out,' all the dead would have risen.
44. John describes Lazarus as ho tethnēkōs ('the one having died, the dead man') — even in the act of emerging, the narrative emphasizes he was genuinely dead. The keiriai ('linen strips, burial wrappings') bound hands and feet according to Jewish burial custom. The soudarion ('face cloth, sweat cloth') is the same word used in 20:7 for the cloth found in Jesus's empty tomb — but at Jesus's resurrection, the cloths are left behind neatly, not unwound by human hands. The command 'unbind him and let him go' (lysate auton kai aphete auton hypagein) involves the community in the miracle's completion.
45. The expected response: eyewitnesses of the raising believe (episteusan, aorist — they came to faith). The sign fulfills its purpose (cf. v. 42). These are the same mourners from verse 19 who had come to console the sisters.
46. The tines ('some') who report to the Pharisees may be hostile informants or may simply be reporting a remarkable event — John does not specify their motive. Either way, the report triggers the fateful council meeting in the next verse. The proximity of Bethany to Jerusalem (v. 18) makes the

rapid communication plausible.

47. The synedrion ('council, Sanhedrin') indicates a formal session of the ruling body. The question *ti poioumen* ('what are we doing?' or 'what should we do?') reveals panic and paralysis. They do not dispute the signs (*sēmeia*) — the reality of the miracles is conceded. Their concern is entirely political and practical, not theological.
48. The fear is political: a popular messianic movement will provoke Roman intervention. The 'place' (*topon*) likely refers to the temple, and the 'nation' (*ethnos*) to Jewish national autonomy. John's readers, writing after 70 AD, would recognize the bitter irony: the Romans did come and destroy both the temple and the nation — the very outcome the council hoped to prevent by killing Jesus.
49. The phrase *archiereus ōn tou eniautou ekeinou* ('being high priest that year') does not mean the office rotated annually — Caiaphas served as high priest from about 18-36 AD. John specifies the year to connect the high priesthood to the specific year of Jesus's death. Caiaphas's opening dismissal (*hymeis ouk oidate ouden*, 'you know nothing') is contemptuous and politically shrewd.
50. Caiaphas's political calculus — sacrifice one to save many — is straightforward realpolitik. The verb *sympherei* ('it is advantageous, it is better') is coldly pragmatic. But John will immediately reinterpret these words as unwitting prophecy (vv. 51-52). The phrase *heis anthrōpos apothanē hyper tou laou* ('one man die for the people') uses the same preposition (*hyper*, 'for, on behalf of') that Jesus used of the good shepherd laying down his life (10:11, 15).
51. John's editorial comment transforms Caiaphas's political statement into prophetic oracle. The phrase *aph' heautou ouk eipen* ('he did not say this on his own') indicates that a power beyond Caiaphas was speaking through him — the high priestly office carried prophetic capacity that operated independently of the priest's own intentions. The verb *eprophēteusen* ('he prophesied') is the narrator's authoritative interpretation.
52. John expands the prophecy beyond Caiaphas's intent: Jesus dies not only for the Jewish nation but to gather (*synagagē*, from *synagō* — the verb root of 'synagogue') all God's scattered children into one community. The phrase *ta tekna tou theou ta dieskorpismena* ('the scattered children of God') echoes the 'other sheep' of 10:16 and connects to the prophetic vision of Israel's regathering (Isaiah 11:12, 43:5-6, Ezekiel 37:21) now extended to include Gentiles.
52. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 11:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
52. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 37:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
53. The verb *ebouleusanto* ('they deliberated, resolved, plotted') marks the formal decision to kill Jesus. The raising of Lazarus — Jesus's greatest sign of life — becomes the direct cause of the decision to end his life. This is John's supreme irony: the one who gives life is condemned to death for giving life.
54. Ephraim is likely the modern village of et-Taiyibeh, about fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem on the edge of the Judean wilderness. The withdrawal is temporary — Jesus will return for Passover (v. 55). The verb *emeinen* ('stayed, remained') uses *menō*, and he remains with his disciples (*meta tōn mathētōn*), withdrawing from public ministry to the community of faith.
55. This is the third and final Passover in John's Gospel (cf. 2:13, 6:4). The purification (*hagnisōsin heautous*) refers to ritual cleansing required before participating in the Passover — those who had contracted uncleanness through contact with a corpse or other sources needed to purify themselves in advance (cf. Numbers 9:6-12). The irony: they purify themselves for Passover while the true Passover Lamb is about to be slaughtered.
55. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 9:6-12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
56. The crowd's speculation builds suspense: will Jesus come to this Passover, knowing the authorities want him dead? The *ou mē* ('surely not') with the subjunctive *ēlthē* expects a negative answer — they doubt he will risk it. But the readers know Jesus has already indicated he will lay down his life voluntarily (10:17-18).
57. The pluperfect *dedōkeisan* ('had given') indicates the orders preceded the crowd's speculation — the authorities had already set the trap. The verb *mēnysē* ('report, inform, disclose') makes the public complicit in the arrest — everyone becomes a potential informant. The chapter ends with the net closing around Jesus, setting the stage for the events of chapters 12-19.

12

Summary: *John 12 transitions from public ministry to the passion narrative. It opens with Mary's anointing of Jesus at Bethany — an extravagant act of devotion that Jesus interprets as preparation for his burial. The triumphal entry into Jerusalem follows, with crowds waving palm branches and shouting 'Hosanna.' Greeks seeking Jesus trigger his declaration that 'the hour has come' for the Son of Man to be glorified, which he describes through the metaphor of a grain of wheat dying to bear fruit. A voice from heaven confirms him. Jesus reflects on the meaning of his death — 'when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself' — then withdraws as the crowd fails to understand. The chapter closes with John's theological summary: despite the signs, most did not believe, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy. Jesus makes a final public appeal about light, judgment, and the Father's command.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter marks the hinge of John's Gospel — the end of the 'Book of Signs' (chs. 1-12) and the threshold of the 'Book of Glory' (chs. 13-21). The anointing at Bethany, the triumphal entry, and the coming of the Greeks form a triptych that interprets Jesus's death as simultaneously an act of love, a royal claim, and a universal mission. The grain-of-wheat metaphor (v. 24) is one of Jesus's most profound self-descriptions: life through death, glory through humiliation. The voice from heaven (v. 28) is the Johannine equivalent of the Synoptic transfiguration. Isaiah 6:10 and 53:1 are quoted together (vv. 38-40), weaving together the themes of prophetic rejection and suffering servanthood.*

Translation Friction: *The chronology of the anointing differs between John (six days before Passover) and the Synoptics. Judas is identified as the objector in John, while in Matthew it is the disciples generally. The identification of the voice from heaven as 'thunder' or 'an angel' by the crowd (v. 29) parallels the Synoptic transfiguration accounts but occurs in a different setting. The 'Greeks' (Hellēnes, v. 20) are likely Gentile God-fearers who attended Jewish festivals, not Greek-speaking Jews.*

Connections: *The anointing connects to Mark 14:3-9 and anticipates the burial in 19:38-42. The triumphal entry fulfills Zechariah 9:9 and connects to Psalm 118:25-26. The grain-of-wheat metaphor connects to 1 Corinthians 15:36-37. 'Lifted up' (v. 32) resumes the language of 3:14 and 8:28. The Isaiah quotations connect to the broader theme of prophetic rejection. The 'prince of this world' (v. 31) connects to 14:30 and 16:11.*

¹Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was — the one whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ²So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with him. ³Mary then took a pound of expensive perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus's feet, and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples — the one who was about to betray him — said, ⁵"Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" ⁶He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. As keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. ⁷Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She intended to keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me." ⁹When the large crowd of the Jewish people learned that Jesus was there, they came not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹because that by reason of him numerous of the Jews traveled away, and believed on Jesus. ¹²The next day the large crowd that had come for the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord — the King of Israel!" ¹⁴Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: ¹⁵"Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. See, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." ¹⁶His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him. ¹⁷The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify about it. ¹⁸This is also why the crowd went to meet him — because they heard that he had performed this sign. ¹⁹So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look — the whole world has gone after him!" ²⁰Now there were some Greeks among those who had come up to worship at the feast. ²¹So they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir,

we want to see Jesus." ²²Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain. But if it dies, it produces much fruit. ²⁵The one who loves his life loses it, and the one who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶If anyone serves me, he must follow me, and where I am, there my servant will be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him." ²⁷"Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say — 'Father, save me from this hour'? But it is for this purpose that I have come to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven: "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." ²⁹The crowd standing there heard it and said it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." ³⁰Jesus answered, "This voice came not for my sake but for yours. ³¹Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³He said this to indicate the kind of death he was going to die. ³⁴So the crowd answered him, "We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" ³⁵So Jesus said to them, "The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness does not overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light." After saying this, Jesus departed and hid himself from them. ³⁷Although he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him, ³⁸Indeed, that the declaring of Esaias the prophet of old could be fulfilled, which he spoke, Lord, who has believed our report? and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? ³⁹For this reason they could not believe, because Isaiah also said: ⁴⁰"He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so that they would not see with their eyes or understand with their hearts, and turn — and I would heal them." ⁴¹Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke about him. ⁴²Nevertheless, many even among the leaders believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be expelled from the synagogue. ⁴³For they loved the glory that comes from people more than the glory that comes from God. ⁴⁴Then Jesus cried out and said, "The one who believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. ⁴⁵And the one who sees me sees the one who sent me. ⁴⁶I have come into the world as light, so that everyone who believes in me may not remain in darkness. ⁴⁷If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him, for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge: the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. ⁴⁹For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment — what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰And I know that his commandment is eternal life. So whatever I say, I say just as the Father has told me."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The time marker 'six days before the Passover' (pro hex hēmerōn tou pascha) places the anointing on the Saturday evening before the final week. The identification of Bethany through Lazarus — 'whom Jesus had raised from the dead' — keeps the raising miracle in view and reminds the reader that Lazarus is living proof of Jesus's power over death.
2. Martha's serving (diēkonei, from diakoneō, the root of 'deacon') is consistent with her characterization in Luke 10:40. Lazarus reclining at table (anakeimenōn, the standard posture for formal dining) is a quiet, powerful detail: the man who was dead four days ago now dines as a living guest.
3. The litra ('pound,' approximately 327 grams or 12 ounces) of nard — an aromatic oil imported from the Himalayas — was extraordinarily expensive (v. 5 values it at 300 denarii, nearly a year's wages). The adjective pistikēs ('pure, genuine, unadulterated') emphasizes quality. Mary anoints Jesus's feet (not his head, as in Mark 14:3), an act of extreme humility, and wipes them with her hair — a shocking intimate gesture in a culture where women kept their hair covered in public. The detail that the fragrance filled the house (hē oikia eplērōthē) is sensory and symbolic: the extravagance of devotion permeates everything.
4. John identifies the objector specifically as Judas (the Synoptics generalize), and immediately adds the editorial tag ho mellōn auton paradidonai ('the one about to betray him'). This characterization colors everything Judas says with duplicity. The verb paradidonai ('hand over, betray') is the standard term for Judas's act throughout the Gospels.
5. Three hundred denarii represented approximately a year's wages for a common laborer (cf. Matthew 20:2, where one denarius is a day's wage). Judas frames his objection as concern for the poor, giving it moral weight. The question implies Mary's act is wasteful.
6. John's narrator strips away Judas's pretense with blunt editorial commentary. The word kleptēs ('thief') is the same word used for the one who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate (10:1). The glōssokomon ('money bag, money box,' originally a case for flute reeds) was the common purse of the group. The verb ebastazen can mean 'carried' (neutral) or 'carried away, pilfered' (negative) — John intends the latter.

7. The Greek is syntactically difficult: hina... tērēsē auto ('so that she might keep it') has been interpreted as (1) 'let her keep the remaining perfume for my burial,' (2) 'she bought it in order to keep it for my burial day,' or (3) 'leave her alone — she has kept it for the purpose of my burial.' We follow the second sense: the anointing itself is the burial preparation, whether Mary fully understands this or not. Jesus interprets her act as prophetically anticipating his death.
8. Jesus alludes to Deuteronomy 15:11 ('the poor will never cease from the land'). The statement does not dismiss care for the poor (Deuteronomy 15:11 commands generosity) but asserts the unique, unrepeatable nature of this moment. Jesus's physical presence is temporary; the opportunity to honor him in this way will soon pass.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 15:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Lazarus has become a living attraction — people come to see the man who was dead and is now alive. He is walking evidence of Jesus's power. The dual motivation (dia ton Iēsoun... kai ton Lazaron) shows the raising has become inseparable from Jesus's public reputation.
10. The plot extends to Lazarus — they want to destroy the evidence. The logic is brutally pragmatic: a living Lazarus is an ongoing testimony to Jesus's power. The verb ebouleusanto ('resolved, plotted') is the same word used for the decision to kill Jesus (11:53). The priests' willingness to murder an innocent man to suppress a miracle reveals how far institutional self-preservation has corrupted their mission.
11. The verb hypēgon ('were going away, were departing') suggests people were leaving the authority of the religious leaders and transferring their allegiance to Jesus. The imperfect tense indicates an ongoing trend, not a single event. Lazarus's existence was causing a steady hemorrhage of loyalty.
12. The 'next day' (tē epaurion) places the triumphal entry on the day after the anointing — traditionally identified as Sunday (Palm Sunday). The crowd consists of Passover pilgrims (ho elthōn eis tēn heortēn), not merely Jerusalem residents. The news of Jesus's approach creates spontaneous excitement.
13. The baia tōn phoinikōn ('branches of palm trees') are mentioned only in John among the Gospel accounts. Palm branches were symbols of Jewish nationalism and military victory (cf. 1 Maccabees 13:51, 2 Maccabees 10:7). The crowd quotes Psalm 118:25-26, a Hallel psalm sung at Passover, adding 'the King of Israel' (ho basileus tou Israēl) — a political-messianic title not in the original psalm. 'Hosanna' (Hebrew hoshi'a na, 'save now, please save') had evolved from a prayer into an acclamation of praise.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 118:26 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. John's account is compressed compared to the Synoptics (no disciples sent to fetch the animal). The onarion ('young donkey, donkey colt') fulfills the prophecy quoted in the next verse. The verb heurōn ('having found') suggests Jesus actively sought the donkey — the act is deliberate, not accidental.
15. The quotation combines Zephaniah 3:16 ('Do not fear, O Zion') with Zechariah 9:9 ('your king comes to you... riding on a donkey'). John abbreviates the Zechariah text, omitting 'humble and mounted on a donkey' — the full context in Zechariah presents a king who comes in humility and peace, not on a war horse. The choice of a donkey is a deliberate counter-symbol to Roman military procession.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 9:9 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zephaniah 3:16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. A characteristic Johannine retrospective note (cf. 2:22, 7:39): understanding comes after the resurrection ('when Jesus was glorified,' hote edoxasthē). The verb emnēsthēsan ('they remembered') describes a Spirit-aided recollection that connects Scripture to the events they witnessed. John is honest about the disciples' initial incomprehension.
17. The imperfect emartyrei ('kept testifying, continued to bear witness') shows the Lazarus witnesses were actively spreading the story. The eyewitnesses function as evangelists — their testimony drives the growing crowds of verse 18.
18. John explicitly connects the triumphal entry to the Lazarus miracle: the crowds come because of the raising. The word sēmeion ('sign') rather than 'miracle' maintains John's theological vocabulary — the raising is not merely a wonder but a pointer to Jesus's identity.
19. The Pharisees' frustrated exaggeration — ho kosmos opisō autou apēlthen ('the world has gone after him') — is deeply ironic in John's theology, where kosmos ('world') is precisely what Jesus came to save (3:16). They speak more truth than they know. Their admission of failure ('you are gaining nothing,' ouk ōpheleite ouden) is also ironic: the verb ōpheleō is the same root Caiaphas used in 11:50 ('it is better,' sympherei) — their efforts are futile.
20. The Hellēnes ('Greeks') are Gentile God-fearers — non-Jews who were attracted to Jewish monotheism and came to worship at the temple festivals. They would have been limited to the Court of the Gentiles. Their arrival immediately following the Pharisees' statement 'the world has gone after him' is John's ironic confirmation: the world — including Gentiles — is indeed coming to Jesus.
21. The Greeks approach Philip, possibly because his Greek name made him seem approachable to non-Jews. Bethsaida, in the tetrarchy of Philip, had a significant Gentile population. The request thelomen ton Iēsoun idein ('we want to see Jesus') is simple and direct. The verb idein ('to see') in John often carries the deeper meaning of perceiving, understanding, and believing.

22. Philip and Andrew, the only two disciples with Greek names, serve as intermediaries between the Gentile seekers and Jesus. The chain of communication (Greeks Philip Andrew Jesus) may reflect early church practice of Gentile inclusion through apostolic mediation. John does not record whether the Greeks actually met Jesus — the request triggers Jesus's discourse on his death rather than a meeting.
23. Throughout the Gospel, 'the hour' (hē hōra) has been approaching but not yet arrived (2:4, 7:30, 8:20). Now, triggered by the Greeks' approach, Jesus declares elēlythen hē hōra ('the hour has come,' perfect tense — it has arrived and is now present). The coming of the Gentiles signals that the time for Jesus's death-as-glorification has arrived. In John, glorification and crucifixion are the same event seen from different perspectives.
24. The agricultural metaphor is precise: a seed that is preserved intact remains alone (autos monos menei); a seed that is buried and 'dies' (its outer shell breaking open) produces abundance (polyn karpon, 'much fruit'). Jesus applies this to himself: his death is not loss but the condition for universal fruitfulness. The 'much fruit' is the gathered community of believers — including the very Greeks who have just sought him.
25. The paradox parallels the Synoptic sayings (Matthew 10:39, Mark 8:35, Luke 9:24). The Greek psychē ('life, soul, self') refers to one's entire existence, not merely biological life. The verb misōn ('hating') is Semitic hyperbole for 'placing in second priority' — not literal hatred but radical subordination of self-preservation to the call of following Jesus.
26. The verb diakoneō ('serve') connects service to following — discipleship is both imitation and participation. The promise 'where I am, there my servant will be' (hopou eimi egō ekei kai ho diakonos ho emos estai) unites the servant's destiny with Jesus's destiny. Since Jesus is about to enter glory through death, this is both promise and warning: following Jesus means sharing his path.
27. This is John's equivalent of the Gethsemane agony (absent from John's passion narrative). The verb tetaraktai ('is troubled, is agitated') is the same word used at Lazarus's tomb (11:33). Jesus's inner conflict is real — he contemplates asking for rescue — but immediately reaffirms his purpose. The rhetorical question format (ti eipō, 'what should I say?') shows Jesus thinking through the temptation and rejecting it in real time.
28. Instead of asking for deliverance, Jesus asks for the Father's name to be glorified — a prayer that accepts the cross as the means of glorification. The heavenly voice (phōnē ek tou ouranou) is the third instance of the bat qol ('daughter of a voice,' divine speech) in the Gospels (cf. baptism, transfiguration). The response spans past ('I have glorified,' edoxasa) and future ('I will glorify again,' palin doxasō) — the Father's glory has been manifested throughout Jesus's ministry and will be manifested supremely through the cross and resurrection.
29. The crowd hears the sound but cannot discern the content — some hear thunder (natural phenomenon), others hear angelic speech (supernatural but impersonal). Neither group perceives that the Father himself has spoken. This graduated perception mirrors the chapter's theme of seeing without understanding.
30. Jesus does not need the audible confirmation — his communion with the Father is unbroken (cf. 11:42). The voice is pedagogical, intended to give the crowd evidence of divine involvement. The distinction between Jesus's needs and the crowd's needs underscores his unique relationship with the Father.
31. The double nyn ('now') marks the decisive moment. The krisis ('judgment') is not a future courtroom scene but a present event — the cross is the judgment of the world. The archōn tou kosmou toutou ('the ruler of this world') refers to Satan (cf. 14:30, 16:11). The paradox: at the very moment the world appears to condemn Jesus, it is the world — and its ruler — that stands judged.
32. The verb hypsōthō ('am lifted up') carries the characteristic Johannine double meaning: physical elevation on the cross and spiritual exaltation to glory (cf. 3:14, 8:28). The verb helkysō ('will draw, will drag') suggests powerful, irresistible attraction — not coercion but a gravitational pull emanating from the cross. The word pantas ('all') is universal: Jew and Gentile, echoing the Greeks who have just sought him and the 'other sheep' of 10:16.
33. The verb sēmainōn ('signifying, indicating') shares the root of sēmeion ('sign') — even Jesus's words about his death are signs pointing to deeper meaning. The phrase poiō thanatō ('what kind of death') specifies crucifixion — the death that involves being physically lifted up.
34. The crowd's objection reveals their messianic expectations: the Christ (ho Christos) should reign forever (menei eis ton aiōna, cf. Psalm 89:36, Isaiah 9:7, Daniel 7:14). If the Son of Man must be 'lifted up' (die), he cannot be the eternal Messiah. Their question 'Who is this Son of Man?' is genuinely confused — they cannot reconcile messianic permanence with the necessity of death.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 89:36. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 9:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 7:14. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. Jesus does not directly answer their question but issues an urgent warning. The 'light' (to phōs) is himself (cf. 8:12, 9:5), and it is about to be withdrawn through his death. The verb katalabē ('overtake, seize, overcome') is the same word used in 1:5 ('the darkness has not overcome it'). The urgency (eti mikron chronon, 'yet a little time') presses for immediate response before the opportunity passes.
36. The call to 'believe in the light' (pisteuete eis to phōs) and become 'children of light' (huiōi phōtos) connects to the Prologue (1:12, 'to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God'). The phrase 'children of light' also appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in Paul (1 Thessalonians 5:5). Jesus's departure and hiding (ekrybē, 'hid himself,' cf. 8:59) marks the end of his public ministry in John — he will next appear with his disciples in the upper room (ch. 13).

37. John begins his theological summary of the public ministry. The concessive clause (tosauta... sēmeia pepoiēkotos, 'though he had done so many signs') emphasizes the abundance of evidence and the inexcusability of unbelief. The perfect participle pepoiēkotos indicates signs performed with lasting results — they stand as permanent testimony.
38. John quotes Isaiah 53:1, the opening of the fourth Servant Song. The connection between Jesus and the Suffering Servant is made explicit: the Servant's rejection was prophesied. The 'arm of the Lord' (ho brachiōn kyriou) is a metaphor for God's saving power — the question implies that God's power was present in Jesus's signs but went unrecognized.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. The phrase ouk ēdynanto pisteuein ('they could not believe') is stark — John presents inability, not merely unwillingness. The second Isaiah quotation (v. 40) provides the explanation: God has judicially hardened those who persistently rejected the signs.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 6:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
40. John quotes Isaiah 6:10, modifying it to make God the subject of the blinding and hardening. The verbs tetyphlōken ('has blinded') and epōrōsen ('has hardened, petrified') are in the perfect tense, indicating completed action with ongoing results. The theological tension between human responsibility (they refused to believe, v. 37) and divine sovereignty (they could not believe, v. 39) is left unresolved — John presents both as true without harmonizing them.
40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 6:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The stunning claim: Isaiah's vision in the temple (Isaiah 6:1-4, where he saw 'the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted') was a vision of Jesus's glory. The pronoun autou ('his') refers to Jesus — John identifies the pre-incarnate Christ as the one Isaiah saw enthroned. This is one of the highest Christological statements in the Gospel.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 6:1-4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
42. This verse qualifies the preceding judgment: not all rejected Jesus — even among the archontōn ('rulers, leaders') many believed. But their faith was secret, suppressed by fear of aposynagōgoi ('expelled from the synagogue,' cf. 9:22). John presents closet discipleship as a real but compromised form of faith — belief without public confession.
43. The Greek doxa ('glory, honor, praise') is used for both human and divine approval, forcing the reader to choose between them. The verb ēgapēsan ('they loved') applies the agapaō word (usually reserved for the highest form of love) to misdirected devotion — they loved human approval with the intensity that should be reserved for God's approval. This diagnosis echoes 5:44.
44. The verb ekraxen ('cried out, shouted') marks an urgent, public declaration — Jesus's final appeal to the crowd. The statement that belief in Jesus is belief in the Father who sent him restates the fundamental Johannine principle of the unity between sender and sent (cf. 5:23-24, 13:20). We add 'only' for English clarity — the Greek negation ou... alla means 'not merely X but Y,' not 'not X at all.'
45. The verb theōreō ('see, perceive, behold') denotes more than physical sight — it is perceptive, contemplative seeing. To see Jesus with understanding is to see the Father (cf. 14:9). This statement grounds all knowledge of God in the encounter with Jesus.
46. The light imagery returns for Jesus's final public statement, connecting back to 1:4-5, 3:19, 8:12, and 9:5. The purpose clause hina... mē meinē ('so that he might not remain') uses menō — the darkness is not the natural human condition from which Jesus rescues (remaining is negative here); light is the transformative alternative.
47. Jesus reaffirms 3:17: his mission is salvific, not condemnatory. The verb phylaxē ('keep, guard, observe') describes active obedience to Jesus's words, not mere hearing. Those who hear but do not keep are not judged by Jesus directly — but verse 48 explains what does judge them.
48. The verb athetōn ('rejecting, setting aside, nullifying') is a strong term for willful dismissal. The judge is not a person but a word — ho logos hon elalēsa ('the word that I spoke'). Jesus's words carry inherent judicial authority that will manifest 'on the last day' (en tē eschatē hēmera). Present rejection stores up future judgment.
49. Jesus grounds the judicial authority of his words in the Father's commissioning: every word carries divine mandate. The Father has given a specific entolē ('commandment, instruction') governing both content (ti eipō, 'what to say') and delivery (ti lalēsō, 'what to speak'). Jesus's words are the Father's words — to reject them is to reject the Father.
50. The final verse of Jesus's public ministry ends with the identification of the Father's command as zōē aiōnios ('eternal life') — the Father's will is not arbitrary law but life-giving reality. Jesus's closing declaration of obedience (kathōs eirēken moi ho patēr, houtōs lalō, 'just as the Father has told me, so I speak') summarizes his entire public ministry: faithful transmission of the Father's word. The public voice falls silent; the private teaching of chapters 13-17 follows.

13

Summary: *John 13 marks the transition from Jesus's public ministry to the private instruction of his disciples during the final Passover. Jesus washes his disciples' feet — an act of radical self-humiliation that embodies the love he is about to command. He predicts his betrayal, identifies Judas by dipping bread and giving it to him, and Judas departs into the night. After Judas leaves, Jesus announces his glorification, gives the 'new commandment' to love one another, and predicts Peter's threefold denial.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *John's account of the Last Supper contains no institution of the Eucharist — instead, the foot-washing functions as the defining act. This substitution is deliberate: John's eucharistic theology is already expressed in the Bread of Life discourse (chapter 6). The foot-washing is unique to John and is presented as both a concrete act of service and a symbolic anticipation of the cross. The phrase 'having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end' (eis telos, v. 1) can mean both 'to the utmost' and 'to the end/completion' — the cross is the full expression of this love. Judas's departure 'into the night' (v. 30) is one of the most haunting lines in Scripture, where physical darkness embodies spiritual reality.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between the foot-washing and baptism has been debated since the patristic era. The exchange with Peter (vv. 6-10) has been read sacramentally, ethically, or christologically. We translate the Greek without imposing any single interpretive framework. The identity of the Beloved Disciple (v. 23) remains John's great mystery — we follow the text without speculating. The morsel given to Judas (v. 26) has eucharistic overtones that intensify the horror of his departure.*

Connections: *The foot-washing connects to the servant songs of Isaiah (especially 52:13-53:12) and to Jesus's own teaching about the greatest being the servant of all (Mark 10:43-45). The new commandment (v. 34) echoes Leviticus 19:18 ('love your neighbor') but transcends it — the standard is now 'as I have loved you.' Judas's departure connects to 6:70-71 and anticipates 18:1-5. Peter's predicted denial foreshadows 18:15-27. The 'hour' (v. 1) fulfills the anticipation built throughout the Gospel (2:4, 7:30, 8:20, 12:23, 27).*

¹Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ²During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray him, ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴Indeed, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments. And picked up a towel, and girded himself. ⁵Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" ⁷Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." ⁸Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹But also my hands and my head, Simon Peter says to him, Lord, not my feet only. ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean — but not all of you." ¹¹For he knew who was to betray him; that is why he said, "Not all of you are clean." ¹²When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and reclined at table again, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? ¹³You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴Have washed your feet, if I then, your Lord and Master. You also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. ¹⁶Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. ¹⁸I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled: 'The one who eats bread with me has lifted his heel against me.' ¹⁹I am telling you this now, before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe that I am. ²⁰Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me." ²¹After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in his spirit, and he testified, "Truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." ²²The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. ²³One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to Jesus. ²⁴So Simon Peter

motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. ²⁵So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, "Lord, who is it?" ²⁶Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the morsel, he took it and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷Then after he received the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly." ²⁸Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. ²⁹Some thought that, because Judas had the money box, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰So, after receiving the morsel, he went out immediately. And it was night. ³¹And god is glorified in him, therefore, while he was gone out, Jesus declared, Now is the Son of Man glorified. ³²If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and will glorify him at once. ³³Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will seek me, and just as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say it to you. ³⁴A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples: if you have love for one another." ³⁶Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward." ³⁷Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." ³⁸Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. This verse is the theological overture to the entire Farewell Discourse (chapters 13-17). The phrase *eis telos* ('to the end') carries a double meaning: 'to the uttermost' (the fullest extent of love) and 'to the completion' (love expressed in the cross). The word *hora* ('hour') is the culmination of every previous reference to 'his hour' throughout the Gospel. The phrase 'his own' (*tous idious*) echoes the Prologue (1:11) but here refers specifically to the disciples, not Israel as a whole.
2. The genitive absolute *deipnou ginomenou* means 'while supper was taking place,' not 'after supper was ended' as the KJV renders. The devil (*ho diabolos*) is the external agent, Judas's heart is the internal battleground. The perfect participle *beblakotos* ('having already put') indicates that the decision has been made before the foot-washing — Judas's betrayal is already in motion even as Jesus washes his feet.
3. The triple knowledge — all authority, divine origin, divine destination — makes the foot-washing astonishing. It is precisely the one who possesses absolute authority who takes the position of the lowest slave. The phrase 'from God ... back to God' (*apo theou ... pros ton theon*) frames the incarnation as a round trip: origin, mission, return.
4. The historic present tense (*egeiretai*, 'rises'; *tithesin*, 'lays aside') gives the narrative vivid immediacy. The verb *tithesin* ('lays aside') is the same word used for laying down one's life in 10:11, 15, 17-18 — a verbal foreshadowing of the cross. The actions described are precisely those of a household slave: removing outer clothing, wrapping a towel, and preparing to wash feet.
5. Foot-washing was a menial task assigned to the lowest-ranking servant in a household, or performed by a wife for her husband or a student for his teacher — never by a master for his servants. In Jewish custom, even a Hebrew slave could not be compelled to wash feet (Mekilta on Exodus 21:2). Jesus's act overturns every social expectation.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 21:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Peter's question carries shock and protest. The Greek word order emphasizes the incongruity: *sy mou* — 'You ... my?' The emphatic pronouns set the Lord against the servant, making Peter's objection not mere politeness but theological protest — this inversion of status is intolerable to him.
7. Jesus distinguishes between present incomprehension (*ouk oidas arti*) and future understanding (*gnosei de meta tauta*). The 'afterward' may refer to the cross, the resurrection, or the coming of the Spirit — all of which will illuminate the meaning of this act. The foot-washing is a parable-in-action that requires interpretation.
8. Peter's *ou me* ('never, by no means') is the strongest possible refusal. Jesus's response raises the stakes to the ultimate level: *meros* ('share, portion, inheritance') is the same word used for Israel's inheritance in the Promised Land (cf. Deuteronomy 12:12). Without receiving Jesus's cleansing service, Peter has no part in Jesus's kingdom. The washing symbolizes the cleansing that comes through Jesus's sacrificial death.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 12:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Peter's response swings from refusal to excess — characteristically impulsive. If washing means sharing in Jesus, he wants the maximum. The mention of hands, feet, and head may echo priestly washing rituals (Exodus 30:19-21), though the connection is not explicit.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 30:19-21. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Jesus distinguishes between the full bath (*ho leloumenos*, from *louō*, 'to bathe the whole body') and the foot-washing (*nipsasthai*, from *niptō*, 'to wash a part'). The one who has been bathed needs only the foot-washing — a metaphor whose precise referent is debated: the bath may represent initial conversion/baptism, and the foot-washing ongoing cleansing from sin. The ominous qualification 'but not all' (*all' ouchi pantes*) points to

Judas.

11. The narrator clarifies the cryptic remark. Jesus's knowledge of the betrayer is emphasized throughout this chapter (vv. 2, 11, 18, 21, 26-27). The uncleanness is moral, not physical — Judas has been washed but remains unclean because his heart belongs to the devil (v. 2).
12. The verb *elaben* ('took up, received') reverses the *tithesin* ('laid aside') of verse 4 — Jesus resumes his garments, having completed the act of service. The question *ginōskete* ('do you understand?') shifts from the act to its meaning. The foot-washing is not merely exemplary behavior; it carries theological significance that requires explanation.
13. Jesus affirms the titles 'Teacher' (*ho didaskalos*, corresponding to 'Rabbi') and 'Lord' (*ho kyrios*). The affirmation is crucial: the foot-washing does not erase the hierarchy but redefines how authority is exercised. The one who is genuinely Teacher and Lord chooses to serve — this is not a renunciation of authority but its highest expression.
14. The verb *opheilete* ('you ought, you owe it') expresses moral obligation, not merely suggestion. The reciprocal 'one another' (*allelōn*) makes the command communal — every disciple serves every other, with no one exempt. Note the reversal of title order: 'Lord and Teacher' (not 'Teacher and Lord' as in v. 13), placing the higher title first to maximize the force of the argument.
15. The word *hypodeigma* ('example, pattern, model') indicates that the foot-washing is paradigmatic — it establishes a pattern of self-giving service that defines the community's life. The 'just as' (*kathōs*) sets a standard: not merely serving in general, but serving in the specific manner of Jesus — sacrificially, without concern for status.
16. The double *amen* introduces a solemn principle. The word *apostolos* ('one who is sent, messenger') here carries its original meaning rather than the later technical sense of 'Apostle.' The logic is *a fortiori*: if the Master serves, the servants have no ground for refusing to serve.
17. The beatitude (*makarioi*, 'blessed, fortunate') hinges on the conditional *ean poiete* ('if you do'). Knowledge without practice yields no blessing. This echoes the Sermon on the Mount's emphasis on doing, not merely hearing (Matthew 7:24-27). John rarely uses *makarios*, making this instance particularly striking.
18. Jesus quotes Psalm 41:9, which describes the betrayal of a close friend — one who shares table fellowship. The verb *trogōn* ('the one eating, feeding on') is the same visceral word used in the Bread of Life discourse (6:54-58). The image of lifting the heel (*epēren ... tēn pternan*) may suggest a horse kicking its master, or simply turning one's back in contempt. The Scripture is not merely predicted but 'fulfilled' (*plērōthē*) — Judas's betrayal is woven into the divine plan.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 41:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The ego *eimi* ('I am') at the end of this verse is the absolute form — without a predicate. Jesus's foreknowledge of the betrayal is itself a sign of divine identity. When the betrayal occurs as predicted, the disciples will recognize that Jesus is the 'I AM' of Exodus 3:14 — the one who knows the end from the beginning.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 3:14. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. This saying establishes a chain of representation: the sent one represents Jesus, and Jesus represents the Father. The principle of agency (*shaliach*) in Jewish law held that a person's agent was legally equivalent to the person himself. This prepares for the sending of the disciples after the resurrection (20:21).
21. The verb *etarachthē* ('was troubled, disturbed, agitated') is the same word used at Lazarus's tomb (11:33) and in the 'soul troubled' passage (12:27). Jesus is not detached from the anguish of betrayal — he feels it deeply. The verb *emarturēsen* ('testified, bore witness') elevates the prediction to a formal declaration.
22. The imperfect *eblepon* ('were looking') captures the prolonged, bewildered exchange of glances. The participle *aporoumenoi* ('being at a loss, uncertain') indicates genuine confusion — none of the disciples suspects Judas, which speaks either to Judas's skill at concealment or to the disciples' trust.
23. This is the first explicit appearance of the Beloved Disciple (*hon egapa ho Iesous*, 'whom Jesus loved'). The phrase *en tō kolpō* ('at the chest/bosom') describes the position of honor at a Roman-style dining arrangement, where guests reclined on their left sides — the one reclining in front of Jesus would have his head near Jesus's chest. The phrase echoes 1:18, where the Son is 'in the bosom' (*eis ton kolpon*) of the Father.
24. Peter's resort to gestures (*neuei*, 'nods, signals') shows the intimacy of the reclining arrangement — direct conversation required physical proximity that Peter apparently lacked. He relies on the Beloved Disciple's privileged position to gain information.
25. The Beloved Disciple leans back (*anapesōn*) toward Jesus's chest to ask privately. The question is whispered — this is not a public exchange. The physical intimacy between the Beloved Disciple and Jesus mirrors the theological intimacy between the Son and the Father (1:18).
26. The *psōmion* ('morsel, small piece of bread') dipped and given was a gesture of honor at a meal — the host would offer choice morsels to favored guests. Jesus's act is thus a final gesture of intimacy and generosity toward his betrayer, making the betrayal all the more grievous. The identification is made privately to the Beloved Disciple, not publicly to the group.
27. The shift from 'the devil' (*diabolos*, v. 2) to 'Satan' (*Satanas*) marks an escalation — Satan himself takes possession. The timing 'after the morsel' is chilling: the gesture of fellowship becomes the occasion of total satanic invasion. Jesus's command 'do quickly' (*poiēson tachion*) is not permission

but sovereign dismissal — he controls even the timing of his own betrayal.

28. Despite the identification to the Beloved Disciple, the rest of the group remains ignorant. The secrecy is maintained — Jesus does not expose Judas publicly, preserving the betrayer's dignity even at this late moment.
29. The mention of the glossokomon ('money box') recalls 12:6, where John noted that Judas was a thief who helped himself from it. The fact that Judas was entrusted with the group's finances despite his character speaks to the mundane realities of the community. The two guesses — festival supplies or almsgiving — show that the disciples' explanation is utterly domestic; they have no idea that cosmic treachery is underway.
30. The three-word phrase *en de nyx* ('and it was night') is one of the most theologically charged sentences in the Gospel. On the literal level, it is a time marker. On the symbolic level, Judas steps out of the light of Jesus's presence into the darkness that represents the domain of evil (cf. 1:5, 3:19, 8:12, 9:4, 11:10, 12:35-36, 46). Night has come.
31. Judas's departure triggers the glorification language. The aorist *edoxasthē* ('was glorified') is proleptic — the cross is already accomplished in Jesus's mind. In John, 'glorification' (*doxa*) encompasses the cross, resurrection, and ascension as a single event. The mutual glorification ('the Son of Man glorified' and 'God glorified in him') expresses the inseparability of Father and Son.
32. The cascade of 'glorify' language (five uses of the *doxaz-* root in vv. 31-32) creates an intense concentration. The 'at once' (*euthys*) emphasizes the immediacy — there is no gap between the Son's obedient death and the Father's vindication.
33. The address *teknia* ('little children') is unique to Jesus in John and is found nowhere else in the Gospels (though John uses it in 1 John 2:1, 12, 28). It conveys tender affection and paternal care. Jesus applies to the disciples the same warning he gave to the Jewish leaders (7:33-34, 8:21), but with a crucial difference: for the disciples, the separation is temporary.
34. The 'new commandment' (*entolēn kainēn*) is not new in commanding love — Leviticus 19:18 already did that. It is new in its standard: 'just as I have loved you' (*kathōs ēgapēsa hymas*). The measure of love is no longer 'as yourself' but 'as Christ' — a standard that includes sacrificial death. The command defines the community's identity: they are not marked by knowledge, power, or ritual, but by mutual love.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 19:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. Love is the public badge of discipleship — not miracles, not doctrine, not moral rigor, but mutual love. The verb *gnōsontai* ('will know') makes love an epistemological category: the world gains knowledge of Christ through the community's love. This is the most visible and most demanding criterion of authentic Christianity.
36. Peter's question picks up on verse 33. Jesus's answer contains both a refusal and a promise: 'not now' (*nyn*) but 'afterward' (*hysteron*). The verb *akolouthēseis* ('you will follow') contains a double meaning — Peter will follow Jesus both in discipleship and in death (cf. 21:18-19, where Peter's crucifixion is predicted).
37. Peter's declaration uses the exact language of the Good Shepherd: 'lay down my life' (*tēn psychēn mou ... thēsō*, cf. 10:11, 15, 17-18). He claims to do for Jesus what Jesus does for the sheep. The irony is painful — within hours, Peter will not lay down his life but will deny three times that he even knows Jesus.
38. Jesus echoes Peter's words back as a question, exposing the gap between Peter's intention and his capacity. The prediction is precise: three denials before the rooster crows. The fulfillment in 18:15-27 is exact. The double amen underscores the certainty of this painful prophecy. Yet the chapter does not end in despair — the following discourse (chapters 14-17) will provide the resources for Peter's eventual restoration.

14

Summary: John 14 is part of Jesus's Farewell Discourse, delivered to his disciples on the night before his crucifixion. Jesus consoles the troubled disciples by promising that his Father's house has many rooms and that he goes to prepare a place for them. He declares himself 'the way, the truth, and the life' — the exclusive path to the Father. He promises that those who believe will do even greater works, that prayers in his name will be answered, and that the Father will send another Advocate (Parakletos), the Spirit of Truth, to be with them forever. The chapter closes with Jesus bequeathing his peace — distinct from the world's peace — and urging the disciples not to be troubled or afraid.

What Makes This Remarkable: This chapter contains some of the most theologically concentrated statements in the New Testament. The 'I am the way' declaration (14:6) is the sixth of John's seven great 'I am' sayings. The introduction of the Parakletos ('Advocate, Helper, Comforter') is unique to John's Gospel and becomes the foundation for later trinitarian theology. Jesus's language moves fluidly between departure and presence — he is leaving, yet he will come to them; they will not see him, yet they will see him. This paradox is resolved through the Spirit, who makes Jesus's continued presence real after his physical departure. The phrase 'my Father's house' (14:2) has been debated for centuries: does it refer to heaven as a destination, or to the temple as a community of God's

dwelling?

Translation Friction: *The Greek monai ('rooms, dwelling places') in verse 2 has traditionally been rendered 'mansions' (KJV), following the Latin Vulgate's mansiones. The Greek word simply means 'dwelling places' or 'rooms' and carries no connotation of luxury. The term Parakletos (14:16, 26) resists single-word translation: 'Comforter' (KJV), 'Advocate,' 'Helper,' and 'Counselor' each capture only part of its legal and relational semantic range. We render it 'Advocate' with notation. The relationship between 14:28 ('the Father is greater than I') and Johannine high Christology has generated extensive theological debate; we render the Greek as stated without harmonizing.*

Connections: *The Farewell Discourse (John 13-17) parallels Moses's farewell in Deuteronomy and David's in 1 Chronicles 28-29. The Parakletos promise anticipates the Pentecost narrative in Acts 2. 'I am the way' connects to Old Testament path/way imagery (Psalm 1, Isaiah 40:3). The 'many rooms' language echoes temple theology and Ezekiel's vision of the restored temple. Jesus's peace declaration (14:27) contrasts with the world's shalom and connects to Isaiah's 'Prince of Peace' (Isaiah 9:6).*

¹Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am, you also may be. ⁴And you know the way to where I am going. ⁵Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you have known me, you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him." ⁸Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." ⁹Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" ¹⁰Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves. ¹²Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do, and will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. ¹⁵If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever — ¹⁷Even the Spirit of truth. Whom the world cannot accept, because it sees him not, neither knows him — but you know him. Since he dwelleth with you, and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans. I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹Whoever has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him." ²²Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, what has happened that you are going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?" ²³Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me. ²⁵These things I have spoken to you while remaining with you. ²⁶But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not be afraid. ²⁸You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. ²⁹And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. ³⁰I will no longer speak much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me, ³¹However, that the world may know that I love the Father. And as the Father offered me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb tarassestho ('be troubled, be agitated') is the same word used of Jesus himself in 11:33 and 13:21. The imperative can be read as either indicative-then-imperative ('you believe in God; believe also in me') or as two imperatives ('believe in God, and believe in me'). The Greek is ambiguous; we follow the more traditional reading that takes the first clause as indicative.

2. The Greek *monai* ('dwelling places, rooms') has been famously rendered 'mansions' in the KJV, following the Latin Vulgate's *mansiones*. The Greek word carries no connotation of grandeur; it simply means 'abiding places' or 'rooms,' from the verb *meno* ('to remain, abide'), a key Johannine term. The punctuation of this verse is debated: some take 'I go to prepare a place for you' as a statement, others as part of the preceding question. We follow the reading that takes the final clause as part of the rhetorical question.
3. The verb *paralempomai* ('take to myself, receive') implies personal accompaniment, not merely granting access. The promise 'where I am, you also may be' is the heart of Johannine eschatology — the goal of salvation is being with Jesus. Whether this refers to his return at death, at the resurrection, or at the *parousia* has been debated since the earliest centuries.
4. Some manuscripts read 'you know where I am going, and you know the way,' which the KJV follows. The SBLGNT follows the shorter reading, which is more likely original and sets up Thomas's question in verse 5 more naturally.
5. Thomas's honest confusion mirrors the recurring Johannine pattern of misunderstanding that leads to deeper revelation. His question provokes one of the Gospel's most important declarations. Thomas appears elsewhere in John as a figure of honest doubt (11:16, 20:24-29).
6. This is the sixth of John's seven great *ego eimi* ('I am') declarations. The three nouns — *hodos* ('way'), *aletheia* ('truth'), *zoe* ('life') — may be read as three coordinate claims or as a single claim with two appositional qualifiers: 'I am the way, that is, the truth and the life.' The definite articles before each noun are emphatic: not a way but the way. The exclusivity clause ('no one comes to the Father except through me') is absolute in the Greek and we render it without softening.
7. The textual tradition is divided between a contrary-to-fact condition ('if you had known me, you would have known') and a fulfilled condition ('if you have known me, you will know'). The SBLGNT follows the latter reading, which is more encouraging than rebuking. The claim that they have 'seen' the Father through knowing Jesus anticipates Philip's question in verse 8.
8. Philip's request echoes Moses's plea in Exodus 33:18 ('Show me your glory'). The verb *deiknumi* ('show, reveal') implies a visible manifestation. Philip has not yet grasped that seeing Jesus is seeing the Father — the central christological claim of the Fourth Gospel.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 33:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The statement 'whoever has seen me has seen the Father' (*ho heorakos eme heoraken ton patera*) is one of the highest christological claims in the New Testament. The perfect tense *heoraken* implies a completed seeing with continuing results. Jesus is not merely a representative of God but the visible manifestation of the invisible Father (cf. Colossians 1:15).
10. The mutual indwelling formula — 'I in the Father and the Father in me' — is a distinctive Johannine expression of the unity between Father and Son. The verb *meno* ('dwell, abide, remain') is one of John's most important theological terms. Jesus grounds his claim not in abstract theology but in observable evidence: his words and works are the Father's own activity.
11. Jesus offers two grounds for faith: his word and his works. The appeal to works as evidence recalls 10:38 and anticipates the theme of signs throughout John. The concessive 'or else' (*ei de me*) acknowledges that direct trust in his word is the higher form of faith, while trust based on evidence is still valid.
12. The double *amen* ('truly, truly') is a distinctive Johannine formula that introduces solemn declarations. The promise of 'greater works' (*meizona touton*) is striking — greater than Jesus's own miracles. The 'because' clause (*hoti*) ties the greater works to Jesus's departure: his going to the Father enables the sending of the Spirit, which empowers the disciples' mission.
13. Asking 'in my name' (*en to onomati mou*) is not a formula appended to prayers but denotes asking in accord with Jesus's character, mission, and authority. The purpose clause — 'so that the Father may be glorified in the Son' — defines the scope and aim of such prayer.
14. This verse repeats and reinforces the promise of verse 13. Some manuscripts omit 'me' (*me*), making the request directed to the Father rather than to Jesus. The SBLGNT includes it, placing Jesus as both the mediator and the one who acts.
15. The future indicative *teresete* ('you will keep') is preferable to reading this as an imperative ('keep'). Jesus states a fact about love's nature rather than issuing a command: genuine love for him will naturally express itself in obedience. This connection between love and obedience is a central theme of the Farewell Discourse.
16. The word *Parakletos* appears only in John's writings in the New Testament (here, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7, and 1 John 2:1). The KJV's 'Comforter' follows the Latin *consolator* but captures only one dimension. The Greek term has legal overtones ('advocate, one called alongside to help') and relational dimensions ('counselor, helper'). We render it 'Advocate' while acknowledging the broader range. The word *allon* ('another') implies one of the same kind — the Spirit is another Advocate like Jesus himself.
17. The 'Spirit of truth' (*to pneuma tes aletheias*) identifies the Advocate with truth itself — a key Johannine theme (cf. 'I am the truth,' 14:6). The contrast between the world's inability and the disciples' capacity to receive the Spirit is absolute. The shift from 'remains with you' (present tense, *menei*) to 'will be in you' (future, *estai*) marks a transition from the Spirit's presence alongside them during Jesus's ministry to the Spirit's indwelling after Pentecost.
18. The Greek *orphanous* ('orphans') is more specific than the KJV's 'comfortless.' The metaphor casts the disciples as children who would be fatherless without Jesus's continued presence. The present tense *erchomai* ('I am coming') conveys certainty and immediacy rather than a distant future event.

19. The contrast between the world and the disciples regarding 'seeing' Jesus extends beyond physical sight to spiritual perception. The declaration 'because I live, you also will live' compresses the entire Christian hope into a single sentence — the disciples' life depends on and flows from Jesus's resurrection life.
20. The mutual indwelling now extends beyond the Father-Son relationship (v. 10) to include the disciples: Father in Son, Son in believers, believers in Son. This threefold chain of indwelling is the Johannine vision of salvation — not merely forgiveness but participatory union. 'That day' likely refers to the post-resurrection encounters and the coming of the Spirit.
21. The chain of love is striking: the believer's love for Jesus expressed through obedience leads to the Father's love for the believer and Jesus's self-revelation. The verb *emphaniso* ('reveal, manifest, make visible') suggests a personal, experiential disclosure — not merely intellectual knowledge but encounter.
22. The parenthetical 'not Iscariot' distinguishes this Judas from the betrayer, who has already departed (13:30). This is likely the same as 'Judas son of James' in Luke 6:16. His question reflects the common expectation that the Messiah would manifest himself publicly to the entire world, not privately to a small group.
23. The word *monen* ('home, dwelling place') is the singular of the *monai* ('rooms') in verse 2. There, Jesus goes to prepare rooms in the Father's house for the disciples; here, the Father and Son come to make a dwelling within the believer. The movement is reciprocal: believers dwell in God's house, and God dwells in believers. The first-person plural 'we will come' (*eleusometha*) unites Father and Son in a single action toward the believer.
24. The negative counterpart to verse 23: failure to keep Jesus's words reveals the absence of love. The second clause reinforces the unity of Father and Son — rejecting Jesus's words is rejecting the Father's words. The shift from 'words' (*logous*, plural) to 'word' (*logos*, singular) may suggest that Jesus's individual sayings constitute a unified message.
25. The perfect tense *lelaleka* ('I have spoken') emphasizes the lasting significance of what has been said. The phrase 'while remaining with you' (*par hymin menon*) uses the key Johannine verb *meno* and marks the transition from Jesus's physical presence to the Spirit's coming ministry.
26. Here the *Parakletos* is explicitly identified as the Holy Spirit (to *pneuma* to *hagion*). The Spirit's twofold ministry is teaching and reminding — not introducing new content unrelated to Jesus but illuminating and recalling what Jesus has already taught. The Father sends the Spirit 'in Jesus's name' (*en to onomati mou*), meaning in Jesus's authority and as his representative.
27. The Greek *eirene* corresponds to the Hebrew *shalom*, which encompasses wholeness, well-being, and right relationship — far more than the absence of conflict. Jesus distinguishes his peace from the world's peace: the world offers temporary, conditional peace; Jesus offers a peace grounded in his relationship with the Father. The repetition of 'do not let your hearts be troubled' forms an *inclusio* with verse 1, framing the entire chapter. The verb *deiliao* ('be afraid, be cowardly') appears only here in the New Testament.
28. The statement 'the Father is greater than I' (*ho pater meizon mou estin*) has been one of the most debated verses in christological history. In context, Jesus speaks of his incarnate, pre-glorification state — his return to the Father is a return to glory, which should cause the disciples to rejoice. The statement does not necessarily address the ontological relationship between Father and Son but rather the functional relationship during the incarnation.
29. Jesus's foreknowledge serves a pastoral purpose: when the events of the crucifixion unfold, the disciples will remember his predictions and find their faith strengthened rather than destroyed. This pattern of prediction-fulfillment runs throughout John (cf. 13:19, 16:4).
30. The 'ruler of this world' (*ho tou kosmou archon*) refers to Satan (cf. 12:31, 16:11). The declaration 'he has nothing in me' (*en emoi ouk echei ouden*) means Satan has no claim, no foothold, no authority over Jesus. Jesus goes to the cross not as Satan's victim but voluntarily, as the next verse makes clear.
31. Jesus frames his approaching death as an act of obedient love toward the Father — the supreme demonstration that the world can see. The command 'Rise, let us go from here' (*egeiresthe, agomen enteuthen*) suggests a physical departure, yet the discourse continues through chapters 15-17. Some scholars propose that chapters 15-17 were originally spoken en route to Gethsemane; others see a literary rather than geographical transition.

15

Summary: *John 15 continues Jesus's farewell discourse with the extended metaphor of the vine and the branches, calling his disciples to remain connected to him as the condition for bearing fruit. The chapter moves from the intimacy of abiding love to the gravity of the world's hatred, culminating in the promise of the Spirit of truth who will testify about Jesus.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The vine metaphor draws on deep Old Testament imagery where Israel is God's vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalm 80:8-16, Jeremiah 2:21). Jesus's claim 'I am the true vine' redirects this identity to himself — he is now the locus of covenant fruitfulness. The 'no greater love' declaration in verse 13 becomes one of the most recognized statements in all of Scripture. The Greek *meno* ('abide, remain') appears eleven times in verses 4-10, creating a literary drumbeat of relational*

permanence.

Translation Friction: *The relationship between 'abiding' (meno) and fruitfulness raises theological questions about whether the branches that are 'taken away' (v. 2) represent genuine believers who fall away or those who were never truly connected. We render the Greek without resolving this debate. The phrase 'I chose you' (v. 16) uses exelexamen, the same verb used for divine election in the Septuagint, but the context is specifically the Twelve's apostolic commission.*

Connections: *The vine imagery connects to Isaiah 5 (the vineyard song), Psalm 80 (Israel as vine), and Ezekiel 15 (the useless vine). The love command (vv. 12-17) intensifies the 'new commandment' of 13:34. The world's hatred (vv. 18-25) prepares for the persecution themes of chapter 16. The Paraclete promise (vv. 26-27) continues the Spirit passages of 14:16-17 and 14:26.*

¹"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he removes, and every branch that bears fruit, he prunes so that it may bear more fruit. ³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, and I will remain in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it remains in the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown out like a branch and withers. Such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this: that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. ⁹As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Remain in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be made complete. ¹²As I have loved you, this was my commandment, That you love one another. ¹³No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know what his master is doing. Instead, I have called you friends, because everything I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you would go and bear fruit — fruit that will last — so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. ¹⁷These things I command you, so that you may love one another. ¹⁸You know that it hated me before it hated you, and if the world hate you. ¹⁹If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own. But because you do not belong to the world — because I chose you out of the world — for this reason the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the word I spoke to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you as well. If they kept my word, they will keep yours also. ²¹But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know the one who sent me. ²²If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³The one who hates me hates my Father also. ²⁴If I had not done among them the works that no one else has done, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen and yet hated both me and my Father. ²⁵But this is to fulfill the word written in their Law: 'They hated me without cause.' ²⁶When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father — the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father — he will testify about me. ²⁷And you also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. This is the last of John's seven 'I am' (ego eimi) declarations with a predicate. The adjective aleethinee ('true, genuine') distinguishes Jesus from Israel as the failed vine of Old Testament imagery (Isaiah 5:1-7, Jeremiah 2:21). The Greek georgos ('farmer, vinedresser') is more specific than the KJV's 'husbandman' — it denotes one who tends and cultivates the land, here specifically a vineyard keeper.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 5:1-7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 2:21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. There is a wordplay in the Greek between airei ('takes away, lifts up') and kathairei ('prunes, cleanses'). Some scholars argue airei should be translated 'lifts up' (as a vinedresser lifts trailing branches off the ground), but the context of removal versus pruning favors 'removes.' The verb kathairei is the root of katharos ('clean'), connecting to Jesus's statement in verse 3.

3. The adjective *katharoi* ('clean') connects to *kathairei* ('prunes/cleanses') in verse 2 — the disciples have already undergone a cleansing through Jesus's word. This also echoes 13:10 where Jesus told the disciples 'you are clean' after washing their feet. The *logos* ('word') here encompasses the entirety of Jesus's teaching, not a single statement.
4. The verb *meno* ('remain, abide, stay') appears here for the first of eleven uses in verses 4-10, forming the thematic center of the passage. The imperative *meinate* ('remain!') is an aorist command implying decisive, sustained commitment. The mutual indwelling ('in me... I in you') echoes the Father-Son mutual indwelling of 14:10-11 and extends it to the disciples.
5. The absolute claim *choris emou ou dynasthe poein ouden* ('apart from me you can do nothing') is among the most radical statements of dependence in the New Testament. The word *choris* ('apart from, separated from') reinforces the vine metaphor — a severed branch is not merely weakened but wholly incapable of producing fruit.
6. The aorist tenses *eblethee* ('was thrown out') and *exeranthee* ('withered') are striking — they describe the result as already accomplished, giving the warning a sense of finality. The impersonal 'they gather' (*synagousin*) avoids naming who performs this judgment. The imagery of fire for useless branches reflects standard Palestinian viticultural practice and echoes John the Baptist's warning in Matthew 3:10.
7. The promise of answered prayer is conditioned on a double remaining: the disciple in Christ and Christ's words (*reemata*, 'spoken words, sayings') in the disciple. This is not a blank check but a promise that those whose desires are shaped by Jesus's teaching will find their prayers aligned with God's will and therefore answered.
8. The aorist *edoxasthee* ('was glorified') could be rendered as a timeless truth ('is glorified') in English since the aorist here expresses a general principle. The conjunction *kai* before *genesthe* could mean 'and' (additional result) or 'and so' (consequential). We render it as consequential — bearing fruit is the proof of discipleship, not a separate item alongside it.
9. The comparison *kathos* ('just as, in the same way as') establishes that Jesus's love for his disciples is patterned on the Father's love for the Son — the same quality, not merely a lesser imitation. The imperative *meinate* ('remain!') shifts from the vine metaphor to love itself as the sphere in which disciples are to dwell.
10. Obedience to commandments (*entolas*) is presented not as the means of earning love but as the means of remaining within the sphere of love already given. The perfect tense *teteereka* ('I have kept and continue to keep') emphasizes Jesus's completed and ongoing obedience to the Father. This parallels the covenantal pattern of the Old Testament where obedience is the response to grace, not its cause.
11. The Greek *pleerothee* ('may be fulfilled, made complete') suggests joy brought to its full capacity, not merely increased. Jesus speaks of 'my joy' (*hee chara hee emee*) — the joy that belongs to him and originates from his relationship with the Father — being transferred to the disciples. This is not human happiness but divine joy shared.
12. The singular *entolee* ('commandment') reduces all of Jesus's commands to a single imperative. The standard of love is not abstract but personal — *kathos eegapeesa hymas* ('as I have loved you'). This intensifies the 'new commandment' of 13:34 by anchoring it in the self-sacrificial love Jesus is about to demonstrate on the cross.
13. The Greek *psycheen* ('soul, life') here means one's entire existence, not merely biological life. The verb *thee* ('to lay down, to place') is the same word used in 10:11, 15, 17-18 for the Good Shepherd laying down his life for the sheep. Jesus defines the supreme expression of love and is about to enact it. The word *philon* ('friends') anticipates verse 15 where Jesus redefines the disciples' status from servants to friends.
14. The conditional *ean poieete* ('if you do') uses the present subjunctive, indicating ongoing action — 'if you continue doing.' Friendship with Jesus is not unconditional in the sense of requiring no response; it is maintained through obedience. The concept of being 'friends of God' has deep Old Testament roots — Abraham was called 'friend of God' (2 Chronicles 20:7, Isaiah 41:8).
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Chronicles 20:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 41:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The Greek *doulos* ('slave, servant') denotes one who serves without understanding the master's purposes. The shift from *douloi* to *philo* ('friends') is a dramatic elevation — friends are confidants who share in the master's knowledge. The perfect tense *egnorisa* ('I have made known') indicates a completed act of revelation. Jesus's entire ministry has been an act of sharing the Father's counsel with his disciples.
16. The verb *exelexameen* ('I chose') is the same word used in the Septuagint for God's election of Israel (Deuteronomy 7:6-7). The verb *etheka* ('I appointed, placed, set') is stronger than the KJV's 'ordained' — it carries the sense of deliberate commissioning. The purpose clause contains three elements: going (mission), bearing fruit (productivity), and fruit that remains (permanence). The prayer promise is tied to this fruitfulness.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 7:6-7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. This verse serves as a closing bracket to the love section (vv. 9-17), echoing the command of verse 12. The *hina* clause ('so that') could indicate purpose ('in order that you may love') or content ('namely, that you love'). The effect is the same: mutual love among disciples is both the goal and the substance of Jesus's commands.
18. The conditional *ei* with the indicative *misei* ('hates') presents the world's hatred as a real condition, not a hypothetical. The Greek *ginooskete* could be indicative ('you know') or imperative ('know!'). The imperative reading fits the context better — Jesus is commanding awareness, not merely acknowledging what they already understand. The perfect *memiseeken* ('has hated') indicates an ongoing state of enmity.

19. The phrase *ek tou kosmou* ('out of/from the world') appears five times in this single verse, creating an emphatic contrast between belonging and separation. The verb *exelexameen* ('I chose') again echoes divine election language. The word *idion* ('its own') indicates that the world recognizes and embraces what belongs to it — the disciples' rejection proves they no longer belong to the world system.
20. Jesus refers back to 13:16 where he made this statement in the context of foot-washing. The parallel structure ('if they persecuted me... if they kept my word') presents both outcomes as real possibilities within different groups of people. The verb *ediooksan* ('persecuted') and *eteereesan* ('kept/obeyed') represent the two responses the world gives to divine truth.
21. The phrase *dia to onoma mou* ('on account of my name') indicates that persecution comes not because of who the disciples are but because of whom they represent. The verb *oidasin* ('they know') uses the perfect form of *oida*, meaning intuitive or relational knowledge — the persecutors lack not merely information about God but genuine knowledge of him.
22. The Greek *hamartian ouk eichosan* ('they would not have sin') does not mean they were sinless before Jesus came, but that they would not bear the specific guilt of rejecting God's self-revelation. The word *prophasin* ('excuse, pretext') — rendered 'cloak' in the KJV — means a justification or defense. Jesus's coming has removed all plausible deniability.
23. This brief statement encapsulates Johannine Christology: Jesus and the Father are so united that one's response to Jesus is necessarily one's response to God. Hatred of Jesus cannot be separated from hatred of God himself.
24. Verse 22 addressed the witness of Jesus's words; this verse addresses the witness of his works (*erga*). The perfect tenses *heorakasin* ('they have seen') and *memiseekasin* ('they have hated') describe settled states — they have witnessed the evidence and have chosen enmity. The claim that these are works 'no one else has done' heightens the culpability of rejection.
25. The quotation is from Psalm 35:19 or 69:4 (both contain the phrase). Jesus refers to the Psalms as 'their Law' (to *nomos auton*), using 'Law' in its broad sense to encompass all of Scripture. The word *dorean* ('without cause, freely, for no reason') emphasizes the gratuitous nature of the hatred — there is no rational basis for it.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 35:19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The Greek *parakletos* ('advocate, helper, counselor') is rendered 'Advocate' to capture its forensic meaning — one who comes alongside to defend and represent. The KJV's 'Comforter' reflects an older English sense of 'one who strengthens' but has lost that meaning in modern usage. The phrase 'who proceeds from the Father' (*ho para tou patros ekporeuetai*) became theologically significant in the later filioque controversy between Eastern and Western Christianity. The masculine pronoun *ekeinos* ('he') is used for the Spirit, despite *pneuma* being neuter in Greek — this personalizes the Spirit.
27. The verb *martyreite* could be indicative ('you testify') or imperative ('testify!'). Either reading works — the disciples both will and should bear witness. The phrase *ap archees* ('from the beginning') refers to the beginning of Jesus's public ministry, establishing the disciples as eyewitnesses. Their testimony alongside the Spirit's testimony creates a dual witness as required by Jewish law (Deuteronomy 19:15).
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 19:15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

16

Summary: *John 16 continues and concludes the farewell discourse. Jesus warns the disciples of coming persecution, then explains that his departure is necessary for the Advocate (the Spirit of truth) to come. He describes the Spirit's work of convicting the world and guiding the disciples into all truth. Jesus then uses the metaphor of a woman in labor to describe the transition from sorrow to joy, promises direct access to the Father in prayer, and closes with the declaration 'I have overcome the world.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Paraclete teaching reaches its fullest development in this chapter: the Spirit will convict the world (v. 8), guide into all truth (v. 13), and glorify Jesus (v. 14). The labor metaphor (vv. 21-22) draws on prophetic imagery of Zion's birth pangs (Isaiah 26:17-18, 66:7-8). The climactic declaration 'I have overcome the world' (v. 33) uses the perfect tense *nenikeeka*, indicating a victory already accomplished even before the cross — an extraordinary claim at the moment of Jesus's greatest apparent vulnerability.*

Translation Friction: *The precise meaning of the Spirit 'convicting' (*elenchei*) the world regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment (vv. 8-11) has been debated extensively. The Greek *elegchein* can mean 'convict, expose, reprove, or prove wrong.' We render the verb and let the explanatory clauses speak for themselves. The phrase 'a little while' (*mikron*) in verses 16-19 is deliberately ambiguous — it could refer to the crucifixion/resurrection gap, the ascension, or the *parousia*.*

Connections: The persecution warnings connect to 15:18-25 and look forward to the early church's experience in Acts. The Paraclete promises continue from 14:16-17, 14:26, and 15:26-27. The 'little while' language echoes Isaiah 26:20. The labor metaphor draws on the prophetic tradition of eschatological birth pangs. The 'I have overcome' declaration connects to Revelation's conquering language (Revelation 2-3, 5:5).

¹"I have told you these things so that you will not fall away. ²They will expel you from the synagogues. In fact, an hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering service to God. ³They will do these things because they have not known the Father or me. ⁴But I have told you these things so that when their hour comes you will remember that I told you about them. I did not tell you these things from the beginning because I was with you. ⁵But now I am going to the one who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' ⁶But because I have told you these things, sorrow has filled your hearts. ⁷But I am telling you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away. For if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸When he comes, he will convict the world regarding sin, righteousness, and judgment: ⁹Of sin, because they trust in not on me; ¹⁰about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will no longer see me; ¹¹Of the time of reckoning, because the prince of this world is judged. ¹²I still have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵Everything the Father has is mine. That is why I said that he takes what is mine and will declare it to you. ¹⁶A little while, and you will no longer see me. Then again a little while, and you will see me." ¹⁷Some of his disciples said to one another, "What is this that he is telling us: 'A little while, and you will not see me, and then again a little while, and you will see me'? And, 'Because I am going to the Father'?" ¹⁸They kept saying, "What is this 'little while' he is talking about? We do not understand what he is saying." ¹⁹Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing with one another what I meant by saying, 'A little while, and you will not see me, and then again a little while, and you will see me'? ²⁰Truly, truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. ²¹When a woman is giving birth, she has pain because her hour has come. But when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, because of the joy that a person has been born into the world. ²²So you also have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. ²³In that day you will ask me nothing. Truly, truly, I tell you, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. ²⁴Until now you have asked for nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, so that your joy may be made complete. ²⁵I have said these things to you in figures of speech. An hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech, but will tell you plainly about the Father. ²⁶In that day you will ask in my name, and I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf, ²⁷And have believed that I came out from God, because the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me. ²⁸I came from the Father and have come into the world. Now I am leaving the world and going to the Father." ²⁹His disciples said, "Now you are speaking plainly and not using figures of speech! ³⁰Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you. By this we believe that you came from God." ³¹Jesus responded them, Do you now believe? ³²Look, an hour is coming — and has come — when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. ³³I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation. But take courage — I have overcome the world."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *skandalisthete* ('be caused to stumble, fall away') is stronger than the KJV's 'offended.' It means to be tripped up in faith, to abandon one's commitment. The word *skandalon* originally referred to the trigger of a trap. Jesus's warnings about persecution are meant to inoculate the disciples against the shock that could destroy their faith.
2. The term *aposynagougous* ('expelled from the synagogue') appears only in John (9:22, 12:42, 16:2) and refers to formal exclusion from the Jewish community — a devastating social and religious penalty. The phrase *latreian prosphelein* ('offering service/worship') is cultic language — those who kill the disciples will regard it as an act of religious worship. This reflects the historical reality of zealous persecution.

3. The aorist *egnosan* ('they knew') points to a fundamental failure of recognition rather than a temporary misunderstanding. The persecutors' ignorance of both the Father and Jesus is presented as the root cause of religious violence — they are acting in the name of a God they do not actually know.
4. The phrase *hee hora auton* ('their hour') parallels the language of Jesus's own 'hour' throughout John (2:4, 7:30, 12:23, 13:1). As Jesus has his hour appointed by the Father, so the persecutors have their hour permitted by God. The explanation for not telling them earlier — 'because I was with you' — implies that Jesus's physical presence provided the protection that the Spirit's presence will provide after his departure.
5. This statement seems to contradict 13:36 (Peter asked 'Where are you going?') and 14:5 (Thomas's question). The point is that now, overwhelmed by grief (v. 6), the disciples have stopped asking the right question. They are consumed by sorrow over the departure rather than curiosity about the destination — which would have led to hope.
6. The perfect tense *pepleeroken* ('has filled') describes sorrow as having completely occupied their hearts — leaving no room for the hope Jesus is trying to communicate. The Greek *lypee* ('grief, sorrow, pain') refers to deep emotional distress, not mere sadness.
7. The verb *sympherei* ('it is advantageous, it is better for') is a strong claim — Jesus asserts that his physical absence is better for the disciples than his physical presence. This is because the Spirit's presence will be universal and internal rather than localized and external. The paradox is startling: the incarnate presence of God will be replaced by something even more beneficial.
8. The verb *elenxei* ('will convict, prove wrong, expose') is forensic language — the Spirit acts as a prosecutor demonstrating guilt. The three charges — sin, righteousness, and judgment — are explained in the following verses. The KJV's 'reprove' is weaker than the Greek, which implies successful conviction, not merely accusation.
9. Sin is defined here not as moral failure in general but specifically as unbelief — the refusal to trust in Jesus. This is consistent with John's theology throughout the Gospel, where believing or not believing in Jesus is the fundamental human decision (3:18, 3:36, 5:24).
10. The logic is compressed: Jesus's departure to the Father vindicates his righteousness (*dikaioσύνης*). The world judged Jesus as a sinner and criminal, but his return to the Father proves the world's verdict wrong. The Spirit will expose this — the one the world condemned was in fact the Righteous One.
11. The perfect tense *kekritai* ('has been judged') indicates that the ruler of this world (*ho archon tou kosmou toutou*) has already been condemned — the verdict is settled even before the cross. This echoes 12:31 ('now the ruler of this world will be cast out'). The Spirit convicts the world that its ruler has lost, and therefore the world's system of values stands condemned.
12. The verb *bastazein* ('to bear, carry, endure') suggests that the additional truths would be too heavy for the disciples in their current state of grief and incomprehension. Jesus exercises pastoral restraint — revelation is given in accordance with the disciples' capacity to receive it.
13. The verb *hodegesei* ('will guide') pictures the Spirit as a guide leading travelers along a path. The phrase *en tee aletheia pasee* ('into all the truth') uses the article — 'the truth' — indicating the full truth about Jesus and his significance, not abstract omniscience. The Spirit's dependence on what he 'hears' parallels Jesus's own dependence on the Father (5:30, 8:28). The phrase *ta erchomena* ('the things coming') refers to future events and their meaning.
14. The Spirit's primary work is Christocentric — he glorifies Jesus, not himself. The verb *leempsetsai* ('will take, receive') indicates that the Spirit's teaching content comes from Jesus. This establishes a chain of revelation: Father to Son to Spirit to disciples.
15. The claim *panta hosa echei ho pateer ema estin* ('everything the Father has is mine') is one of the most sweeping claims of unity with the Father in the Gospel. Because the Father and Son share everything, the Spirit's drawing from Jesus is simultaneously drawing from the Father. The revelation chain is unbroken.
16. The SBLGNT does not include the final clause 'because I go to the Father' (*hoti hypago pros ton patera*), which is present in some manuscripts and in the KJV. We follow the critical text. The word *mikron* ('a little while') is deliberately enigmatic, creating the confusion the disciples express in the next verses. The two different verbs for 'see' — *theoreite* (present, continuous observation) and *opsesthe* (future, experiential seeing) — may indicate different qualities of perception.
17. The disciples quote Jesus back to one another, trying to understand his meaning. Their confusion is characteristic of the Johannine misunderstanding motif, where characters take Jesus's words at face value and miss the deeper meaning (cf. 3:4, 4:15, 6:52). The phrase 'because I am going to the Father' appears in the disciples' quotation even though the SBLGNT omits it from verse 16 — suggesting they are combining statements from different points in the discourse.
18. The imperfect *elegon* ('they kept saying') indicates repeated, ongoing discussion — the disciples are turning the phrase over among themselves without resolution. Their honest confession *ouk oidamen* ('we do not know/understand') echoes a persistent theme in John where the disciples struggle to comprehend Jesus's teaching until after the resurrection (cf. 2:22, 12:16).
19. The verb *egnou* ('knew') indicates Jesus's supernatural awareness of their thoughts, a recurring feature in John (1:48, 2:24-25, 6:64). The verb *eethelohn* ('they wanted') suggests they desired to ask but were too confused or intimidated to voice the question directly.
20. The double *ameen* ('truly, truly') signals a solemn and authoritative declaration. The three pairs — weeping/mourning, world rejoicing/disciples sorrowing, sorrow/joy — create a carefully structured prophecy of the crucifixion-to-resurrection reversal. The phrase *eis charan geneesetai* ('will become into joy') means not that sorrow will be replaced by joy but that the very sorrow itself will be transformed into joy — the same event (the cross) that causes grief will become the source of joy.

- 21.** The phrase 'her hour has come' (eelthen hee hora autees) deliberately echoes the language of Jesus's own 'hour' (12:23, 13:1, 17:1), connecting the woman's suffering to Jesus's passion. The Greek anthropos ('a person, a human being') rather than a more specific term gives the birth a universal quality. The prophetic tradition uses labor imagery for the suffering that precedes divine deliverance (Isaiah 26:17-18, 66:7-8, Micah 4:9-10).
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 26:17-18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Micah 4:9-10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 22.** The application of the labor metaphor is direct: the disciples' current sorrow corresponds to labor pains, and Jesus's return (the resurrection) corresponds to the birth that transforms pain into joy. The promise 'no one will take your joy from you' (teen charan hymoon oudeis airei aph hymoon) uses the present tense airei, suggesting that this joy, once given, is permanently beyond anyone's power to remove.
- 23.** The Greek uses two different verbs for 'ask': erooteesete ('ask a question, inquire') and aiteesete ('ask for, request, petition'). In that day — the post-resurrection era — the disciples will no longer need to question Jesus for understanding (the Spirit will guide them), and their prayers to the Father in Jesus's name will be answered. 'In my name' (en to onomati mou) means by his authority and in alignment with his character, not as a magic formula.
- 24.** The adverb heos arti ('until now') marks a turning point — a new era of prayer in Jesus's name is about to begin. The connection between prayer, answered requests, and complete joy (pepleeromenee, 'having been made full') echoes 15:11. The imperative aiteite ('ask!') is a present tense command implying ongoing, habitual practice.
- 25.** The Greek paroimiais ('proverbs, figures of speech, riddles') is broader than 'proverbs' — it includes any indirect or veiled speech. The contrast with parresia ('plainly, openly, with boldness') promises a shift from enigmatic teaching to direct revelation. This shift is associated with the coming of the Spirit (v. 13) who will make plain what Jesus taught in veiled terms.
- 26.** This verse has been misread as Jesus saying he will not intercede (contradicting Romans 8:34 and 1 John 2:1). The point is rather that direct intercession will not be the primary dynamic — the disciples will have their own direct access to the Father. Jesus is not denying his intercessory role but emphasizing the Father's direct love for the disciples.
- 27.** The verb philei ('loves') here is the word for personal, affectionate love rather than agapao. The Father's love for the disciples is warm and intimate. The perfect tenses pephileekate ('you have loved') and pepisteukate ('you have believed') indicate ongoing states that began in the past. The phrase para tou theou ('from God, from the presence of God') asserts Jesus's divine origin.
- 28.** This verse summarizes the entire Johannine Christology in four movements: origin (from the Father), incarnation (into the world), departure (leaving the world), and return (to the Father). The chiasmic structure (Father world world Father) frames Jesus's earthly ministry as a round trip from and back to the Father's presence.
- 29.** The disciples' enthusiasm is somewhat premature — they think they have achieved the understanding Jesus promised for 'that day' (v. 25), but Jesus will immediately challenge this confidence (v. 31). The irony is characteristic of John: the disciples claim clarity at the very moment they are about to demonstrate their confusion by abandoning Jesus.
- 30.** The disciples' confession oidamen ('we know') and pisteuomen ('we believe') represents genuine but still immature faith. Jesus's knowledge of their unspoken questions (v. 19) has convinced them of his omniscience and divine origin. Yet the faith expressed here will be severely tested within hours.
- 31.** The question arti pisteuete could be read as a statement ('Now you believe') or a question ('Do you now believe?'). The interrogative reading fits better with the following prediction of their scattering. The adverb arti ('now, at this moment') carries a note of irony — their belief is real but about to be tested by catastrophic events.
- 32.** The verb skorpisthete ('be scattered') echoes Zechariah 13:7 ('Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered'), which Jesus quotes in the Synoptic accounts (Matthew 26:31, Mark 14:27). The phrase eis ta idia ('to his own things/home') is the same expression used in the Prologue (1:11, 'his own'). The juxtaposition of abandonment by the disciples and the Father's continued presence demonstrates that Jesus faces the cross in conscious reliance on the Father.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zechariah 13:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 33.** The contrast is spatial: 'in me' (en emoi) peace; 'in the world' (en to kosmo) tribulation. The imperative tharseite ('take courage, be of good cheer') is a command, not a suggestion. The perfect tense nenikeeka ('I have overcome') is extraordinary — Jesus speaks of his victory as already accomplished before the cross. This is not future hope but present reality declared in advance. The verb nikao ('to conquer, overcome') becomes a key term in Revelation for the victory of Christ and his followers.

17

Summary: *John 17 records Jesus's extended prayer to the Father, traditionally called the 'High Priestly Prayer.' It is the longest recorded prayer of Jesus in the Gospels. The prayer moves in three concentric circles: Jesus prays for himself and the completion of his mission (vv. 1-5), for his immediate disciples (vv. 6-19), and for all future believers (vv. 20-26). The dominant themes are glory, unity, protection, sanctification, and the revelation of the Father's name.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This prayer is unique in the Gospel tradition — nowhere else do we hear Jesus pray at such length and with such theological depth. The opening petition 'Glorify your Son' (v. 1) reverses normal prayer convention where the petitioner glorifies God; here the Son asks the Father to glorify him, revealing the mutual glorification within the Godhead. The prayer's Christology is extraordinarily high: Jesus speaks of glory shared with the Father 'before the world existed' (v. 5), implying pre-existence. The unity prayer (vv. 21-23) grounds human unity in the divine unity of Father and Son — 'that they may be one, just as we are one.'*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'eternal life is that they know you' (v. 3) redefines eternal life as relational knowledge rather than temporal duration. We render this without theological commentary. The 'son of destruction' (v. 12) is widely understood as referring to Judas, but the phrase itself (ho huios tees apoleias) is a Semitic idiom meaning 'one destined for destruction.' The prayer's placement before the arrest creates a literary tension — Jesus prays with serene authority while betrayal approaches.*

Connections: *The prayer connects to the Prologue (1:1-18) through its themes of glory, pre-existence, and the Father-Son relationship. The sanctification language (vv. 17-19) echoes the consecration of priests in Exodus 28-29. The unity theme anticipates the early church's struggle and hope (Acts 4:32, Ephesians 4:1-6). The 'I am not of the world' language (vv. 14-16) develops the farewell discourse's world/disciple contrast (15:18-19, 16:33).*

¹After Jesus had spoken these things, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, so that the Son may glorify you, ²As you have given him authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as numerous as you have given him. ³And this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I have glorified you on the earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory I had with you before the world existed. ⁶I have made your name known to the people you gave me out of the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you, ⁸For I have given to them the words which you gavest me. Then they have received them, and have known surely that I arrived out from you, then they have believed that you didst send me. ⁹I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All that is mine is yours, and all that is yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, so that they may be one, just as we are one. ¹²While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. ¹⁴I have given them your word. Even as i am not in the world, and the world has hated them, because they are not in the world. ¹⁵I am not asking that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶Even as i am not in the world, and they are not in the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸Just as you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sake I consecrate myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth. ²⁰I am not asking on behalf of these alone, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹That they all may be one. As you, Father, art in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us — that the world may trust that you have dispatched me. ²²The glory that you have given me I have given to them, so that they may be one just as we are one — ²³I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to complete unity, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them just as you

loved me. ²⁴Father, I desire that those you have given me may also be with me where I am, so that they may see my glory that you have given me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these have known that you sent me. ²⁶I have made your name known to them and will continue to make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The gesture of lifting eyes to heaven (*eparas tous ophthalmous eis ton ouranon*) is a traditional Jewish prayer posture (cf. Psalm 123:1). The perfect tense *eleelyhen* ('has come') marks the arrival of the 'hour' that has been anticipated throughout the Gospel (2:4, 7:30, 8:20, 12:23, 13:1). The mutual glorification — Son glorifies Father, Father glorifies Son — reveals a reciprocal dynamic within the Godhead.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 123:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The phrase *exousian pasees sarkos* ('authority over all flesh') is a Semitic expression meaning authority over all humanity. The neuter singular *pan ho* ('everything that') is collective, referring to believers as a unified whole, while the plural *autois* ('to them') sees them as individuals. The Father gives people to the Son; the Son gives them eternal life — a chain of divine giving.
3. This verse redefines eternal life (*aiōnios zōē*) not as endless duration but as relational knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. The verb *ginōskōsin* (present subjunctive of *ginōskō*) indicates ongoing, deepening knowledge — not a one-time acquisition but a continual knowing. The phrase *ton monon aleethinon theon* ('the only true God') echoes the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4) and the first commandment. The juxtaposition of knowing the Father and knowing Jesus Christ places Jesus alongside God as the co-object of saving knowledge.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 6:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The aorist *edoxasa* ('I glorified') and the participle *teleiōsas* ('having completed') speak of Jesus's earthly mission as already finished — a proleptic perspective that views the cross as accomplished even before it occurs. The word *teleiōsas* shares its root with *tetelestai* ('It is finished,' 19:30), creating a verbal link between this prayer and the cross.
5. This is one of the strongest pre-existence claims in the New Testament. Jesus asks to be restored to the glory (*tee doxee*) he shared with the Father *pro tou ton kosmon einai* ('before the world existed'). The phrase *para seautō* ('in your own presence, at your own side') echoes the Prologue's *pros ton theon* ('with God,' 1:1). The prayer assumes that the incarnation involved a voluntary setting aside of divine glory, which is now to be resumed.
6. The verb *ephanerōsa* ('I revealed, manifested, made known') indicates that Jesus's entire ministry was an act of revealing the Father's name — his character, identity, and purposes. 'Name' (*onoma*) in Semitic thought encompasses the person's entire nature. The possessive chain — 'they were yours, you gave them to me' — emphasizes that the disciples belong first to the Father and are entrusted to the Son.
7. The perfect *egnōkan* ('they have come to know') indicates a settled conviction. The disciples have reached the understanding that Jesus's teaching, authority, and mission all originate with the Father — not from himself independently. This echoes the disciples' confession in 16:30.
8. The chain of transmission is explicit: Father gives words to Son, Son gives words to disciples, disciples receive them. The three verbs — *elabon* ('received'), *egnōsan* ('understood'), *episteusan* ('believed') — describe the progression of faith: reception, comprehension, and trust. The adverb *alēthōs* ('truly, genuinely') affirms the reality of their knowledge despite its limitations.
9. The limitation 'not for the world' (*ou peri tou kosmou*) does not mean Jesus has no concern for the world (cf. 3:16) but that this particular prayer focuses on the disciples who form the nucleus of the future community. The reason given — 'because they are yours' (*hoti soi eisin*) — grounds the petition in the Father's ownership of the disciples.
10. The mutual possession — 'mine is yours and yours is mine' — is a striking declaration of complete unity between Father and Son. The perfect passive *dedoxasmai* ('I have been glorified') in the disciples suggests that the disciples' faith and witness already constitute a glorification of Jesus, even before the cross.
11. The address *pater hagio* ('Holy Father') is unique in the New Testament — this combination appears nowhere else. The petition *teerēson autous en tō onomati sou* ('keep them in your name') asks the Father to protect the disciples within the sphere of his revealed character. The unity requested — 'that they may be one, just as we are' — sets the standard for human community at the level of the divine unity between Father and Son.
12. Two verbs describe Jesus's protective work: *eteeroun* ('I kept, watched over') and *ephylaxa* ('I guarded, protected'). The phrase *ho huiois tees apōleias* ('the son of destruction') is a Semitic idiom meaning 'one destined for or characterized by destruction.' The same phrase appears in 2 Thessalonians 2:3. The reference to Scripture being fulfilled likely points to Psalm 41:9 (quoted in 13:18) or Psalm 109:8.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 41:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 109:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

13. Jesus prays aloud ('in the world') so the disciples can hear. The phrase *teen charan teen emeen pepleerōmeneen* ('my joy made complete') echoes 15:11 and 16:24. The joy Jesus offers is his own joy — the joy of his relationship with the Father — shared with the disciples and brought to fullness.
14. The logic is: receiving God's word alienates the disciples from the world-system, making them targets of hatred. The parallel 'just as I am not of the world' (*kathōs egō ouk eimi ek tou kosmou*) places the disciples' experience in direct parallel with Jesus's own rejection. The world's hatred is evidence of their belonging to God, not a sign of failure.
15. The phrase *ek tou poneerou* could mean 'from evil' (abstract) or 'from the evil one' (personal). Given John's references to the 'ruler of this world' (12:31, 14:30, 16:11), the personal reading is more likely. Jesus does not pray for escape from the world but for protection while remaining in it — the mission requires presence, not withdrawal.
16. This verse nearly repeats verse 14b, creating a frame around the petition in verse 15. The repetition emphasizes the foundational claim: the disciples' identity is defined by their origin ('not of the world') rather than their location (they remain in the world). This grounds both the world's hostility and the need for divine protection.
17. The verb *hagiason* ('sanctify, set apart, consecrate') is cultic language — the same verb used in the Septuagint for consecrating priests and offerings (Exodus 28:41, Leviticus 8:10-12). The disciples are being set apart for a sacred mission. The instrument of sanctification is truth (*en tee aletheia*), which is then identified with God's word (*ho logos ho sos*). Truth in John is not abstract proposition but the reality of God revealed through Jesus.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 28:41. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 8:10-12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verb *aposteila* ('I sent') is the root of *apostolos* ('apostle, sent one'). Jesus's mission becomes the model and mandate for the disciples' mission. The parallel is comprehensive: as the Father sent the Son into a hostile world, so the Son sends his followers into that same world. The mission is outward, not inward.
19. Jesus 'consecrates himself' (*hagiazō emauton*) — language that evokes a sacrifice being set apart for offering. The phrase *hyper autōn* ('for their sake, on their behalf') gives his self-consecration a substitutionary quality. Jesus sets himself apart for the cross so that the disciples might be set apart for mission. The shift from 'sanctify' (for the disciples in v. 17) to 'consecrate' (for Jesus here) reflects the sacrificial nuance of Jesus's self-dedication.
20. The prayer expands from the present disciples to all future believers — everyone who will come to faith through the apostolic witness. The present participle *pisteuontōn* ('those believing') envisions an ongoing community that extends through time. This verse makes every subsequent Christian a subject of Jesus's prayer.
21. The unity prayer has three layers: unity among believers ('that they may all be one'), participation in the divine life ('that they also may be in us'), and missional witness ('that the world may believe'). The standard for human unity is nothing less than the mutual indwelling of Father and Son. This is not organizational uniformity but relational oneness patterned on the Godhead.
22. The claim that Jesus has given his glory (*teen doxan*) to the disciples is remarkable. This glory is not the pre-incarnate glory of verse 5 but the glory revealed through the incarnation and the cross — the glory of self-giving love. Shared glory becomes the basis for unity: those who share in the same glory naturally share in one another.
23. The perfect participle *teteleiōmenoi* ('having been brought to completion, perfected') describes unity as a realized state, not merely an aspiration. The chain of indwelling — Jesus in the disciples, the Father in Jesus — creates a unity that has missional impact: the world will 'know' (*ginōskee*) God's sending of Jesus and God's love for the disciples. The astounding claim is that God loves the disciples *kathos eme eegapeesas* ('just as you loved me') — with the same quality of love he has for the Son.
24. The verb *thelō* ('I desire, I will') is unusually direct for prayer — Jesus does not merely ask but expresses his will to the Father, reflecting the intimacy and unity of their relationship. The phrase *pro katabolees kosmou* ('before the foundation of the world') reaches further back than verse 5 ('before the world existed'), grounding the Father's love for the Son in eternity. The ultimate destiny of believers is to see (*theōrōsin*) Jesus's full, unveiled glory — a beatific vision.
25. The address *pater dikaie* ('Righteous Father') shifts from 'Holy Father' (v. 11) — holiness related to the petition for protection, righteousness to the appeal for justice and vindication. Three levels of knowing are contrasted: the world does not know the Father at all, Jesus knows the Father directly, and the disciples know that the Father sent Jesus. The disciples' knowledge is mediated through Jesus.
26. The prayer ends with a final statement of purpose that encompasses the entire Gospel: the revelation of the Father's name (his character) results in the Father's own love dwelling in the disciples, with Jesus himself in them. The future *gnōrisō* ('I will make known') indicates that Jesus's revelatory work continues beyond the cross through the Spirit. The prayer's final word is 'in them' (*en autois*), placing the focus not on Jesus's return to glory but on his ongoing presence within the believing community.

18

Summary: *John 18 narrates the arrest of Jesus in the garden, the Jewish interrogation before Annas and Caiaphas, Peter's three denials, and the Roman trial before Pilate. John's account differs from the Synoptics in key details: Jesus initiates the encounter with the arresting party, there is no Gethsemane agony, and the Jewish proceedings focus on Annas rather than a formal Sanhedrin trial. Pilate's interrogation centers on the question of kingship and culminates in the crowd's choice of Barabbas.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *John's arrest scene is theologically charged: when Jesus says ego eimi ('I am he,' v. 5), the soldiers fall to the ground — a detail unique to John that echoes the divine name theophany. Peter's sword-strike is attributed to him by name (only John identifies him). The interweaving of Peter's denials with Jesus's interrogation creates a literary contrast between Jesus's bold confession and Peter's craven denial. Pilate's question 'What is truth?' (v. 38) is one of the most famous philosophical moments in literature, left unanswered while Truth incarnate stands before him.*

Translation Friction: *John's chronology of the Jewish proceedings differs from the Synoptics — Jesus is taken first to Annas (the former high priest and father-in-law of Caiaphas), then to Caiaphas, with no detailed account of a Sanhedrin trial. We render John's account as given without harmonizing. The phrase 'not into the Praetorium, so that they would not be defiled' (v. 28) reflects the irony John intends — the Jewish leaders avoid ritual defilement while engineering the death of the innocent.*

Connections: *The garden arrest connects to the Gethsemane accounts in the Synoptics (Matthew 26:36-56, Mark 14:32-52, Luke 22:39-53). The ego eimi declaration echoes Exodus 3:14 and John's earlier 'I am' statements (8:24, 8:28, 8:58). Peter's denials fulfill Jesus's prediction in 13:38. Pilate's encounter with Jesus develops the kingship theme running through John (1:49, 6:15, 12:13-15). The Barabbas choice echoes the scapegoat ritual of Leviticus 16.*

¹After Jesus had said these things, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley to a place where there was a garden, and he and his disciples entered it. ²Now Judas, who was betraying him, also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. ³So Judas, having procured a detachment of soldiers and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. ⁴Then Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, came forward and said to them, "Who are you looking for?" ⁵They answered him, "Jesus the Nazarene." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who was betraying him, was also standing with them. ⁶When he said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷So he asked them again, "Who are you looking for?" They said, "Jesus the Nazarene." ⁸Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." ⁹This was to fulfill the word he had spoken: "I have not lost a single one of those you gave me." ¹⁰Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. ¹¹Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back in its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?" ¹²So the detachment of soldiers, their commander, and the officers of the Jewish leaders arrested Jesus and bound him. ¹³They led him first to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. ¹⁴It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jewish leaders that it was better for one man to die for the people. ¹⁵Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. That disciple was known to the high priest and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, ¹⁶However, Peter was standing at the door without. Then traveled out that other disciple, which was recognized to the elevated priest, and spoke to her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. ¹⁷The servant girl at the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." ¹⁸Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it warming themselves. Peter was also standing with them, warming himself. ¹⁹The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. ²⁰Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jewish people gather, and I have said nothing in secret. ²¹Why do you question me? Ask those who heard what I said to them. They know what I said." ²²When he had said this, one of the officers standing nearby struck Jesus, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" ²³Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify about what was wrong. But if

I spoke rightly, why do you strike me?" ²⁴Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest. ²⁵Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." ²⁶One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "Didn't I see you in the garden with him?" ²⁷Peter denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed. ²⁸Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They did not enter the headquarters themselves, so that they would not be defiled but could eat the Passover. ²⁹So Pilate went outside to them and said, "What charge do you bring against this man?" ³⁰They answered him, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." ³¹Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your own law." The Jewish leaders said to him, "It is not permitted for us to execute anyone." ³²This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was going to die. ³³So Pilate entered the headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴Jesus answered, "Are you asking this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" ³⁵Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jewish leaders. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." ³⁷So Pilate said to him, "Then you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world: to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." ³⁸Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" After he said this, he went back out to the Jewish leaders and told them, "I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹But you have a custom that I release one prisoner for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release the King of the Jews for you?" ⁴⁰They shouted back, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *cheimmarrou tou Kedrōn* ('the winter-torrent of Kidron') refers to the Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives. John does not name Gethsemane (a Synoptic detail) but simply refers to a 'garden' (*kēpos*). The Kidron crossing echoes David's flight from Absalom (2 Samuel 15:23), creating a typological parallel between the rejected kings.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Samuel 15:23. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The present participle *paradidous* ('the one handing over, betraying') describes Judas's action as ongoing — he is in the process of betrayal. The detail that Jesus 'often met there' (*pollakis synēchthē*) explains how Judas knew where to find him and emphasizes that Jesus made no attempt to avoid arrest by changing his routine.
3. The Greek *speiran* ('cohort, detachment') technically denotes a Roman military unit of 200-600 soldiers, though it may be used loosely here for a smaller detachment. The involvement of Roman soldiers alongside Jewish temple officers (*hypēretas*) indicates cooperation between Roman and Jewish authorities. The detail of lanterns and torches at Passover (during a full moon) carries Johannine irony — they bring artificial light to arrest the Light of the World.
4. John emphasizes Jesus's omniscience (*eidōs panta ta erchomena*) — he is not caught off guard but moves toward his captors deliberately. The verb *exēlthen* ('went out, came forward') shows Jesus taking the initiative rather than being discovered or seized. The question *tina zēteite* ('Who are you looking for?') is not a request for information but a sovereign challenge.
5. The response *egō eimi* ('I am he' or simply 'I am') functions on two levels: as a simple identification ('I'm the one you're looking for') and as an echo of the divine self-revelation in Exodus 3:14 and Isaiah 43:10. John's Gospel has used *egō eimi* repeatedly with divine overtones (8:24, 8:28, 8:58). The effect in verse 6 confirms the deeper reading. The detail of Judas standing with the arresting party (*met' autōn*) emphasizes his position — he has crossed from Jesus's side to the opposition.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 3:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 43:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The physical recoil (*apēlthon eis ta opisō*, 'went backward') and falling (*epesan chamai*, 'fell to the ground') are unique to John and carry theophanic overtones. In the Old Testament, people fall before divine presence (Ezekiel 1:28, Daniel 10:9). This detail transforms the arrest scene: Jesus is not a victim being seized but a sovereign figure before whom armed men collapse. He permits his own arrest.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 1:28. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 10:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Jesus repeats the question (palin epērōtēsen) after the soldiers recover, demonstrating complete control of the situation. The repetition also serves to set up the protective command in verse 8.
8. Jesus negotiates the disciples' freedom even at the moment of his own arrest. The imperative aphete toutous hypagein ('let these go') is a command, not a request. Jesus acts as the Good Shepherd protecting his flock (10:11-15) — he offers himself in exchange for the safety of his followers.
9. John applies fulfillment language (hina pleerōthee, 'so that it might be fulfilled') not to an Old Testament text but to Jesus's own words from 6:39 and 17:12. Jesus's own statements carry the authority of Scripture. The physical protection of the disciples here points to the spiritual protection Jesus promised in the prayer of chapter 17.
10. Only John identifies Peter as the one who struck (the Synoptics leave the swordsman anonymous) and names the servant Malchus. The specificity suggests eyewitness knowledge. The Greek ōtarion ('ear,' diminutive form) denotes the outer ear or earlobe. Peter's violent response contrasts sharply with Jesus's sovereign self-surrender.
11. The 'cup' (poteerion) is a well-established Old Testament metaphor for divinely appointed suffering or judgment (Psalm 75:8, Isaiah 51:17, Jeremiah 25:15). John's account omits the Gethsemane agony over the cup (Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:36, Luke 22:42) and presents Jesus as wholly resolved — the rhetorical question expects the answer 'yes.' The perfect tense dedōken ('has given') indicates the Father's settled determination.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 75:8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 51:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 25:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The Greek chiliarchos ('commander of a thousand') is a Roman military title, confirming the involvement of Roman forces. The verb edēsan ('they bound') emphasizes the indignity — the one who spoke as sovereign moments ago now submits to being bound. John lists three groups cooperating: Roman soldiers (speira), their commander (chiliarchos), and Jewish temple police (hypēretai).
13. Annas had served as high priest from AD 6-15 and retained enormous influence. The Synoptics do not record this preliminary hearing before Annas. John's phrase 'high priest that year' (archiereus tou eniautou ekeinou) does not imply an annual rotation (which did not exist) but identifies which year is in view — the year of Jesus's death.
14. John reminds the reader of Caiaphas's unwitting prophecy from 11:49-52. The word sympherei ('it is advantageous, it is better') is the same word Jesus used in 16:7 about his departure being 'to your advantage.' The irony is layered: Caiaphas spoke cynical political calculus, but John understood it as genuine prophecy about substitutionary death.
15. The identity of the 'other disciple' (allos matheetes) is debated — traditionally identified with the Beloved Disciple (the author). The word gnōstos ('known') implies a personal connection with the high priest's household, not merely acquaintance. The Greek aulēn ('courtyard') rather than 'palace' — the proceedings take place in the open courtyard of the high priest's residential compound.
16. The female doorkeeper (thyrooro, feminine) plays a small but significant role — she will initiate Peter's first denial in the next verse. The other disciple's ability to enter freely and arrange Peter's admission underscores his connection to the high priest's household.
17. The question expects a negative answer (mee kai sy, 'surely you're not also...'), giving Peter an easy path to denial. Peter's response ouk eimi ('I am not') stands in devastating contrast to Jesus's egō eimi ('I am') in verses 5-6 and 8. Where Jesus boldly identified himself, Peter denies his own identity as a disciple.
18. The detail of the charcoal fire (anthrakian) is significant because the same rare word appears in 21:9 when Jesus makes a charcoal fire on the beach — creating a literary connection between Peter's denial and his restoration. The image of Peter warming himself among Jesus's enemies visually places him on the wrong side.
19. The 'high priest' here is Annas (v. 13), who retains the title by courtesy despite having been deposed. The two topics — disciples and teaching (didachēs) — suggest an inquiry into whether Jesus leads a seditious movement. John provides no false witnesses or blasphemy charge as in the Synoptic accounts.
20. The adverb parrēsia ('openly, with boldness') contrasts with en kryptō ('in secret'). Jesus asserts that his teaching has been entirely public — there is no hidden revolutionary agenda. The appeal to public teaching implicitly challenges the legitimacy of a secret nighttime proceeding. The phrase is reminiscent of Isaiah 45:19: 'I have not spoken in secret.'
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 45:19: — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Jesus's response implicitly invokes a legal principle — under Jewish law, a defendant should not be compelled to testify against himself. Witnesses should be called. The perfect participle akēkootas ('those who have heard') refers to the many public witnesses of his teaching. Jesus's bold response

before the high priest contrasts with Peter's denials in the courtyard.

22. The Greek *edōken rhapsima* ('gave a blow') could mean a slap with the open hand or a strike with a rod. The officer's rebuke assumes that any challenge to the high priest's authority is disrespectful. This is the first physical violence against Jesus in the passion narrative (in John's account), and it comes from a Jewish officer, not a Roman soldier.
23. Jesus's response is a model of dignified resistance — he does not retaliate but demands legal accountability. The contrast between *kakōs* ('wrongly, badly') and *kalōs* ('rightly, well') frames the issue as a matter of justice, not authority. If Jesus said something false, let it be proved; if true, the violence is unjust.
24. The perfect participle *dedemenon* ('having been bound') emphasizes that Jesus remained bound throughout. John provides no details of the proceedings before Caiaphas, moving directly to the continuation of Peter's denials. The Synoptic accounts place the main trial before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin; John's focus remains on the theological significance of the events rather than legal procedure.
25. The scene returns to Peter, still at the charcoal fire (v. 18), creating a literary interweaving with Jesus's interrogation. The second denial uses the same formula as the first — *ouk eimi* ('I am not') — reinforcing the contrast with Jesus's *egō eimi*. The verb *ērēsato* ('he denied') is emphatic.
26. This third challenge is the most dangerous — the questioner is a relative (*syngenēs*) of Malchus (v. 10) and claims to be an eyewitness (*ouk egō se eidon*, 'didn't I see you?'). Peter is now in real physical danger, not merely social embarrassment. The detail of the family connection is unique to John and suggests firsthand knowledge of the events.
27. The fulfillment of Jesus's prediction (13:38) is stated without commentary — John lets the bare fact speak. The word *eutheos* ('immediately') compresses the moment: denial and rooster-crow are nearly simultaneous. Unlike Luke (22:61-62), John does not record Peter's emotional response — the scene simply ends, leaving the reader to feel the weight of the silence.
28. The Greek *praitōrion* ('praetorium') is the Roman governor's official residence, likely the former palace of Herod the Great or the Antonia Fortress. The irony is unmistakable: the Jewish leaders avoid entering a Gentile building to preserve ceremonial purity for Passover while simultaneously delivering an innocent man to death. John's Passover chronology differs from the Synoptics — here the Passover meal has not yet been eaten, placing the crucifixion on the day the Passover lambs are slaughtered.
29. Pilate accommodates the Jewish leaders' purity concerns by going outside — a detail that structures the entire trial scene as a series of movements between inside (with Jesus) and outside (with the crowd). The word *katēgorian* ('accusation, charge') is a legal term requiring a formal indictment.
30. The response avoids a specific charge, instead asserting a general claim of criminality (*kakon poiōn*, 'one doing evil'). The evasion suggests either that their real charge (blasphemy) would not interest a Roman court, or that they expected Pilate to simply ratify their judgment without independent investigation. The verb *paredōkamen* ('we handed over') is the same root (*paradidōmi*) used for Judas's betrayal.
31. Pilate's response is dismissive — he attempts to return the case to Jewish jurisdiction. The Jewish leaders' reply reveals their true intention: they want execution, not merely punishment. The phrase *ouk exestin* ('it is not permitted') refers to the Roman restriction on Jewish capital punishment (the *ius gladii* reserved to the governor). This legal constraint ensures that Jesus will die by Roman crucifixion rather than Jewish stoning.
32. John explains the theological significance: Roman execution means crucifixion, which fulfills Jesus's own predictions about being 'lifted up' (3:14, 8:28, 12:32-33). The verb *sēmainōn* ('signifying, indicating') is the same word used in 12:33 where Jesus spoke of being 'lifted up from the earth.' Death by lifting up — on a cross — rather than by casting down (stoning) was divinely ordained.
33. Pilate moves inside to question Jesus privately — this inside/outside movement structures the entire trial (vv. 28-29 outside, 33-38a inside, 38b-40 outside). The question *sy ei ho basileus tōn Ioudaiōn* ('Are you the king of the Jews?') indicates that the Jewish leaders have now framed the charge in political terms — kingship claims would constitute sedition against Rome.
34. Jesus's counter-question probes the source and intent of Pilate's inquiry. If Pilate asks on his own, the question has a Roman political meaning (Are you a revolutionary?). If others prompted it, the question carries Jewish messianic meaning (Are you the promised king?). The distinction matters because Jesus's answer depends on which sense of 'king' is intended.
35. Pilate's question *mēti egō Ioudaios eimi* ('I'm not a Jew, am I?') expects a negative answer and expresses disdain — he has no interest in Jewish messianic categories. The emphasis on 'your own nation' (to *ethnos* to son) and 'the chief priests' underscores that the initiative for Jesus's arrest came from his own people. Pilate's final question — 'What have you done?' — returns to the Roman concern: what crime warrants this proceeding?
36. The phrase *ouk estin ek tou kosmou toutou* ('is not from this world') uses *ek* ('from, out of') to indicate origin, not location. Jesus does not say his kingdom has no relevance to this world, but that it does not derive its authority, methods, or power from worldly sources. The proof is the absence of armed resistance — a kingdom of this world would fight. The threefold repetition of 'my kingdom' (*hee basileia hee emee*) emphasizes personal ownership.
37. Jesus's response *sy legeis hoti basileus eimi* ('you say that I am a king') is ambiguous — it neither confirms nor denies the title but redirects it. Jesus then redefines his kingship in terms of truth-bearing rather than political power. The phrase *eis touto gegennēmai* ('for this I was born') combined with *eis touto elēlytha eis ton kosmon* ('for this I came into the world') distinguishes birth from incarnation, implying pre-existence. The claim 'everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice' echoes the shepherd discourse (10:3-4, 27).
38. Pilate's question *ti estin alētheia* ('What is truth?') has been interpreted as cynical dismissal, philosophical inquiry, or weary pragmatism. John leaves it unanswered — Pilate does not wait for a reply but immediately exits. The irony is profound: Pilate asks 'What is truth?' while standing

before the one who said 'I am the truth' (14:6). His judicial verdict — oudemian heuriskō en autō aitian ('I find no charge in him') — is the first of three declarations of innocence (cf. 19:4, 6).

39. The Passover amnesty custom (synētheia, 'custom, usual practice') is not attested outside the Gospels but is plausible within Roman provincial practice. Pilate's use of the title 'the King of the Jews' (ton basilea tōn Ioudaiōn) may be mocking or strategic — using the title to minimize the charge. The Passover context deepens the theological resonance: the festival celebrating Israel's liberation from slavery becomes the setting for a choice between releasing a criminal and condemning the innocent.
40. The verb ekraugasan ('they shouted, cried out') indicates a loud, collective outcry. The name Barabbas (Bar-Abbas) means 'son of the father' in Aramaic — an ironic detail since the crowd chooses the 'son of the father' over the Son of the Father. The Greek lēstēs can mean 'robber, bandit, or insurrectionist.' Given the political context and the parallel accounts (Mark 15:7 mentions insurrection and murder), 'revolutionary' better captures the political dimension. The crowd prefers a violent revolutionary to the king whose kingdom is 'not of this world.'

19

Summary: *John 19 narrates the climax of the passion: Pilate's final attempts to release Jesus, the scourging and mocking, the crowd's demand for crucifixion, the crucifixion itself at Golgotha, Jesus's final words and death, and the burial by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. John's account emphasizes Jesus's sovereignty throughout — he carries his own cross, speaks from the cross with deliberate purpose, and chooses the moment of his death with the declaration 'It is finished.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *John's crucifixion account is rich with theological symbolism. The inscription in three languages (v. 20) proclaims Jesus's kingship to the world. The seamless tunic (vv. 23-24) may symbolize the high priestly garment. Jesus's care for his mother (vv. 26-27) demonstrates love even in death. The flow of blood and water (v. 34) carries sacramental overtones. The fulfillment of Scripture is noted repeatedly (vv. 24, 28, 36-37). The word tetelestai ('It is finished,' v. 30) is the Greek perfect of teleō — not a cry of defeat but a shout of completion. The same root appeared in the prayer of 17:4 ('I have completed the work').*

Translation Friction: *John's account differs from the Synoptics in several details: Jesus carries his own cross (no Simon of Cyrene), only three sayings from the cross are recorded (compared to seven across all Gospels), and the darkness and temple veil are not mentioned. We render John's text as given. The identity of the Beloved Disciple (v. 26) remains debated — traditionally identified as John son of Zebedee. The emphasis on eyewitness testimony (v. 35) asserts historical reliability at the most theologically charged moment.*

Connections: *The scourging and crown of thorns connect to Isaiah 53 (the suffering servant). The seamless tunic echoes Psalm 22:18 and possibly the high priestly garment of Exodus 28. 'It is finished' completes the work described in 4:34 and 17:4. The unbroken bones fulfill Exodus 12:46 (Passover lamb) and Psalm 34:20. The piercing fulfills Zechariah 12:10. The burial with myrrh and aloes connects to Nicodemus's first appearance in chapter 3. The garden burial echoes the garden of Eden and anticipates the garden resurrection of chapter 20.*

¹Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ²The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and placed it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. ³They kept coming up to him and saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him in the face. ⁴Pilate went outside again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you so that you may know I find no basis for a charge against him." ⁵So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" ⁶When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no basis for a charge against him." ⁷The Jewish leaders answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he made himself the Son of God." ⁸When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid. ⁹He entered the headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰So Pilate said to him, "You refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" ¹¹Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given to you from above. For this reason, the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin." ¹²From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, "If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar." ¹³When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the

Stone Pavement — in Aramaic, Gabbatha. ¹⁴Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover, about the sixth hour. He said to the Jewish leaders, "Here is your king!" ¹⁵They shouted, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." ¹⁶So he handed him over to them to be crucified. They took Jesus, ¹⁷He bearing his cross traveled forth into a location called the location of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha. ¹⁸There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on each side, with Jesus in the middle. ¹⁹Pilate also wrote an inscription and placed it on the cross. It read: "Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews." ²⁰Many of the Jewish people read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. ²¹So the chief priests of the Jewish people said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" ²²Indeed, Pilate answered, What I have written stands as written. ²³When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic. Now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. ²⁴So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to decide whose it will be." This was to fulfill the Scripture that says: "They divided my garments among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." So that is what the soldiers did. ²⁵Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." ²⁷Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. ²⁸After this, Jesus, knowing that everything was now completed, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I am thirsty." ²⁹A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge soaked in the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. ³⁰When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and bowing his head, he gave up his spirit. ³¹Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross during the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jewish leaders asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. ³²So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and then of the other who had been crucified with him. ³³But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. ³⁵The one who saw it has testified, and his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. ³⁶For these things took place to fulfill the Scripture: "Not one of his bones will be broken." ³⁷And another Scripture says: "They will look on the one whom they pierced." ³⁸After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus — but secretly, for fear of the Jewish leaders — asked Pilate for permission to take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission, so he came and took his body. ³⁹Nicodemus also came — the one who had first come to Jesus at night — bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. ⁴⁰So they took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. ⁴¹Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴²So because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *emastigōsen* ('scourged, flogged') refers to the Roman *flagellum* — a brutal punishment using a multi-tailed whip embedded with bone or metal. Roman scourging often preceded crucifixion but could also serve as a lesser punishment. Pilate may have intended the flogging as a substitute for execution, hoping it would satisfy the crowd (cf. Luke 23:16, 22).
2. The crown of thorns (*stephanon ex akanthōn*) parodies a royal crown or possibly the laurel wreath of a Roman victor. The purple robe (*himation porphyroun*) mocks royal status — purple was the color of royalty and extreme wealth. The irony in John's narrative is that the mockery accidentally declares the truth: Jesus is a king, and the thorns echo the curse of Genesis 3:18.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 3:18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The imperfect tenses *ērchonto* ('they kept coming') and *elegon* ('they kept saying') indicate repeated, ongoing mockery. The greeting *chaire* ('hail, rejoice') parodies the formal salutation to the emperor: 'Ave Caesar.' The verb *edidosan* ('they kept giving') with *rapismata* ('slaps, blows') describes repeated strikes. The soldiers' mockery is a cruel game, but for John's readers it is unwitting testimony.

4. This is Pilate's second declaration of Jesus's innocence (cf. 18:38). The verb *agō* ('I bring, I lead out') presents Jesus as being exhibited to the crowd. Pilate's strategy appears to be: display the beaten, humiliated prisoner and demonstrate that he poses no political threat, hoping the crowd will be satisfied short of execution.
5. The Latin *Ecce Homo* ('Behold the man') is one of the most famous phrases in Western culture. The Greek *idou ho anthrōpos* may carry several layers: Pilate's dismissive 'Look at this pathetic figure' (hoping to evoke pity), an ironic echo of 'Son of Man' (*ho huios tou anthrōpou*), or an unwitting declaration of Jesus's true humanity. For John's readers, the beaten figure in mock-royal garments is simultaneously the most pitiful and the most regal sight in history.
6. The double imperative *staurōson staurōson* ('Crucify! Crucify!') is a frenzied demand. John identifies the chief priests and officers as leading the cry, not the general populace. Pilate's third declaration of innocence (*ego gar ouch heuriskō en autō aitian*) makes his eventual capitulation all the more damning — he condemns a man he knows to be innocent. His suggestion to 'take him yourselves and crucify him' is likely sarcastic, since the Jewish leaders lack authority to crucify.
7. The charge shifts from political (king) to religious (Son of God). The law they reference is likely Leviticus 24:16 regarding blasphemy. The phrase *huion theou heauton epoiesen* ('he made himself Son of God') reveals the core theological offense — not merely claiming to be Messiah but claiming a unique divine relationship. For Pilate, a Roman, the phrase 'Son of God' (*huios theou*) would evoke the divine claims associated with the emperor.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 24:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The comparative *mallon ephobēthē* ('he was more afraid') implies Pilate was already uneasy — the claim of divine sonship intensifies his discomfort. Roman superstition took divine claims seriously; Pilate may fear divine retribution for mistreating a being with supernatural connections. The fear also has political dimensions — executing someone with a divine following could provoke unrest.
9. Pilate's question *pothen ei sy* ('Where are you from?') operates on two levels: Pilate asks about Jesus's origin in light of the 'Son of God' claim, but the question of Jesus's origin is one of the great themes of John's Gospel (7:27-28, 8:14, 9:29-30). Jesus's silence echoes Isaiah 53:7 ('like a sheep before its shearers is silent'). Having already declared his origin to Pilate (18:36-37), Jesus offers no further testimony to one who dismissed truth itself (18:38).
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 53:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Pilate asserts his *exousian* ('authority, power') — the Roman governor's judicial authority over life and death. The double claim of authority (to release and to crucify) is meant to compel a response. The irony is that Pilate's authority is about to be overridden by the crowd's pressure, exposing its fragility.
11. Jesus breaks his silence to correct Pilate's claim to autonomous authority. All authority is *anōthen* ('from above') — derived from God. The phrase *paradous me soi* ('the one who handed me over to you') most likely refers to Caiaphas (who formally delivered Jesus to Pilate) rather than Judas (who betrayed Jesus to the Jewish leaders). The comparative 'greater sin' (*meizona hamartian*) implies Pilate also bears sin, but the one with fuller knowledge of God's purposes bears more guilt.
12. The phrase *philos tou Kaisaros* ('friend of Caesar') may be a formal title (*amicus Caesaris*) denoting loyalty to the emperor, or simply a threat that Pilate would be reported as disloyal. Under the emperor Tiberius, accusations of disloyalty were extremely dangerous — many officials were executed on such charges. This political threat is the lever that finally breaks Pilate's resistance. The irony is that the Jewish leaders, who chafe under Roman rule, now invoke Caesar's authority to destroy their own Messiah.
13. The verb *ekathisen* ('sat down') could be transitive ('he seated Jesus on the judgment seat') — a reading some scholars favor as another layer of Johannine irony: the judge is being judged, and the condemned man occupies the seat of judgment. The more natural reading is intransitive ('Pilate sat down'). The *Lithostroton* ('Stone Pavement') was likely a paved area in the governor's complex. John provides both the Greek and Aramaic names, characteristic of his concern for multilingual readers.
14. The chronological note is theologically loaded: *paraskeue tou pascha* ('Preparation of the Passover') is the day the Passover lambs were slaughtered in the temple. At the very hour the lambs are being prepared for sacrifice, the Lamb of God (1:29) is being condemned. The 'sixth hour' (about noon) conflicts with Mark 15:25 ('the third hour'); John may be using Roman time-reckoning (6 AM) or emphasizing the symbolic correspondence with the lamb-slaughtering hour. Pilate's *idou ho basileus hymōn* ('Here is your king!') parallels his earlier *idou ho anthrōpos* ('Here is the man!', v. 5).
15. The double imperative *aron aron* ('Take away! Take away!') expresses urgent demand for removal. The chief priests' declaration *ouk echomen basilea ei mē Kaisara* ('We have no king but Caesar') is a devastating theological surrender — Israel's foundational confession was that God alone is king (Judges 8:23, 1 Samuel 8:7, Isaiah 33:22). The religious leaders renounce their own theological heritage to secure Jesus's death.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Judges 8:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Samuel 8:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 33:22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The verb *paredōken* ('he handed over') is the same word used for Judas's betrayal (*paradidōmi*). Pilate becomes another link in the chain of 'handing over.' The subject shifts abruptly — 'they took Jesus' begins the crucifixion narrative. John compresses the transition from verdict to execution.

17. John emphasizes that Jesus carried his own cross (bastazōn heautō ton stauron) — unlike the Synoptics where Simon of Cyrene is pressed into service (Mark 15:21). John may omit Simon to emphasize Jesus's sovereign self-determination. The stauros ('cross') here refers to the crossbeam (patibulum), which the condemned carried to the execution site where the upright post was fixed. Golgotha is Aramaic Gulgaltā ('skull'), possibly named for the skull-shaped topography of the site.
18. John records the crucifixion itself with stark brevity — estaurōsan ('they crucified') — without describing the physical process. The placement of Jesus meson ('in the middle') between two others may symbolize his role as mediator or may ironically fulfill Isaiah 53:12 ('he was numbered with the transgressors'). John does not identify the two others as criminals (a Synoptic detail).
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The Greek titlon is a loanword from the Latin titulus, the official placard stating the condemned person's crime. The inscription — Iesous ho Nazōraios ho basileus tōn Ioudaiōn — becomes the inadvertent proclamation that John's entire Gospel has been building toward. Pilate, who asked 'What is truth?' now unwittingly publishes the truth for all to read.
20. The three languages represent the three major linguistic communities in the region: Hebraisti (Aramaic, the local language), Rhōmaisti (Latin, the language of power), and Hellēnisti (Greek, the language of culture and commerce). The trilingual inscription proclaims Jesus's kingship to the entire known world. John uses Hebraisti to mean 'in the local Semitic language,' which at this period was Aramaic rather than classical Hebrew.
21. The chief priests want the inscription changed from a factual declaration to a reported claim — the difference between 'The King of the Jews' (a statement of identity) and 'He said he was King of the Jews' (a recorded accusation). The objection reveals their awareness that Pilate's wording, as written, amounts to an official Roman acknowledgment of Jesus's kingship.
22. The perfect tense gegrapha ('I have written and it stands written') carries the force of finality — the decision is irreversible. This is Pilate's one act of resolve in the entire proceeding. Whether from stubbornness, spite, or unconscious obedience to a higher purpose, Pilate ensures that the proclamation of Jesus's kingship stands permanently over the cross.
23. The detail of four soldiers (tessara merē, 'four parts') establishes the standard Roman crucifixion squad (a quaternion). The chitōn ('tunic, inner garment') is distinguished from the outer himation ('garments'). The seamless tunic (araphos, 'without seam') woven ek tōn anōthen ('from the top') has been interpreted as symbolizing the high priestly garment (Josephus, Antiquities 3.161 describes the high priest's robe as woven without seam) or as representing the unity of Jesus's work that cannot be divided.
24. The Scripture quoted is Psalm 22:18, one of the most detailed prophetic correspondences in the passion narrative. John sees the two halves of the psalm verse fulfilled in two distinct actions: the dividing of the outer garments and the casting of lots for the inner tunic. Psalm 22 opens with 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' — words Jesus speaks from the cross in Matthew and Mark but not in John.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 22:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The Greek could list three or four women depending on whether 'his mother's sister' and 'Mary the wife of Clopas' are the same person or two different individuals. If four women, they form two pairs; if three, one pair is identified. We render the list as given without resolving the ambiguity. The courage of these women contrasts with the absence of the male disciples (except the Beloved Disciple, v. 26).
26. The address gynai ('woman') is not disrespectful in Greek (cf. 2:4) but is notably formal rather than intimate. The 'disciple whom he loved' (ton mathētēn hon ēgapa) is the Beloved Disciple, traditionally identified as John son of Zebedee. From the cross, Jesus establishes a new family relationship — his mother is entrusted to the Beloved Disciple's care. The scene has both pastoral and symbolic dimensions: the formation of a new community at the foot of the cross.
27. The phrase eis ta idia ('into his own home/things') is the same expression used in 1:11 and 16:32, creating a literary connection. The Beloved Disciple's immediate obedience (elaben, 'he took') mirrors Joseph's obedience in Matthew 1:24. The phrase 'from that hour' (ap ekeinēs tēs hōras) marks a decisive moment — even from the cross, Jesus's words create new realities.
28. The perfect tense tetelestai ('has been completed') indicates that Jesus's mission is accomplished. The verb teleiōthē ('might be fulfilled/completed') connects Scripture fulfillment to the completion of Jesus's work — the two are inseparable. The Scripture referenced is likely Psalm 69:21 ('for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink') or Psalm 22:15 ('my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth'). The declaration dipsō ('I thirst') is both a genuine expression of physical suffering and a deliberate action to fulfill Scripture.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 69:21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 22:15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. The oxos ('sour wine, vinegar') was the posca — cheap vinegar-wine commonly drunk by Roman soldiers. The hyssop (hyssōpō) is a significant detail: hyssop was used to apply the Passover lamb's blood to the doorposts in Exodus 12:22. John connects Jesus's death to the Passover sacrifice through this botanical detail. Some manuscripts read hyssō ('javelin') instead of hyssōpō, but the Passover connection favors the majority reading.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 12:22. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

30. The word *tetelestai* ('It is finished, It has been completed') is the perfect tense of *teleō* — denoting a completed action with lasting results. This is not a cry of defeat ('It's over') but a shout of accomplishment ('It is accomplished'). The same root appears in 4:34 ('to complete his work'), 17:4 ('I have completed the work'), and 19:28 ('everything was completed'). The phrase *paredōken to pneuma* ('he handed over his spirit') portrays Jesus's death as a voluntary act — he 'gave' his spirit rather than having it taken. The verb *paradidōmi* ('to hand over') is the same word used for Judas's betrayal, creating a theological contrast: Judas handed Jesus over to death; Jesus hands his spirit over to the Father.
31. Deuteronomy 21:22-23 required that a hanged body not remain overnight. The request to break legs (*crurifragium*) was a method of hastening death — unable to push up on their legs to breathe, the crucified would suffocate quickly. The note that this Sabbath was *megalē* ('great, high') indicates it coincided with a festival — in John's chronology, the first day of Passover, making it doubly sacred.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 21:22-23. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The soldiers proceed systematically from one end to the other. Jesus, crucified in the middle (v. 18), would be last. The verb *kateaxan* ('they broke') refers to the *crurifragium* — smashing the shin bones with a heavy mallet.
33. The perfect participle *tethnēkota* ('having died, being dead') emphasizes that Jesus's death was already complete and verified by professional soldiers. The fact that his legs were not broken becomes theologically significant in verses 36-37 as the fulfillment of Scripture.
34. The spear thrust (*lonchē*, 'lance, spear') was likely a verification of death. The flow of *haima kai hydōr* ('blood and water') has been interpreted medically (pericardial fluid and blood, indicating death by cardiac rupture), sacramentally (symbolizing the Eucharist and baptism), and typologically (echoing the water from the rock in Exodus 17:6). John's emphasis on this detail (reinforced by the eyewitness attestation in v. 35) suggests he sees deep significance beyond mere physical description.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 17:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. This is a rare intrusion of the narrator's voice asserting eyewitness authority. The perfect tenses *heōrakōs* ('having seen') and *memartyrēken* ('has testified') indicate that the witness continues to bear testimony. The double affirmation — 'his testimony is true' (*alēthinē*) and 'he tells the truth' (*alēthē*) — uses two different Greek words for truth, reinforcing the reliability of the account. The purpose clause 'so that you may believe' (*hina kai hymeis pisteusēte*) connects the eyewitness report directly to the Gospel's evangelistic purpose (cf. 20:31).
36. The Scripture cited is Exodus 12:46 (or Numbers 9:12), which prohibits breaking the bones of the Passover lamb, or Psalm 34:20 ('He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken'). The Passover lamb connection is primary in John's theology — Jesus is the Lamb of God (1:29, 36) whose bones remain unbroken according to the Passover regulations. The sacrificial typology is complete.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 12:46. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 9:12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 34:20. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. The quotation is from Zechariah 12:10, which in its original context describes a future mourning in Jerusalem: 'They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only son.' The Hebrew has 'on me' (*alai*) while John's Greek has 'on the one whom' (*eis hon*), following a textual tradition that avoids the startling first-person reference to God being pierced. Revelation 1:7 also cites this passage in connection with Jesus's return.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zechariah 12:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. Joseph's status as a 'secret disciple' (*mathētēs kekrymmenos*) connects him to the 'many rulers' who believed but would not confess openly (12:42). The fear that silenced him during Jesus's life gives way to courage after his death — Joseph publicly identifies himself with the crucified Jesus by requesting his body, an act that would end any remaining concealment. Roman law allowed the bodies of the executed to be claimed by friends or family.
39. John reminds the reader of Nicodemus's nighttime visit in chapter 3 (*ho elthōn pros auton nyktos to prōton*). His progression in the Gospel is notable: he came secretly at night (3:1-2), spoke cautiously in Jesus's defense (7:50-52), and now openly participates in the burial. The quantity — *hōs litras hekatōn* ('about a hundred litrai') — is enormous, approximately 75 modern pounds (33 kg). This is a royal burial provision, befitting a king. The spices (*myrrh* and *aloes*) were used to mask the odor of decomposition and honor the dead.
40. The Greek *othoniois* ('linen cloths, strips of linen') are burial wrappings. The phrase *kathos ethos estin tois Ioudaiois entaphiazein* ('as is the custom of the Jews to bury') distinguishes Jewish burial practice from Egyptian embalming or Roman cremation. The spices are packed within and around the wrappings. These grave cloths will be significant in the resurrection account (20:5-7).
41. John frames the death and burial in a garden (*kēpos*), creating a literary inclusion with the arrest in a garden (18:1) and anticipating the resurrection in the same garden (20:15). The 'new tomb' (*mnēmeion kainon*) where 'no one had ever been placed' (*oudepō oudeis ēn tetheimenos*) ensures that any resurrection from this tomb can only be Jesus's. The garden setting also evokes Eden — humanity fell in a garden, and new creation begins in a

garden.

42. The burial is hasty — driven by the approaching Sabbath (paraskeuen tōn Ioudaiōn). The proximity of the tomb (engys ēn to mnēmeion) was providential rather than planned. The verb ethēkan ('they placed, they laid') is simple and final. The chapter ends not with triumph or commentary but with a body laid in a tomb — the silence between death and resurrection.

20

Summary: *John 20 narrates the resurrection and its aftermath: Mary Magdalene discovers the empty tomb, Peter and the Beloved Disciple investigate, Mary encounters the risen Jesus in the garden, Jesus appears to the gathered disciples and commissions them with the Holy Spirit, and Thomas moves from doubt to the climactic confession 'My Lord and my God.' The chapter concludes with the Gospel's purpose statement: 'these are written so that you may believe.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter contains some of the most intimate and theologically significant scenes in the Gospels. Mary Magdalene's encounter with the risen Jesus (vv. 11-18) is deeply personal — she recognizes him only when he speaks her name, echoing the shepherd who 'calls his own sheep by name' (10:3). Thomas's confession 'My Lord and my God' (v. 28) is the highest Christological declaration in the Gospel, forming an inclusio with the Prologue's 'the Word was God' (1:1). The purpose statement (vv. 30-31) reveals that the entire Gospel has been evangelistic testimony designed to produce faith.*

Translation Friction: *Mary's instruction 'Do not cling to me' (v. 17) with the explanation 'I have not yet ascended' is theologically puzzling — the relationship between touching Jesus and his ascension is not self-evident. We render the Greek without resolving the debate. The phrase 'he breathed on them' (v. 22) uses the same verb (emphysaō) as Genesis 2:7 in the Septuagint, suggesting a deliberate new-creation parallel. Whether this constitutes the Johannine Pentecost or an anticipation of Acts 2 is debated.*

Connections: *The empty tomb narrative connects to all four Gospel accounts while retaining John's distinctive perspective. Mary's garden encounter echoes Song of Songs 3:1-4 (seeking the beloved). The breathing of the Spirit echoes Genesis 2:7 (creation of humanity) and Ezekiel 37:9 (revival of dry bones). Thomas's confession answers the question of Jesus's identity posed throughout the Gospel. The purpose statement connects to 1 John 5:13 and frames the entire Gospel as testimony.*

¹On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. ²So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." ³So Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. ⁴They were both running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵Stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷The napkin, that was concerning his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a location by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed. ⁹For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples went back to their homes. ¹¹But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping. As she wept, she stooped to look into the tomb, ¹²Sees two angels in brilliant sitting, the one at the skull, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴After she said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not recognize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" She, thinking he was the gardener, said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him." ¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" — which means "Teacher." ¹⁷Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" — and she told them what he had said to her. ¹⁹On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being

locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." ²²And after he said this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." ²⁴Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the mark of the nails and put my hand into his side, I will never believe." ²⁶Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." ²⁸Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." ³⁰Now Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *tee mia tōn sabbatōn* ('the first of the week') is a Semitic way of saying 'Sunday.' The detail *skotias eti ousēs* ('while it was still dark') is characteristically Johannine — darkness in this Gospel symbolizes spiritual blindness and separation from Jesus (cf. 1:5, 3:19, 13:30). Mary comes in literal darkness and will move toward the light of recognition. John mentions only Mary Magdalene, unlike the Synoptics which include other women.
2. Mary's first interpretation is grave robbery (*ēran ton kyrion*, 'they have taken the Lord'). The plural 'we do not know' (*ouk oidamen*) may suggest other women were present (as in the Synoptic accounts) even though John mentions only Mary. The 'other disciple whom Jesus loved' (*ton allon mathētēn hon ephilei ho Iēsous*) is the Beloved Disciple, here described with *phileō* ('loved with personal affection') rather than the *agapaō* used in 13:23 and 19:26.
3. The imperfect *ērchonto* ('they were going, they were on their way') captures the ongoing action — the narrative builds suspense as the two disciples make their way to the tomb.
4. The detail of the foot race (*proedragen tachion*, 'ran ahead faster') has the feel of eyewitness memory — specific, personal, and unnecessary for the theological point. The Beloved Disciple's greater speed and earlier arrival set up the distinction between seeing (v. 5) and believing (v. 8).
5. The verb *parakypsas* ('stooping, bending over to look') indicates the low entrance of a first-century rock-cut tomb. The Beloved Disciple sees (*blepei*) the linen cloths (*othonia*) but hesitates to enter — whether from reverence, fear, or deference to Peter is not stated.
6. Peter arrives and enters without hesitation — consistent with his impulsive character throughout the Gospels. The verb *theōrei* ('he observed, he looked carefully at') is a more intensive form of seeing than the Beloved Disciple's *blepei* in verse 5, suggesting Peter examined the scene closely.
7. The *soudarion* ('face cloth, handkerchief') is a separate piece from the body wrappings. The detail that it was *entetyligmenon* ('rolled up, folded') and placed *choris* ('separately, apart') suggests orderliness rather than the haste of grave robbery — a thief would not neatly fold the burial cloths. The arrangement of the grave cloths is evidence that something other than theft has occurred.
8. Three different Greek verbs for 'seeing' appear in verses 5-8: *blepei* (v. 5, 'he sees'), *theōrei* (v. 6, 'he observes'), and *eiden* (v. 8, 'he saw' — from *horaō*, implying perception with understanding). The Beloved Disciple's seeing leads immediately to believing — he is the first to believe in the resurrection based on the evidence of the empty tomb and the arrangement of the burial cloths, without yet seeing the risen Jesus.
9. The narrator explains that the disciples' understanding was still incomplete — they had not yet grasped the scriptural necessity (*dei*, 'it is necessary') of the resurrection. The specific Scripture (*graphēn*, singular) is not identified; possibilities include Psalm 16:10 ('you will not abandon my soul to Sheol'), Hosea 6:2 ('on the third day he will raise us up'), or Isaiah 53:10-12. The Beloved Disciple believed based on what he saw, but fuller scriptural understanding would come later.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 16:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Hosea 6:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 53:10-12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The phrase *pros autous* ('to themselves, to their own') indicates they returned to where they were staying. The departure sets the stage for Mary's solitary encounter with the risen Jesus — the disciples leave, but Mary stays.
11. The imperfect *eistēkei* ('she was standing') and the present participle *klaiousa* ('weeping') paint a vivid picture of sustained grief. Mary's sorrow dominates the scene — she is weeping for a dead man, unaware that death has been conquered. The verb *parekypsen* ('she stooped to look') echoes the Beloved Disciple's action in verse 5.

12. The two angels (angelous) in white recall the cherubim on the mercy seat (kapporet) of the Ark of the Covenant, positioned at each end (Exodus 25:18-20). If this parallel is intended, the place where Jesus's body lay corresponds to the mercy seat — the place of atonement. The white garments (en leukois) are characteristic of heavenly beings in the New Testament.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 25:18-20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Mary's response repeats her earlier report (v. 2) but now uses the singular 'I do not know' (ouk oida) and the personal 'my Lord' (ton kyrion mou) — the grief has become deeply personal. She is so consumed by sorrow that the presence of angels does not startle her or redirect her attention.
14. Mary's failure to recognize Jesus (ouk ēdei hoti Iēsous estin) echoes other post-resurrection non-recognition scenes (Luke 24:16, 24:37). This may indicate a transformation in Jesus's risen body, or it may reflect Mary's grief-blurred perception, or both. The dramatic irony is intense — the reader knows who stands before her.
15. Jesus's question tina zēteis ('Who are you looking for?') echoes his first question in the Gospel to Andrew and John (1:38, 'What are you seeking?') and his question to the arresting party (18:4, 'Who are you looking for?'). Mary's assumption that Jesus is the kēpouros ('gardener') is natural given the garden setting — but for John's readers, there is a deeper truth: the risen Jesus is the true gardener of the new Eden, the one who tends the garden of new creation.
16. The recognition comes through a single word — her name. This fulfills 10:3 ('he calls his own sheep by name') and 10:27 ('my sheep hear my voice'). The shift from non-recognition to recognition pivots on the personal address. Mary's response 'Rabboni' (rabbouni) is an intensified form of 'Rabbi' — 'my great teacher' or 'my dear teacher.' John translates it as didaskalos ('teacher') for his Greek readers. The scene is one of the most intimate in all four Gospels.
17. The present imperative mee mou haptou is better rendered 'stop clinging to me' or 'do not keep holding on to me' rather than 'do not touch me' — Mary has apparently grasped him and Jesus tells her to release him. The reason given — 'I have not yet ascended' (oupō anabebēka) — implies that the old mode of physical relationship must give way to a new mode of spiritual relationship mediated by the Spirit. The phrase 'my brothers' (tous adelphous mou) is the first time Jesus uses this family language for his disciples. The careful distinction 'my Father and your Father, my God and your God' maintains Jesus's unique relationship to the Father while including the disciples in a genuine filial relationship.
18. Mary becomes the first witness to the resurrection and the first evangelist — she is sent (poreuou, 'go!') by Jesus to proclaim the news. The verb angellousa ('announcing, reporting') is related to angelos ('messenger') — Mary fulfills an angelic function. Her declaration heōraka ton kyrion ('I have seen the Lord') uses the perfect tense, indicating a sight with lasting impact.
19. The locked doors (tōn thyron kekleisimenōn) emphasize both the disciples' fear and the supernatural character of Jesus's appearance — he enters without the doors being opened. The greeting eirēnē hymin ('Peace to you') is the standard Semitic greeting (shalom aleichem) but carries enormous weight in this context. Jesus had promised 'my peace I give to you' (14:27) and 'in me you may have peace' (16:33). Now the risen Jesus delivers on that promise.
20. Jesus shows his wounds as identification — the risen body bears the marks of the cross. The resurrection does not erase the crucifixion but transforms it. The disciples' joy (echarēsan, 'they rejoiced') fulfills Jesus's promise in 16:20-22 that their sorrow would be turned to joy. The verb echarēsan echoes 16:22: 'your hearts will rejoice.'
21. The second eirēnē hymin transitions from greeting to commissioning. The perfect apostalken ('has sent,' denoting the ongoing mission) is paired with the present pempō ('I am sending,' denoting the immediate commission). This echoes 17:18: 'As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.' The disciples' mission is patterned on Jesus's own mission from the Father.
22. The verb enepheysēsen ('he breathed on/into') appears in the Septuagint only in Genesis 2:7 (God 'breathed into' Adam the breath of life) and Ezekiel 37:9 (the Spirit 'breathes' life into the dry bones). The allusion is deliberate — Jesus's act is a new creation, a new breathing of life into his people. Whether this constitutes the full giving of the Spirit (as in Johannine theology) or an anticipation of Pentecost (as in Lukan theology) is debated. In John's narrative, this is the moment the Spirit is given.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 2:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 37:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The authority to forgive or retain sins (aphēte, 'release, forgive' and kratēte, 'hold, retain') is given to the community of disciples, not to an individual. The perfect tenses apheōntai ('they stand forgiven') and kekratēntai ('they stand retained') indicate permanent results. This commission extends the forgiveness ministry that Jesus exercised during his earthly life. The precise exercise of this authority — whether sacramental, declarative, or disciplinary — has been debated throughout church history.
24. The name Thomas (Thōmas) is itself Aramaic for 'twin' (te'oma), and Didymos is the Greek equivalent. John consistently identifies Thomas with this double name (11:16, 14:5, 21:2). His absence from the first appearance sets up one of the Gospel's most dramatic scenes.
25. Thomas's demand escalates from seeing (idō) to touching (balō ton daktylo mou, 'put my finger') to thrusting his hand into the spear wound (balō mou tēn cheira eis tēn pleuran). The double negative ou mē pisteusō ('I will absolutely not believe') is the strongest form of denial in Greek. Note that Thomas demands the same evidence Jesus had already provided the other disciples (v. 20) — his request is not unreasonable, merely emphatic.

The mention of nails (hēlōn) confirms crucifixion by nailing (rather than tying).

26. The phrase meth' hēmeras oktō ('after eight days') by inclusive counting means the following Sunday — establishing the pattern of first-day-of-the-week gatherings that would become Christian worship practice. The repeated detail of locked doors and Jesus's supernatural entry underscores the nature of the resurrection body: physical enough to be seen and touched, yet not bound by physical barriers.
27. Jesus addresses Thomas's exact demands (vv. 25) — demonstrating both his knowledge of Thomas's words (he was not present when Thomas spoke them) and his willingness to meet Thomas where he is. The imperative mē ginou apistos alla pistos ('stop becoming unbelieving but be believing') uses the present imperative ginou, suggesting a process: Thomas is not yet fixed in unbelief but is moving toward it, and Jesus intervenes. The text does not say whether Thomas actually touched Jesus's wounds — the narrative moves directly to his confession.
28. Thomas's confession ho kyrios mou kai ho theos mou ('My Lord and my God') is the climactic Christological declaration of the Gospel. The use of the nominative with the article (ho kyrios, ho theos) as vocative gives the confession maximum force. This directly identifies Jesus as theos ('God'), completing the theological arc that began in 1:1 ('the Word was God'). Thomas moves from the most extreme doubt to the most exalted confession in the Gospel — a transformation John presents as the paradigm of faith.
29. The first clause can be read as a statement ('Because you have seen me, you have believed') or a question ('Have you believed because you have seen me?'). Both readings work theologically. The beatitude for those who believe without seeing (makarioi hoi mē idontes kai pisteusantes) reaches beyond Thomas to all future believers — including every reader of the Gospel. This is the bridge between the apostolic eyewitnesses and the ongoing community of faith.
30. The word sēmeia ('signs') is John's characteristic term for Jesus's miracles — they are not mere displays of power but signs pointing to deeper realities about Jesus's identity. The acknowledgment that 'many other signs' exist admits the Gospel's selectivity — what is included has been deliberately chosen for the purpose stated in verse 31.
31. This is the Gospel's purpose statement, revealing that everything written has been evangelistic testimony. The verb pisteusēte could be aorist subjunctive ('come to believe' — evangelistic, aimed at unbelievers) or present subjunctive ('continue believing' — pastoral, aimed at the community). The manuscript evidence is divided; both purposes are served by the Gospel. The double object of faith — that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah) and the Son of God — summarizes the Gospel's dual Christological claim: Jesus fulfills Jewish messianic expectation and shares in the divine identity. The result of believing is zōē ('life') — the life that has been the Gospel's theme from the Prologue (1:4: 'In him was life').

21

Summary: *John 21 is the epilogue of the Gospel, set by the Sea of Tiberias (Galilee). Seven disciples go fishing and catch nothing until the risen Jesus appears on the shore and directs them to an enormous catch. After a breakfast of bread and fish, Jesus three times asks Peter 'Do you love me?' — restoring him from his threefold denial. Jesus predicts Peter's martyrdom, addresses the fate of the Beloved Disciple, and the chapter closes with a final testimony to the authenticity of the Gospel.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The chapter is widely regarded as an epilogue added after the original conclusion (20:30-31), though it is present in all manuscripts. The miraculous catch of 153 fish has generated centuries of interpretation — the number may be symbolic (Jerome claimed it was the number of known species of fish, representing the universal mission). The threefold 'Do you love me?' dialogue restores Peter from his threefold denial (18:17, 25, 27), creating a literary and pastoral symmetry. The charcoal fire (anthrakian, v. 9) uses the same rare word as the fire where Peter denied Jesus (18:18), connecting the two scenes. Jesus's final commission — 'Feed my sheep' — establishes pastoral care as the expression of love for Christ.*

Translation Friction: *The interchange between agapaō and phileō in the Peter dialogue (vv. 15-17) has been interpreted as theologically significant (agapaō as divine love, phileō as human affection) or as Johannine stylistic variation without distinction. We render both as 'love' since English lacks the Greek differentiation, and note the variation in translator notes. The identity of the Beloved Disciple (v. 20) remains the Gospel's enduring mystery. The final verse (v. 25) is hyperbolic, a literary convention for closing a work of vast scope.*

Connections: *The fishing scene echoes Luke 5:1-11 (the first miraculous catch). The charcoal fire connects to 18:18 (Peter's denials). The threefold restoration mirrors the threefold denial. 'Feed my sheep' connects to the shepherd discourse (10:1-18). Peter's predicted death by stretching out his hands (v. 18) has traditionally been understood as crucifixion. The Beloved Disciple's testimony (vv. 24-25) connects to the eyewitness claim of 19:35.*

¹After these things, Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. He revealed himself in this way: ²Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples were together. ³Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will come with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. ⁴Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Jesus said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish, do you?" They answered him, "No." ⁶He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish. ⁷So the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment — for he had stripped for work — and threw himself into the sea. ⁸The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land — only about a hundred yards. ⁹When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there with fish laid on it, and bread. ¹⁰Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." ¹¹So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish — a hundred and fifty-three. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹²Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" — because they knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the fish likewise. ¹⁴This was now the third time Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. ¹⁵When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." ¹⁶He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." ¹⁷He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸Truly, truly, I tell you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." ¹⁹He said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. After saying this, he said to him, "Follow me." ²⁰Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them — the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" ²¹When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" ²²Jesus said to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!" ²³So the word spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say to him that he would not die. Rather, he said, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?" ²⁴This is the disciple who is testifying about these things and who wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true. ²⁵Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *ephanērōsen* ('he revealed, manifested') emphasizes Jesus's initiative — he chooses when and how to appear. The Sea of Tiberias is an alternate name for the Sea of Galilee, named after the city built by Herod Antipas in honor of Emperor Tiberius. The repetition of *ephanērōsen* creates a formal introduction, as if presenting an official account.
2. Seven disciples are listed — seven being the number of completeness. This is the only mention of the sons of Zebedee (James and John) in the Fourth Gospel, supporting the traditional identification of the Beloved Disciple with John son of Zebedee. Nathanael, introduced in 1:45-51, reappears only here in John. The two unnamed disciples remain unidentified.
3. Peter's return to fishing has been interpreted as apostasy (returning to his old life), pragmatism (they needed to eat), or simply filling time while waiting for further instruction. The narrative does not condemn the decision. The fruitless night of fishing (*epiasan ouden*, 'they caught nothing') sets up the contrast with the abundance that Jesus provides — apart from him they can do nothing (15:5).
4. The transition from night to dawn (*prōias ēdē genomenēs*, 'morning already having come') carries symbolic weight: the fruitless darkness gives way to the presence of the Light (cf. 1:5, 8:12). The disciples' failure to recognize Jesus (*ouk ēdeisan hoti Iēsous estin*) echoes Mary Magdalene's experience (20:14) and the Emmaus road encounter (Luke 24:16).
5. The address *paidia* ('children, lads') is informal and affectionate. The word *prospaghion* ('something to eat with bread, fish') specifically refers to the relish or fish eaten alongside bread. The question *mē ti prospaghion echete* expects a negative answer — Jesus already knows the result of their night's labor. The stark monosyllable *ou* ('no') captures the disciples' frustrated exhaustion.

6. The direction 'right side' (ta dexia merē) may be coincidental or may carry symbolic significance (the right side being associated with favor and blessing in biblical and ancient Near Eastern thought). The contrast between total failure without Jesus's direction and overwhelming abundance with it illustrates the principle of 15:5 ('apart from me you can do nothing'). The verb *hēlyksai* ('to drag, haul') will reappear in verse 11.
7. The Beloved Disciple recognizes Jesus first (spiritual perception), but Peter acts first (impulsive action) — a pattern consistent with their characterizations throughout the Gospel (cf. 20:4-8). The word *gymnos* ('naked') here means stripped to a loincloth for work, not fully unclothed. Peter puts on his *ependytēn* ('outer garment') before jumping in — seemingly illogical for swimming, but motivated by the desire not to greet his Lord in a state of undress.
8. The Greek *pēchōn diakosiōn* ('two hundred cubits') is approximately 300 feet or 90 meters. We render this as 'about a hundred yards' for modern comprehension. The diminutive *ploiariō* ('small boat') distinguishes their vessel from a larger ship. While Peter swims, the others bring the catch to shore.
9. The word *anthrakian* ('charcoal fire') appears only here and in 18:18 (the fire where Peter denied Jesus) in the entire New Testament. The verbal link is deliberate — Jesus will restore Peter at the same type of fire where Peter fell. The prepared meal (*opsarion*, 'fish,' and *arton*, 'bread') recalls the feeding of the five thousand (6:9, 11) where the same two words appear. Jesus provides for his people.
10. Jesus already has fish on the fire (v. 9) but invites the disciples to contribute from their catch. This combines divine provision with human participation — a pattern consistent with the feeding miracles. The adverb *nyn* ('now, just now') emphasizes the freshness of the catch.
11. The exact count of 153 fish (*hekaton pentēkonta triōn*) has generated extensive speculation: Jerome claimed it was the number of known fish species (universal mission); Augustine noted it is the triangular number of 17 (1+2+3...+17=153); others connect it to Ezekiel 47:10 (the prophetic vision of abundant fishing in the Dead Sea). The precision of the count suggests eyewitness memory. The unbroken net (*ouk eschisthē to diktyon*) may symbolize the unity of the church despite the great number gathered into it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 47:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The invitation *deute aristēsate* ('come, have breakfast') is warm and domestic. The verb *aristēsate* specifically refers to the morning meal. The tension between knowing (*eidotes hoti ho kyrios estin*, 'knowing that it was the Lord') and wanting to ask (*exetasai*, 'to examine, to question') captures the awe and strangeness of encountering the risen Jesus — they recognize him but his transformed presence inhibits normal interaction.
13. The verbs *lambanei...* *didōsin* ('he takes... he gives') echo the actions at the feeding of the five thousand (6:11: 'Jesus took the loaves... and distributed them') and the Last Supper (13:26). The risen Jesus continues to be the one who feeds his people. The act is eucharistic in resonance without being explicitly identified as a sacramental meal.
14. The narrator counts Jesus's appearances to the disciples as a group: first on Easter evening (20:19-23), second a week later with Thomas (20:26-29), and now third by the sea. Mary Magdalene's encounter (20:14-18) is not counted because it was to an individual, not to the gathered disciples. The passive *egertheis* ('having been raised') attributes the resurrection to divine action.
15. Jesus addresses Peter by his birth name *Simōn Iōannou* ('Simon son of John') rather than his apostolic name Peter — recalling the moment of their first meeting (1:42). The phrase *pleon toutōn* ('more than these') could mean 'more than these other disciples love me,' 'more than you love these men,' or 'more than you love these things (the boats and fish).' The first reading fits Peter's earlier boast of superior loyalty (13:37). Jesus uses *agapas* ('do you love with *agapē*?'') while Peter responds with *philō* ('I love with *philia*'). Whether this distinction is theologically significant or merely stylistic variation is debated. The command *boske ta arnia mou* ('feed my lambs') commissions Peter as an under-shepherd.
16. The second question drops 'more than these' — the comparison is removed and the question is simple and direct. Jesus again uses *agapas*; Peter again responds with *philō*. The command shifts from *boske* ('feed') to *poimaine* ('tend, shepherd') and from *arnia* ('lambs') to *probata* ('sheep'). The shepherd imagery connects directly to chapter 10 where Jesus is the Good Shepherd; Peter is now commissioned to continue that shepherding work.
17. In the third question, Jesus switches to Peter's own verb — *phileis me?* ('do you have affection for me?'). This is what grieves Peter (*elypēthē*, 'he was hurt, pained') — Jesus seems to question even Peter's *philia*-level love. Peter's response appeals to Jesus's omniscience: *panta sy oidas* ('you know everything'). The switch from *oidas* ('you know intuitively') to *ginōskeis* ('you know from experience') is emphatic — Peter trusts that Jesus's comprehensive knowledge includes knowledge of Peter's heart. The threefold question-and-commission corresponds to the threefold denial, effecting a complete restoration.
18. The double *amēn* introduces a solemn prediction. The phrase *ekteneis tas cheiras sou* ('you will stretch out your hands') has traditionally been understood as a reference to crucifixion — the stretching out of arms on a cross. The progression from self-determination ('you dressed yourself, walked where you wanted') to submission ('another will dress you, carry you where you do not want') describes the movement from freedom to martyrdom. Church tradition records that Peter was crucified in Rome under Nero, reportedly upside down at his own request.
19. The verb *sēmainōn* ('signifying, indicating') is the same word used in 12:33 and 18:32 for Jesus indicating the manner of his own death. Peter's death, like Jesus's, will 'glorify God' (*doxasei ton theon*) — martyrdom is presented not as tragedy but as the ultimate expression of discipleship. The command *akolouthei moi* ('follow me') recalls the original call to discipleship (1:43) and takes on new meaning in light of the predicted death — 'follow me' now means 'follow me to the cross.'

- 20.** The Beloved Disciple is identified by his posture at the Last Supper (13:23-25) — reclining at Jesus's chest and asking about the betrayer. This lengthy identification emphasizes the intimacy of his relationship with Jesus and connects the epilogue to the upper room narrative. Peter's natural curiosity about the Beloved Disciple's fate follows immediately from the prediction about his own.
- 21.** Peter's question *houtos de ti* ('But this one — what?') is characteristically blunt and impulsive. Having learned his own fate, Peter wants to know the Beloved Disciple's. The question reveals a natural human tendency to compare one's calling and suffering with others'.
- 22.** Jesus's response is both an answer and a rebuke: each disciple's calling is between him and Jesus, and comparison is inappropriate. The conditional *ean auton thelō menein* ('if I want him to remain') is deliberately hypothetical — Jesus does not predict the Beloved Disciple's survival until the *parousia* but uses the hypothetical to redirect Peter's focus. The emphatic *sy moi akolouthei* ('you — follow me!') places the pronoun first for emphasis: 'As for you, your job is to follow me.'
- 23.** The narrator corrects a misunderstanding that had circulated in the early Christian community (*eis tous adelphous*, 'among the brothers'). The rumor that the Beloved Disciple would not die had apparently persisted, perhaps because he lived to an advanced age. This correction suggests the chapter was written or finalized after the Beloved Disciple's death (or near the end of his life) when the community needed clarification.
- 24.** The present participle *martyrōn* ('the one testifying') indicates ongoing witness, while the aorist *grapsas* ('the one who wrote') points to a completed literary act. The first-person plural *oidamen* ('we know') shifts from the individual voice of the Beloved Disciple to a community that vouches for his testimony. This suggests a circle of disciples who knew the Beloved Disciple and endorsed his Gospel. The claim *alēthēs autou hē martyria estin* ('his testimony is true') echoes 19:35.
- 25.** The closing verse is a literary convention of hyperbolic modesty (cf. Ecclesiastes 12:12, 'Of making many books there is no end'). The first person *oimai* ('I suppose, I think') is the only clear first-person singular in the Gospel, giving the ending a personal and reflective tone. The hyperbole — the world could not contain the books — expresses the inexhaustible significance of Jesus's life and work. Some manuscripts add 'Amen,' but the SBLGNT does not include it.
- 25.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ecclesiastes 12:12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

Acts

1

Summary: *Acts 1 opens with Luke's prologue addressing Theophilus, connecting this volume to the Gospel of Luke. The risen Jesus instructs his apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Holy Spirit. After forty days of post-resurrection appearances, Jesus ascends into heaven from the Mount of Olives. The apostles return to Jerusalem and devote themselves to prayer. The chapter closes with the selection of Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot, restoring the Twelve.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Luke explicitly frames Acts as a sequel — 'the first account' (ton proton logon) refers to his Gospel. The forty-day period of post-resurrection teaching echoes Israel's forty years in the wilderness and Moses' forty days on Sinai. The ascension narrative is remarkably restrained — no dramatic special effects, just Jesus 'lifted up' and a cloud receiving him. The 'two men in white' echo the angelic figures at the empty tomb (Luke 24:4). The lot-casting for Matthias is the last recorded instance of this Old Testament decision-making method; after Pentecost, the Spirit replaces the lot.*

Translation Friction: *The Greek phrase 'baptized with the Holy Spirit' (baptistesesthe en pneumati hagio) in verse 5 creates the theological foundation for the Pentecost narrative in chapter 2. The question about restoring the kingdom to Israel (v. 6) reveals the disciples' persistent expectation of a political Messiah, which Jesus redirects without directly denying. The criteria for Judas's replacement (vv. 21-22) — someone present from John's baptism through the ascension — defines apostolic witness as eyewitness testimony.*

Connections: *The prologue connects to Luke 1:1-4. The promise of the Spirit connects to Joel 2:28-32 (quoted in Acts 2). The ascension connects to Daniel 7:13-14 (the Son of Man coming with clouds). The replacement of Judas fulfills the Psalms citations in verses 16 and 20 (Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8). The number twelve connects to the twelve tribes of Israel, maintaining the symbolic completeness of the apostolic body.*

¹I wrote the first account, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and to teach, ²Until the day in which he was taken up, following that he by way of the Holy Ghost had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen:. ³He also presented himself alive to them after his suffering, with many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴While he was eating with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father. "This is what you heard from me," he said. ⁵"For John baptized with water, but you

will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶So when they had gathered together, they asked him, "Lord, is it at this time that you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ⁹After he had said these things, while they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. ¹⁰While they were staring intently into the sky as he was going, suddenly two men in white clothing stood beside them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." ¹²Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mountain called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³When they arrived, they went up to the upper room where they were staying — Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas son of James. ¹⁴All these were devoting themselves with one mind to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. ¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the brothers and sisters — the gathering numbered about one hundred and twenty — and said, ¹⁶"Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled that the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷For he was counted among us and received his share in this ministry." ¹⁸(Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headfirst, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. ¹⁹This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that field was called in their own language Hakeldamach — that is, 'Field of Blood.') ²⁰"For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let his dwelling become desolate, and let no one live in it,' and, 'Let another take his position of oversight.' ²¹So one of the men who accompanied us during the entire time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²starting from John's baptism all the way to the day Jesus was taken up from among us. One of these men must join us as a witness of his resurrection. ²³They proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴Then they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵Indeed, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by sin fell, that he might go to his own location. ²⁶Then they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was counted with the eleven apostles.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *ton proton logon* ('the first account/word') refers to Luke's Gospel. The verb *epoiesameen* ('I made/composed') is a standard literary term for writing a work. 'Theophilus' means 'lover of God' or 'friend of God' — whether this is a real person or a symbolic addressee is debated, though the honorific 'most excellent' used in Luke 1:3 suggests a real patron.
1. The phrase 'began to do and to teach' (*eerxato poiein te kai didaskein*) implies that what Jesus 'began' in the Gospel continues through his apostles in Acts — the ascension does not end Jesus's work but changes its mode.
2. The verb *aneleemphthee* ('was taken up') is the technical term for the ascension, used again in verse 11 and in 1 Timothy 3:16. The phrase 'through the Holy Spirit' (*dia pneumatos hagiou*) can modify either 'given instructions' or 'chosen' — the ambiguity is present in the Greek. We follow the more natural reading linking it to the instructions.
2. The word *apostolois* ('apostles') here designates the specific group Jesus chose, not the broader later usage of the term. Luke uses it as a technical title for the Twelve.
3. The Greek *tekmeriois* ('proofs, convincing evidence') is a strong term from legal and philosophical discourse — these are not casual sightings but demonstrable evidence. Luke the historian emphasizes the evidentiary quality of the resurrection appearances.
3. The forty-day period (*di' heemerōn tesserakonta*) is mentioned only here in the New Testament. It echoes Moses' forty days on Sinai (Exodus 24:18) and Elijah's forty-day journey to Horeb (1 Kings 19:8). The risen Jesus uses this time to teach about the kingdom — a post-resurrection seminar on God's reign.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 24:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Kings 19:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The Greek *synalizomenos* is debated: it may mean 'eating together with' (from *hals*, 'salt') or 'being assembled with' (from *syn* + *halizō*). The eating interpretation is favored by many scholars as it emphasizes the physical reality of the risen Jesus sharing meals with his disciples (cf. Luke 24:41-43). We follow this reading.

4. The 'promise of the Father' (teen epangelian tou patros) refers to the Holy Spirit, as clarified in verse 5. This connects to Joel 2:28-29 and Jesus's own promises in Luke 24:49 and John 14-16.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joel 2:28-29. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The contrast between John's water baptism and the coming Spirit baptism is a key theme in Luke-Acts (cf. Luke 3:16). The preposition en can mean 'with' or 'in' — 'baptized in the Holy Spirit' and 'baptized with the Holy Spirit' are both valid renderings. We choose 'with' for clarity, though the immersion imagery of 'in' captures the Greek metaphor better.
5. The phrase 'not many days from now' (ou meta pollas tautas heemeras) deliberately avoids specifying the exact timing, building anticipation for the Pentecost event in chapter 2.
6. The imperfect tense eerōtōn ('they were asking, kept asking') suggests persistent questioning, not a single query. The verb apokathistaneis ('are you restoring') carries overtones of the prophetic hope for Israel's restoration (cf. Malachi 4:5-6, where Elijah 'restores' all things). The disciples assume the Spirit's coming means political restoration — Jesus redirects but does not deny the eventual restoration of Israel.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Malachi 4:5-6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Jesus distinguishes two temporal concepts: chronous ('times,' referring to duration or chronological periods) and kairous ('seasons,' referring to appointed moments or decisive occasions). Together they cover both the timeline and the turning points of God's plan. The Father alone holds authority (exousia) over these — this is a boundary on human knowledge, not a denial that restoration will occur.
8. This verse serves as the programmatic outline for the entire book of Acts: Jerusalem (chapters 1-7), Judea and Samaria (chapters 8-12), and to the ends of the earth (chapters 13-28). The Greek dynamin ('power') is the root of English 'dynamite' — the Spirit's power is not passive but active and transformative.
8. The word martyres ('witnesses') is the root of English 'martyr.' In Acts, bearing witness will cost some disciples their lives (Stephen in chapter 7, James in chapter 12). Witness and suffering are linguistically and theologically intertwined.
8. The phrase 'ends of the earth' (eschatou tees gees) echoes Isaiah 49:6, where the Servant of the LORD is 'a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.' Jesus's commission fulfills the Isaianic servant vision.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 49:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The ascension is described with remarkable restraint. The passive epeerthee ('was lifted up') indicates divine action — Jesus does not fly away under his own power but is taken up by God. The cloud (nephelee) echoes the cloud of divine presence throughout the Old Testament: the pillar of cloud in the wilderness (Exodus 13:21), the cloud on Sinai (Exodus 24:15-18), the cloud filling the temple (1 Kings 8:10-11), and the Son of Man coming with clouds (Daniel 7:13). The cloud is not weather but theophany.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 13:21. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 24:15-18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Kings 8:10-11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 7:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The verb atenizantes ('staring intently, gazing fixedly') conveys the disciples' stunned focus — they cannot look away. The 'two men in white' (andres duo en esthesesin leukais) parallels the two figures at the empty tomb in Luke 24:4. Luke identifies them as men rather than angels, though their white clothing signals heavenly origin. Two witnesses fulfill the Deuteronomic requirement for valid testimony (Deuteronomy 19:15).
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 19:15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The address 'Men of Galilee' (andres Galilaiōi) identifies the apostles by their regional origin and echoes the pattern of address used throughout Acts (cf. 'Men of Israel,' 'Men of Athens'). The promise of return 'in the same way' (hon tropon) — visibly, bodily, with clouds — becomes the foundation of the Christian hope of the second coming. The threefold repetition of 'heaven' (ouranos) in this verse emphasizes both Jesus's destination and the direction from which he will return.
12. A 'Sabbath day's journey' (sabbatou echon hodon) was approximately 2,000 cubits or about half a mile (roughly 1 kilometer), the maximum distance one could travel on the Sabbath according to rabbinic tradition. Luke's geographical note serves both literary and practical purposes — the Mount of Olives is close enough that the disciples could quickly obey Jesus's command to stay in Jerusalem.
12. The Mount of Olives (Elaiōnos, 'of olives') was associated with eschatological expectation in Zechariah 14:4, where the LORD's feet stand on the Mount of Olives at the final redemption.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zechariah 14:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

13. The 'upper room' (to hyperōon) was likely a large second-story room in a Jerusalem house, possibly the same location as the Last Supper (Luke 22:12). The list of eleven apostles differs in order from Luke 6:14-16 — notably Peter and John are paired here (as they will be partners throughout Acts 1-8), whereas in Luke's Gospel Peter and Andrew are paired as brothers. Simon 'the Zealot' (ho zeelotees) may indicate former membership in the Zealot political movement or simply intense religious zeal.
13. 'Judas son of James' (Ioudas Iakōbou) — the KJV renders this 'brother of James,' but the Greek more naturally reads 'son of.' This is the same figure called Thaddaeus in Matthew 10:3.
14. The Greek proskarterountes ('devoting themselves, persisting, being steadfast in') is a strong word indicating persistent, wholehearted commitment — not casual prayer meetings but intense, unified intercession. The adverb homothymadon ('with one mind, unanimously') is a favorite word of Luke in Acts, appearing ten times to describe the early church's unity.
14. This is Mary's last appearance in the New Testament. She is mentioned among the community of prayer, not elevated above it. The 'brothers' (adelphois) of Jesus are mentioned — the same brothers who did not believe during his ministry (John 7:5) are now part of the believing community. James the brother of Jesus will emerge as a leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15, 21).
15. The Greek adelphōn ('brothers') is used inclusively here, as the context clearly includes women (v. 14). We render 'brothers and sisters' to reflect the inclusive usage. The number 120 may be symbolically significant — Jewish tradition required a minimum of 120 men to establish a local council (sanhedrin), so the community meets the threshold for self-governance.
15. The phrase ochlos onomatōn ('a crowd of names') is an unusual expression; 'names' (onomatōn) here means 'persons' — a Semitic idiom reflected in the Greek.
16. Peter's speech demonstrates early Christian hermeneutics: the Psalms of David are read as prophetic, spoken 'through' David by the Holy Spirit. The verb edei ('it was necessary') expresses divine necessity — Judas's betrayal, while morally culpable, fell within God's sovereign plan. The description of Judas as 'guide' (hodēgou) for the arrest party emphasizes his active role in leading them to Jesus.
17. The verb kateerithmemenos ('numbered, counted among') emphasizes that Judas was a genuine member of the Twelve, not an outsider. The word kleeron ('lot, share, portion') is the same word used for the lot-casting in verse 26 — Judas received his allotted portion of the ministry (diakonia), making his betrayal all the more grievous.
18. This parenthetical note (vv. 18-19) is Luke's aside to the reader, not part of Peter's speech. The account of Judas's death differs from Matthew 27:3-10, where Judas hangs himself and the priests buy the field. Various harmonizations have been proposed, but the texts present genuinely different traditions. We render the Greek as given without attempting to reconcile.
18. The Greek preeness genomenos ('falling headfirst/prone') and elakēsen mesos ('burst open in the middle') is graphic and visceral. Luke does not sanitize the scene. The 'reward of wickedness' (misthou tees adikias) echoes the language of Balaam's wages in 2 Peter 2:15.
19. Luke translates the Aramaic name for his Greek-speaking audience. Hakeldamach (κελδαμάχ) represents the Aramaic chaqel dema ('field of blood'). The phrase 'in their own language' (tee idia dialektō autōn) refers to Aramaic, the common spoken language of Jerusalem. Luke's geographical and linguistic notes serve his role as historian writing for a Gentile audience.
20. Peter quotes two Psalms: Psalm 69:25 (LXX 68:26) and Psalm 109:8 (LXX 108:8). The first applies to Judas's vacated place; the second provides the scriptural basis for selecting a replacement. The Greek episkopeen ('position of oversight, office') is the root of 'bishop/episcopate' — the KJV's 'bishopric' is a translation that reads later church structure back into the text. We render it as 'position of oversight' to preserve the original sense.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 69:25 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 109:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Peter establishes the criteria for apostolic replacement: the candidate must have been a continuous companion of the Twelve throughout Jesus's public ministry. The phrase 'went in and out' (eisēlthen kai exēlthen) is a Semitic idiom for daily life and activity (cf. Deuteronomy 28:6, 'when you come in and when you go out'). This defines apostleship as grounded in firsthand eyewitness experience.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 28:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The timeframe spans from John's baptism (the beginning of Jesus's public ministry) to the ascension. The central qualification is being a 'witness of his resurrection' (martyra tees anastaseōs autou) — the resurrection is the core apostolic testimony in Acts. The verb genesthai ('become') indicates appointment to a role, not ordination in the later ecclesiastical sense.
23. Joseph Barsabbas bears three names: his given name Joseph, his Aramaic patronymic Barsabbas ('son of the Sabbath' or 'son of the elder'), and his Latin cognomen Justus ('the righteous one'). The triple naming reflects the multilingual culture of first-century Jerusalem. Matthias (Maththias) is a shortened form of Mattathias ('gift of the LORD'). Neither man appears elsewhere in Acts after this passage.
24. The title kardiognōsta ('knower of hearts') appears only here and in Acts 15:8 in the New Testament. It is ambiguous whether the prayer is addressed to God the Father or to the risen Jesus — 'Lord' (kyrie) can refer to either in Acts. The verb exelexō ('you have chosen') is aorist, implying that God has already made the selection; the lot merely reveals the divine choice.

25. The phrase 'his own place' (ton topon ton idion) is a grim euphemism for Judas's fate after death. The verb parebee ('turned aside, transgressed') suggests a deliberate departure from the path — Judas did not merely fall but actively deviated. The coupling of 'ministry and apostleship' (diakonia and apostolees) defines the role as both service and commission.
26. Lot-casting was an established Old Testament method for discerning God's will (cf. Proverbs 16:33, 'The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD'). This is the last recorded use of lots in the New Testament — after Pentecost, the Holy Spirit provides direct guidance, making the mechanical method unnecessary.
26. The verb synkatepsēphisthee ('was counted together with, was enrolled with') is a compound word suggesting formal addition to the group by common vote or reckoning. Matthias becomes the twelfth apostle, restoring the symbolic number that represents the twelve tribes of Israel.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 16:33. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

2

Summary: *Acts 2 narrates the day of Pentecost: the Holy Spirit descends on the gathered believers with wind and fire, enabling them to speak in the languages of the nations. Peter delivers the first Christian sermon, interpreting the event through Joel 2, Psalm 16, and Psalm 110. He proclaims Jesus as the crucified and risen Messiah whom God has made both Lord and Christ. Three thousand people respond, are baptized, and form the first church community characterized by apostolic teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Pentecost was already a major Jewish festival (Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks) celebrating the wheat harvest and, by the first century, also commemorating the giving of the Torah at Sinai. The Spirit's descent on this day reframes Sinai: where the first covenant was given with fire and thunder on a mountain, the new covenant is given with fire and wind in a city. The gift of languages reverses Babel (Genesis 11) — where God confused languages to scatter humanity, God now gives languages to gather humanity. Peter's sermon is a masterpiece of early christological argument, using Israel's own scriptures to demonstrate that Jesus is the promised Messiah.*

Translation Friction: *The nature of the 'tongues' in verses 4-11 (known human languages vs. ecstatic speech) has been debated throughout church history. Luke's description clearly indicates known languages understood by the international audience. The Joel quotation in verses 17-21 follows the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew text in several details. Peter's argument from Psalm 16 (vv. 25-28) depends on the assumption that David could not have been speaking about himself since David died and was buried.*

Connections: *The Pentecost event fulfills Jesus's promise in Acts 1:5, 8. Joel 2:28-32 provides the prophetic framework. Psalm 16:8-11 and Psalm 110:1 provide the christological proof texts. The community description in verses 42-47 becomes the model for church life throughout Acts (cf. 4:32-35). The 'last days' language connects to Isaiah 2:2 and Micah 4:1.*

¹When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound came from heaven like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Tongues as of fire appeared to them, distributing themselves, and one rested on each of them. ⁴They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them the ability to speak out. ⁵Now there were devout Jews living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven. ⁶When this sound occurred, the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷They were astonished and amazed, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸How is it that each of us hears them in our own native language? ⁹Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene, and visitors from Rome — ¹¹Cretans and Arabs alike — we hear them declaring the mighty works of God in our own languages! ¹²They were all astonished and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³But others were mocking and saying, "They are full of sweet wine." ¹⁴But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and pay attention to my words. ¹⁵For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only nine in the morning. ¹⁶Rather, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷"And it will be in

the last days,' God says, 'that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸Even on my male servants and female servants I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹And I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below — blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. ²¹And it will be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' ²²"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God through mighty works and wonders and signs that God performed through him in your midst, as you yourselves know — ²³Him, while delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you possess removed, and by corrupt hands have crucified and slain. ²⁴But God raised him up, having freed him from the agony of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. ²⁵For David says concerning him: 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken. ²⁶Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced; moreover, my flesh also will live in hope, ²⁷Because you will not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt you suffer your Holy One to see corruption. ²⁸You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.' ²⁹"Brothers, I can speak to you confidently about the patriarch David: he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰Since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn an oath to him that he would seat one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹Indeed, he seeing this prior to spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not departed in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. ³²This Jesus God raised up, and of this we are all witnesses. ³³Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear. ³⁴For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, ³⁵Until I make your foes your footstool. ³⁶Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you crucified." ³⁷When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" ³⁸Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off — everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." ⁴⁰With many other words he solemnly testified and kept urging them, saying, "Be saved from this crooked generation!" ⁴¹So those who received his message were baptized, and about three thousand people were added that day. ⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Aw e came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴All who believed were together and held everything in common. ⁴⁵They would sell their possessions and belongings and distribute the proceeds to all, as anyone had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together with one purpose in the temple courts, and breaking bread from house to house, they shared their meals with joy and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷They praised God and enjoyed the goodwill of all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *symplērousthai* ('to be fulfilled, to arrive in fullness') suggests not merely that the day came but that it reached its appointed fullness — a theologically loaded term. Pentecost (*pentēkostē*, 'fiftieth') fell fifty days after Passover. As a harvest festival (*Shavuot*), it was one of three pilgrimage feasts requiring attendance in Jerusalem, explaining the international crowd described in verses 5-11.
1. The phrase *epi to auto* ('in one place' or 'together') echoes 1:15 and emphasizes the unity of the community at the moment of the Spirit's descent.
2. The Greek *pnoē* ('wind, breath, blast') is related to *pneuma* ('spirit/wind') — the wordplay connects the physical phenomenon to the Holy Spirit (*pneuma hagion*). The wind comes 'from heaven' (*ek tou ouranou*), marking its divine origin. The verb *eplērōsen* ('filled') anticipates the believers being 'filled' with the Spirit in verse 4. The violence of the wind (*biaias*, 'forceful, violent') recalls the theophany at Sinai (Exodus 19:16-19) and Elijah's experience at Horeb (1 Kings 19:11).
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 19:16-19. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 19:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

3. The Greek *diamerizomenai* ('distributing themselves, dividing') describes the fire separating into individual flames — one for each person. The word *glōssai* ('tongues') does double duty: the fire appears in tongue-like shapes, and the result is speaking in tongues (languages). Fire is a consistent symbol of divine presence in the Old Testament: the burning bush (Exodus 3:2), the pillar of fire (Exodus 13:21), and the fire on Sinai (Exodus 19:18). That the fire rests on 'each one' (*hena hekaston*) emphasizes the individual, personal nature of the Spirit's coming — not corporate only but personal.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 3:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 13:21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 19:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The passive *eplēsthēsan* ('were filled') indicates divine action — the Spirit fills them; they do not generate the experience themselves. The phrase *heterais glōssais* ('other tongues/languages') is clarified by verses 6-11 as known human languages, not ecstatic speech. The verb *apophthengesthai* ('to speak out, to declare boldly') is rare in the New Testament (used only here, v. 14, and 26:25) and carries the connotation of inspired, prophetic utterance — weighty proclamation, not babbling.
5. The phrase 'from every nation under heaven' (*apo pantos ethnous tōn hypo ton ouranon*) is hyperbolic but reflects the reality that the Jewish diaspora extended throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. These are not tourists but *katoikountes* ('residing, dwelling') — diaspora Jews who had settled in Jerusalem, likely for religious reasons. The word *eulabeis* ('devout, reverent, God-fearing') characterizes them as pious Jews, not yet Christians.
6. The 'sound' (*phōnēs*) likely refers to the sound of the wind from verse 2 rather than the speaking in tongues. The verb *synechythē* ('was bewildered, confounded, thrown into confusion') is a strong word indicating deep cognitive dissonance — they cannot make sense of what they are experiencing. The phrase *tē idia dialektō* ('in his own dialect/language') specifies that this is not generic babbling but precise, recognizable languages corresponding to each listener's mother tongue.
7. The double expression *existanto kai ethaumazon* ('were astonished and amazed') piles up terms for shock. Galileans were known for their distinctive accent (cf. Matthew 26:73) and were generally regarded by Judeans as less educated and culturally unsophisticated. The rhetorical question highlights the incongruity: how can these provincial Galileans speak fluently in the sophisticated languages of the wider world?
8. The phrase 'in which we were born' (*en hē egennēthēmen*) specifies these as mother tongues — the languages heard in childhood, the deepest linguistic identity. This detail rules out the interpretation that the audience merely understood a common language like Aramaic or Greek; they each heard their own distinct dialect.
9. The list begins with regions east of the Roman Empire (Parthia, Media, Elam — modern Iran and Iraq) and moves westward. This geographical sweep represents the entire known world. The inclusion of 'Judea' is surprising in a Jerusalem setting — some scholars emend it to 'Armenia' or 'India,' but the text may simply mean Jews from the Judean countryside as opposed to Jerusalem residents, or it may represent the complete geographical coverage Luke intends.
10. The list continues through Asia Minor (Phrygia, Pamphylia), North Africa (Egypt, Libya/Cyrene), and reaches Rome itself. The 'visitors from Rome' (*hoi epidēmoutēs Rhōmaioi*) are temporary residents or pilgrims, distinguished from the permanent Jerusalem settlers of verse 5. Cyrene in Libya had a large Jewish community; Simon of Cyrene who carried Jesus's cross came from there (Luke 23:26).
11. The phrase 'Jews and converts' (*Ioudaioi te kai prosēlytoi*) is a parenthetical clarification covering the entire list — all these nationalities include both ethnic Jews and Gentile converts to Judaism. The content of the Spirit-enabled speech is 'the mighty deeds of God' (*ta megaleia tou theou*) — not random utterances but coherent praise of God's great acts. This echoes the Hebrew *magnalia Dei* tradition found in the Psalms.
11. The list ends with Cretans (island Mediterranean) and Arabs (the desert south and east), completing the compass-point coverage of the known world.
12. The verb *diēporoun* ('were perplexed, were at a loss') indicates genuine intellectual struggle, not dismissal. These are devout people trying to make sense of an unprecedented event. The question 'What does this mean?' (*ti thelei touto einai*, literally 'What does this wish to be?') sets up Peter's sermon, which will provide the scriptural interpretation.
13. The verb *diachleuazontes* ('mocking, jeering, sneering') is intensified by the prefix *dia-*, indicating thorough mockery. *Gleukos* ('sweet wine, new wine') was unfermented or partially fermented grape juice — lower in alcohol than aged wine. The accusation is somewhat absurd: it would take large quantities of sweet wine to produce drunkenness, especially in the morning. Peter addresses this directly in verse 15.
14. Peter stands 'with the eleven' (*syn tois hendeka*), showing apostolic solidarity — he speaks as their representative, not as an individual. The verb *apophthengato* ('spoke out, declared') is the same rare verb used in verse 4 for Spirit-inspired speech, linking Peter's sermon to the same Spirit-empowerment that produced the tongues. The phrase *enōtistashe* ('give ear, listen carefully') is a Septuagintalism echoing the prophetic call to attention (cf. Isaiah 1:2).
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 1:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The 'third hour' (*hōra tritē*) is approximately 9:00 AM by Jewish time reckoning (counting from sunrise at roughly 6:00 AM). Peter's argument from the time of day is practical: even on feast days, people did not drink before the morning prayers and sacrifices were complete. The defense is simple but effective — and it is merely the setup for the real explanation that follows.

16. Peter identifies the Pentecost event as the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy — 'this is that' (touto estin to) is a direct identification formula. The preposition *dia* ('through') presents Joel as the instrument through whom God spoke, consistent with the view of prophetic inspiration expressed in 1:16.
17. Peter's quotation modifies Joel 2:28 (LXX 3:1) in a significant way: Joel has 'after these things' (*meta tauta*), but Peter substitutes 'in the last days' (*en tais eschatais hēmerais*), explicitly interpreting Pentecost as the inauguration of the eschatological age. The pouring out of the Spirit is universal in scope — 'all flesh' (*pasan sarka*) breaks barriers of gender (sons and daughters), age (young and old), and as verse 18 will add, social status.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Joel 2:28-32. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. Joel's original text has 'servants and female servants' without the possessive 'my'; Peter's version (following the LXX variant) adds 'my' (*mou*), transforming social servants into God's own servants. This universalization of the Spirit breaks the social hierarchy: slaves and free, male and female all receive the prophetic Spirit. The addition of 'and they will prophesy' (*kai prophēteusousin*) is not in the Hebrew of Joel 2:29 — Peter extends the prophetic promise explicitly to the lowest social stratum.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Joel 2:28-32 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. Peter adds 'above' (*anō*) and 'below' (*katō*) to Joel's text, emphasizing the cosmic scope of God's activity. The triad 'blood and fire and billows of smoke' may echo the Sinai theophany (Exodus 19:18) or anticipate the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. The Greek *atmida kapnou* ('vapor/billow of smoke') suggests thick, rising columns of smoke, not mere wisps.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joel 2:28-32. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 19:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Joel's Hebrew has 'great and terrible' (*gadol v'nora*); the LXX renders *nora* as *epiphanē* ('glorious, manifest, splendid') rather than 'terrible' — a significant interpretive shift from fear to revelation. The 'day of the Lord' (*hēmeran kyriou*) is a major prophetic concept throughout the Old Testament (Isaiah 2:12, Amos 5:18-20, Zephaniah 1:14-18), originally a day of judgment that Peter now connects to the events surrounding Jesus.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joel 2:28-32 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 2:12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Amos 5:18-20 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zephaniah 1:14-18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. This is the climactic line of the Joel quotation and the hinge of Peter's sermon. In Joel, 'the Lord' (*kyrios*) translates YHWH — calling on the name of Israel's God. Peter will argue in verses 34-36 that Jesus is this Lord (*kyrios*), so that calling on the name of Jesus is calling on the name of the LORD. The verb *sōthēsetai* ('will be saved') encompasses both immediate rescue and eschatological salvation — the same word Paul will use in Romans 10:13 when quoting this same verse.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Joel 2:28-32. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. Peter shifts from Joel's prophecy to its christological application. The designation 'the Nazarene' (*ton Nazōraion*) identifies Jesus by his hometown, grounding the theological claims in historical specificity. The triad 'mighty works and wonders and signs' (*dynamesin kai terasin kai sēmeiois*) covers the full range of Jesus's miraculous activity. Crucially, Peter says God performed these 'through him' (*di' autou*) — the miracles attest God's endorsement of Jesus. The appeal to the audience's own knowledge ('as you yourselves know') grounds the argument in shared public memory.
23. Peter holds two truths in tension without resolving the paradox: Jesus's death was both 'the determined plan and foreknowledge of God' (*tē hōrismenē boulē kai prognōsei tou theou*) and the moral responsibility of those who crucified him. The 'lawless men' (*anomōn*) are the Roman soldiers who physically performed the crucifixion — 'lawless' because they were outside the Torah. But the 'you' (the Jewish audience) are also implicated: 'you put to death' (*aneilate*). Peter does not soften either side of this tension.
24. The phrase 'agony of death' (*tas ōdinas tou thanatou*) literally means 'birth pangs of death' — the image is of death in labor, unable to hold its prey, forced to 'give birth' to the risen Jesus. The LXX of Psalm 18:5 (= 2 Samuel 22:6) uses the same phrase. The declaration 'it was not possible' (*ouk ēn dynaton*) is theologically profound: death's inability to hold Jesus is not merely historical but ontological — it lies in the nature of who Jesus is.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 18:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Samuel 22:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. Peter now quotes Psalm 16:8-11 (LXX 15:8-11), attributing the words to David and applying them to Jesus. The Greek *proorōmēn* ('I saw beforehand, I kept before me') translates the Hebrew *shiviti* ('I have set'). The Lord at the right hand provides stability and protection — 'I will not be shaken' (*mē saleuthō*) expresses unshakeable confidence in divine presence.

25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 16:8-11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The LXX has 'tongue' (glōssa) where the Hebrew of Psalm 16:9 has 'glory' (kavod) — a significant textual divergence. The Hebrew kavod ('glory, weightiness') likely refers to the inner self or honor, which the LXX translators rendered as 'tongue' (perhaps reading kavod as kaved, 'liver,' an organ associated with deep emotion). The phrase 'my flesh will live in hope' (hē sarx mou kataskēnōsei ep' elpidi) becomes Peter's key proof text: if David's flesh 'lives in hope,' whose flesh found that hope fulfilled?
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 16:8-11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. Hades (hadēn) is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Sheol — the realm of the dead, not the later Christian concept of hell as a place of punishment. 'Decay' (diaphthoran) translates the Hebrew shachat, which can mean 'pit' or 'corruption/decay.' The LXX's choice of diaphthora ('decay, corruption') is crucial for Peter's argument: David's body did see decay (v. 29), but Jesus's did not (v. 31). The term 'Holy One' (hōsion) translates the Hebrew chasid ('faithful, loyal, devoted one').
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 16:8-11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The 'paths of life' (hodos zōēs) implies not merely survival but the way to fullness of life — a path through death to resurrection. The final image — 'joy in your presence' (euphrosynēs meta tou prosōpou sou, literally 'gladness with your face') — is the ultimate hope: restored face-to-face relationship with God. The Psalm quotation ends on this note of joy, which Peter will now apply to the risen Jesus.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 16:8-11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. Peter's argument is straightforward: David cannot have been speaking about himself in Psalm 16 because David died, was buried, and his tomb is still present in Jerusalem — his body did see decay. The word parrhēsia ('confidently, boldly, with freedom of speech') indicates Peter is making a potentially controversial claim about Israel's greatest king. David's tomb was a well-known Jerusalem landmark, so the point is verifiable.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. Peter identifies David as a prophet, not merely a king and poet — this justifies reading the Psalms as prophetic. The oath refers to 2 Samuel 7:12-13 and Psalm 132:11, where God promises David an eternal dynasty. The Greek ek karpou tēs osphyos autou ('from the fruit of his loins') is a Hebraic idiom for physical descendants. We render this as 'one of his descendants' for natural modern English while noting the idiom.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Samuel 7:12-13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 132:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. Peter now makes the interpretive move explicit: David's words in Psalm 16 were prophetic speech about the Messiah's resurrection. The two key claims from Psalm 16:10 — not abandoned to Hades and no bodily decay — are applied to Jesus's resurrection. Peter's argument depends on the physical nature of the resurrection: Jesus's actual body did not decompose.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. The sentence is emphatic in Greek: 'This Jesus' (touton ton Iēsoun) is placed first for emphasis — this specific historical person, not an abstract concept. The claim to be 'witnesses' (martyres) circles back to 1:8 — the apostles fulfill their commission as witnesses to the resurrection. The 'all' (pantes) includes the eleven standing with Peter, a claim that could be immediately verified or challenged by the audience.
33. Peter connects the ascension (exaltation to God's right hand), the reception of the Spirit from the Father, and the Pentecost event in a single theological chain: Jesus is exalted Jesus receives the Spirit from the Father Jesus pours out the Spirit on his followers. The verb exechēen ('poured out') directly echoes the Joel quotation in verse 17 ('I will pour out my Spirit'). The appeal to sensory evidence — 'what you both see and hear' (blepete kai akouete) — grounds the theological claim in observable phenomena.
34. Peter now quotes Psalm 110:1 (LXX 109:1), the most frequently cited Old Testament text in the New Testament. The same argument applies: David did not ascend to heaven, so these words must refer to someone greater than David. The double 'Lord' (eipen ho kyrios tō kyriō mou) reflects the Hebrew 'the LORD (YHWH) said to my lord (adoni)' — David's lord is the Messiah, who sits at God's right hand.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 110:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. The image of enemies as a footstool reflects ancient Near Eastern conquest imagery — victorious kings literally placed their feet on the necks of conquered enemies (cf. Joshua 10:24). The Psalm envisions a period of reigning at God's right hand until all opposition is subdued. Peter leaves the implication hanging: if Jesus is now at God's right hand, then the subjugation of all enemies is underway.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 110:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 10:24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. This is the sermon's climax. The adverb *asphalōs* ('with certainty, beyond doubt') demands intellectual assent, not mere emotional response. 'Lord and Christ' (*kyrion kai christon*) — the two titles Peter has argued for throughout the sermon converge: *kyrios* from Psalm 110:1 and *christos* from Psalm 16. The final phrase — 'this Jesus whom you crucified' (*touton ton Iēsoun hon hymeis estaurōsate*) — is deliberately confrontational, pressing the audience to reckon with the implications of having killed God's anointed one.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 110:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. The verb *katenygēsan* ('were pierced, were cut to the heart') is a powerful word describing deep emotional and spiritual conviction — it appears only here in the New Testament. The audience's question 'What should we do?' (*ti poiēsōmen*) is the proper response to conviction: not debate but action. Their address 'brothers' (*adelphoi*) shows they still consider Peter and the apostles fellow Jews.
38. Peter's response contains four elements: repentance, baptism, forgiveness, and the gift of the Spirit. The verb *metanoēsate* ('repent') means to change one's mind and direction — the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *teshuvah* ('return'). The preposition *epi* ('in/on/upon') with 'the name of Jesus Christ' indicates that baptism is performed on the authority of and in connection with Jesus. The preposition *eis* before 'forgiveness' can mean 'for the purpose of' or 'on the basis of' — both translations are grammatically possible.
39. The scope of the promise expands in three concentric circles: 'you' (the present audience), 'your children' (the next generation), and 'all who are far off' (*tous eis makran*). The phrase 'those far off' echoes Isaiah 57:19 and Ephesians 2:13, 17 — it can refer to future generations, to diaspora Jews, or to Gentiles. Peter may not yet fully grasp the Gentile implications, but Luke's reader does. The final clause — 'everyone whom the Lord our God calls' — grounds the universal offer in divine initiative.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 57:19. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
40. Luke summarizes the rest of Peter's sermon rather than recording it fully — 'many other words' (*heterois logois pleiosin*) indicates this is an excerpt. The verb *diemartyrato* ('solemnly testified') carries legal weight, while *parekalei* ('kept urging, exhorting') is imperfect tense indicating ongoing, persistent appeal. The phrase 'crooked generation' (*geneas tēs skolias*) echoes Moses' words in Deuteronomy 32:5 and Jesus's own language in Matthew 17:17.
40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 32:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The number 'about three thousand' (*hōsei trischiliai*) represents a massive response to a single sermon. The passive *prosetethēsan* ('were added') implies divine agency — God adds to the community. The word *psychai* ('souls/people') is used in the Semitic sense of 'persons,' not in the Greek philosophical sense of immortal souls. The logistics of baptizing three thousand people in a single day likely involved the numerous *mikva'ot* (ritual immersion pools) near the Temple, which have been archaeologically confirmed.
42. This verse is often called the four marks of the early church: teaching (*didachē*), fellowship (*koinōnia*), breaking of bread (*klasis tou artou*), and prayers (*proseuchais*). The verb *proskarterountes* ('devoting themselves') is the same word used in 1:14 — the persistence that characterized the pre-Pentecost community continues and intensifies. 'Breaking of bread' may refer to ordinary communal meals, the Lord's Supper, or both — Luke does not distinguish. The plural 'prayers' (*proseuchais*) may indicate set times of prayer, possibly following the Jewish daily prayer schedule.
43. The word *phobos* ('fear, awe, reverence') here indicates reverential awe rather than terror — the community lived with a sense of the sacred. The 'wonders and signs' (*terata kai sēmeia*) performed through the apostles echo the description of Jesus's own ministry in verse 22, showing continuity between Jesus's work and the apostles' work through the Spirit. The imperfect tense *egineto* ('were being done') indicates ongoing, repeated miraculous activity.
44. The phrase *epi to auto* ('together, in the same place') echoes verses 1 and 1:15 — unity of place reflects unity of heart. The economic sharing described here — 'held everything in common' (*eichon hapanta koina*) — is voluntary community, not enforced communism. The sharing arises from the *koinōnia* described in verse 42, not from external compulsion. Luke presents this as an ideal, not necessarily as a permanent economic model.
45. Luke distinguishes between 'possessions' (*ktēmata*, typically real property like land) and 'belongings' (*hyparxeis*, personal goods and assets). The imperfect tenses (*epipraskon*, *diemerizon*) indicate ongoing, repeated action — they sold as needs arose, not in a single liquidation event. Distribution was based on need (*chreia*), not equality — a principle of sufficiency rather than uniformity.
46. The early believers maintained a dual pattern of worship: public gathering in the temple (*en tō hierō*, referring to the temple courts, especially Solomon's Portico per 3:11) and private fellowship in homes (*kat' oikon*). They did not abandon Jewish temple worship but supplemented it with distinctly Christian home gatherings. The word *aphelotēti* ('sincerity, simplicity, generosity') occurs only here in the New Testament — it suggests an unaffected, genuine quality of heart free from pretense.
47. The chapter ends with two complementary realities: human praise ('praising God') and divine growth ('the Lord was adding'). The present participle *sōzomenous* ('those being saved') indicates an ongoing process, not a completed transaction — salvation in Acts is both an event and a journey. The phrase *epi to auto* ('to their number, together') echoes the opening of the chapter, creating a literary frame: the community that gathered in verse 1

has grown from 120 to over 3,000.

47. Luke does not use the word 'church' (ekklēsia) here, though the KJV adds it. The SBLGNT simply has 'adding together' — the community is described by its life rather than by a title.

3

Summary: *Acts 3 narrates the healing of a man lame from birth at the Beautiful Gate of the temple by Peter and John. The miracle draws a crowd in Solomon's Portico, and Peter delivers his second major sermon, arguing that the healing was performed through faith in the name of Jesus — the same Jesus whom the people of Jerusalem rejected and handed over for crucifixion. Peter calls for repentance and identifies Jesus as the prophet like Moses foretold in Deuteronomy 18, and as the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant promise that through Abraham's offspring all the families of the earth would be blessed.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The healing at the temple gate is the first recorded miracle of the apostolic church after Pentecost. Peter's declaration 'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you' (v. 6) has become one of the most quoted lines in Acts. The sermon presents a distinctive christological argument: Jesus is both the Suffering Servant (v. 13, 'glorified his servant Jesus') and the Prophet like Moses (v. 22). The concept of 'times of refreshing' (v. 19) and 'the restoration of all things' (v. 21) introduce eschatological themes unique to this speech.*

Translation Friction: *The Greek pais in verse 13 can mean 'servant' or 'child' — its connection to the Servant Songs of Isaiah (especially Isaiah 52:13) is likely but debated. Peter's accusation in verses 13-15 is direct and pointed ('you denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be granted to you'), raising questions about corporate responsibility versus individual guilt. The phrase 'restoration of all things' (apokatastaseōs pantōn) in verse 21 has been interpreted variously as universal salvation, cosmic renewal, or Israel's political restoration.*

Connections: *The healing fulfills Jesus's promise that the apostles would do the works he did (John 14:12). Peter's sermon connects to the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12:3, 22:18), the Mosaic promise of a prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15-19), and the Servant Songs of Isaiah. The 'times of refreshing' language connects to prophetic hopes in Isaiah 28:12 and 32:15. The identification of Jesus as 'the Holy and Righteous One' (v. 14) echoes messianic titles from Isaiah and the Psalms.*

1Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 2A man who had been lame from birth was being carried, whom they placed daily at the temple gate called the Beautiful Gate to beg for alms from those entering the temple. 3When he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he asked them for money. 4Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." 5He fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 6But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I do have, I give to you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene — walk!" 7Taking him by the right hand, he raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. 8Leaping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9Every one of the people noticed him walking and praising God: 10They recognized that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple — then they were overflowing with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him. 11While the man clung to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at what is called Solomon's Portico, utterly astonished. 12When Peter saw this, he addressed the people: "Men of Israel, why are you amazed at this? Why do you stare at us as though we made him walk by our own power or godliness? 13The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and denied before Pilate, when he had decided to release him. 14You denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked for a murderer to be given to you. 15You killed the Author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. 16And on the basis of faith in his name, his name has made this man strong — this man whom you see and know. The faith that comes through Jesus has given him this complete health in the presence of all of you. 17"And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your rulers. 18But what God foretold through the mouth of all the prophets — that his Christ would suffer — he has fulfilled in this way. 19Repent therefore, and

turn back, so that your sins may be wiped away, ²⁰He will send Jesus Christ, which prior to was preached to you:. ²¹Whom the heaven must accept until the times of restitution of all matters, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the present age began. ²²Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers. You must listen to him in everything he tells you. ²³And it will be that every person who does not listen to that prophet will be utterly destroyed from among the people.' ²⁴And all the prophets, from Samuel and those who came after him, as many as have spoken, also proclaimed these days. ²⁵You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed.' ²⁶God raised up his servant and sent him to you first, to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The ninth hour (approximately 3:00 PM) was one of the three daily prayer times in Jewish practice, coinciding with the afternoon tamid (daily sacrifice). Peter and John's continued participation in temple worship shows that the early believers remained within Judaism. The imperfect anebanion ('were going up') captures them in mid-journey, setting the scene for the encounter at the gate.
2. The phrase 'lame from his mother's womb' (chōlos ek kolias mētros autou) establishes that this is a congenital condition — not an injury but a lifelong disability, making the healing all the more remarkable. The Beautiful Gate (tēn Horaian) is likely the Nicanor Gate, a massive bronze gate on the east side of the temple connecting the Court of the Gentiles to the Court of Women. Its identification is debated among archaeologists. The man's daily placement at this gate means he was a well-known figure, which matters for the public impact of the miracle (cf. v. 10).
3. The man asks for eleēmōsynēn ('alms, charitable gift') — the standard term for religiously motivated charity. He has no expectation of healing; his request is purely economic. The imperfect ērōta ('was asking, kept asking') suggests ongoing, repeated begging — this was his daily routine.
4. The verb atenisas ('looked intently, fixed his gaze') is the same word used for the disciples staring at the sky during the ascension (1:10). Peter's fixed gaze signals that something more than a casual encounter is about to happen. The command 'Look at us' (blepson eis hēmas) is not merely a request for eye contact but a call to attention — something is about to be given that is far more than coins.
5. The verb epeichen ('fixed attention, turned toward') shows the man's responsive engagement. His expectation (prosdokōn) is limited to financial assistance — the gap between what he expects and what he is about to receive creates the narrative tension.
6. Peter's declaration has a poetic rhythm in Greek: argyrion kai chrysiōn ouch hyparchei moi ('silver and gold do not belong to me'). The phrase 'in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene' (en tō onomati Iēsou Christou tou Nazōraiou) is not a magic formula but an invocation of Jesus's authority and power. The command peripatei ('walk!') is a present imperative — 'start walking and keep walking.' The name of Jesus becomes the central controversy in chapter 4.
7. The physical act of grasping the right hand (piasas tēs dexias cheiros) is both practical assistance and symbolic — the right hand signifies strength and authority. Luke, traditionally identified as a physician, provides medical detail: the baseis ('feet, soles') and sphyra ('ankles, ankle bones') are specific anatomical terms. The verb estereōthēsan ('were made strong, were solidified') indicates instant structural transformation — bones and muscles that had never functioned properly were immediately restored.
8. The sequence of verbs captures the man's escalating joy: exallomenos ('leaping up'), estē ('stood'), periepatei ('walked around'), hallomenos ('leaping'), ainōn ('praising'). The repetition of walking and leaping reflects someone testing and celebrating abilities he has never had. His entrance into the temple is theologically significant: lame persons were excluded from certain temple areas (cf. 2 Samuel 5:8). The healing restores not just physical function but full participation in worship. The scene echoes Isaiah 35:6: 'Then the lame will leap like a deer.'
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Samuel 5:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 35:6: — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The public nature of the miracle is emphasized — 'all the people' (pas ho laos) in the temple courts witnessed it. This public setting in the temple provides both the audience for Peter's sermon and the provocation for the authorities' response in chapter 4.
10. The verb epeginōskon ('recognized, identified') confirms the man's identity — this is not a stranger but the well-known beggar at the temple gate. The combination thambous kai ekstaseōs ('wonder and astonishment') describes an overwhelming emotional response. Ekstasis (the root of 'ecstasy') literally means 'standing outside oneself' — the crowd is beside themselves with amazement.
11. The healed man 'clung to' (kratountos) Peter and John — a detail of physical attachment that is both grateful and dramatic. Solomon's Portico (stoa Solomōntos) was a covered colonnade along the eastern side of the temple's outer court. It was a traditional gathering place for teaching (cf. John 10:23) and would become the regular meeting place of the early church (5:12). The adjective ekthambol ('utterly astonished') intensifies the amazement already described in verse 10.

12. Peter immediately redirects the crowd's attention from the apostles to God. The two potential misunderstandings he addresses — 'our own power' (idia dymamei) and 'our own godliness' (eusebeia) — represent the temptation to attribute the miracle to human ability or human merit. This deflection establishes a pattern repeated throughout Acts: miracles are not the apostles' achievement but God's work through them.
13. Peter begins with the covenant formula 'The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob' (cf. Exodus 3:6, 15), anchoring his christology in Israel's covenant history. The word paida ('servant/child') echoes Isaiah 52:13 LXX ('my servant shall be exalted and glorified'), identifying Jesus with Isaiah's Suffering Servant. We render 'servant' rather than 'Son' because the Isaianic servant background is primary here, though the filial resonance is present.
13. The accusation is sharp: 'you handed over and denied' (paredōkate kai ěrnēasthe) before Pilate, who wanted to release Jesus. The contrast heightens the guilt: even the pagan governor judged more rightly than the covenant people.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 3:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 52:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The titles 'the Holy One' (ton hagion) and 'the Righteous One' (ton dikaion) are messianic designations drawn from the Old Testament (cf. Isaiah 53:11, 'my righteous servant'). The contrast is devastating: they rejected the Holy and Righteous One and chose a murderer (andrea phonea) — Barabbas (Luke 23:18-25). The irony is sharp: they asked for the life of a killer while demanding the death of the life-giver (v. 15).
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 53:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The title archēgon tēs zōēs ('author/originator/prince of life') is strikingly paradoxical: the source of life was put to death. The Greek archēgos can mean 'founder, pioneer, author, prince, leader' — it appears again in 5:31 and Hebrews 2:10, 12:2. 'Author of life' captures the creative agency implied. The contrast 'you killed... God raised' is the core kerygma (proclamation) of early Christianity, repeated throughout Acts.
16. This verse is grammatically complex, with 'name' and 'faith' mentioned twice each. The 'name' (onoma) of Jesus represents his person, authority, and power — it is not a magical incantation but a relationship of trust. The word holoklērian ('complete health, perfect wholeness') appears only here in the New Testament — it means total, nothing-missing wholeness, covering both physical healing and restoration to full community membership.
17. After the sharp accusations of verses 13-15, Peter softens with a recognition of mitigating circumstance: ignorance (agnoian). This echoes Jesus's prayer on the cross, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing' (Luke 23:34). The inclusion of 'your rulers' (hoi archontes hymōn) extends the ignorance defense to the Sanhedrin and priestly leadership. Ignorance does not remove guilt but makes repentance possible — the door is not shut.
18. Peter claims that the prophets collectively ('all the prophets,' pantōn tōn prophētōn) spoke of the Messiah's suffering. This is a bold hermeneutical claim — the concept of a suffering Messiah was not the dominant expectation in Second Temple Judaism. Peter reads the entirety of prophetic literature as converging on the cross. The verb prokatēngeilen ('foretold, announced beforehand') emphasizes that the suffering was not an accident but a plan.
19. Peter uses two verbs: metanoēsate ('repent,' change your mind) and epistrepsate ('turn back, return'). Together they capture the full biblical concept of repentance: a cognitive change (meta-noeo) and a directional change (epi-strephō). The verb exaleipthēnai ('be wiped away, blotted out') pictures sins being erased from a record — the same word used for wiping tears from eyes in Revelation 21:4.
20. The phrase kairoi anapsyxēs ('times of refreshing') is unique to this passage. Anapsysis means 'cooling, relief, refreshment' — it suggests respite from hardship, a divine breath of fresh air. These times come 'from the presence of the Lord' (apo prosōpou tou kyriou, literally 'from the face of the Lord'). The verb prokecheirismenon ('appointed beforehand, designated in advance') indicates that Jesus's messianic role was established before the events of his earthly life.
21. The phrase apokatastaseōs pantōn ('restoration of all things') is theologically rich and debated. Apokatastasis means 'restoration to a former state' and was later adopted by Origen and others to argue for universal salvation. In Peter's context, it likely refers to the prophetic hope of cosmic renewal — the restoration of all that sin and evil have damaged (cf. Isaiah 65:17, Romans 8:19-22). Jesus remains in heaven 'until' (achri) these times arrive, implying his return will coincide with or inaugurate the restoration.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 65:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. Peter quotes Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19 — Moses' promise of a future prophet who would be 'like me' (hōs eme). In Jewish tradition, this promise was understood to refer to a specific future prophet (cf. John 1:21, 6:14). Peter identifies Jesus as this prophet. The verb anastēsei ('will raise up') carries a double meaning in context: God 'raised up' Jesus both in the sense of appointing him as prophet and in the sense of raising him from the dead.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 18:15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. Peter intensifies the Deuteronomy passage by adding exolethreuthēsetai ('will be utterly destroyed'), which echoes the language of covenant curse (cf. Leviticus 23:29, 'cut off from the people'). The warning is severe: failure to heed the prophet-like-Moses is not mere ignorance but covenant

violation. This sharpens the call to repentance — rejecting Jesus is not a neutral choice but an act with eschatological consequences.

- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 18:19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 23:29 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 24.** Peter extends the prophetic witness beyond Moses to include the entire prophetic tradition beginning with Samuel, traditionally considered the first of the classical prophets (after Moses). The phrase 'these days' (tas hēmeras tautas) is deliberately ambiguous — it includes the present time of fulfillment as well as the future consummation. Peter's point is that the entire prophetic corpus converges on the events now unfolding.
- 25.** Peter quotes Genesis 22:18 (cf. 12:3), connecting the present moment to the Abrahamic covenant. The word *diathēkē* ('covenant') is the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew *berit*. The phrase 'sons of the prophets and of the covenant' (*huiōi tōn prophētōn kai tēs diathēkēs*) means heirs and beneficiaries — the audience stands in the direct line of covenant promise. The word *sperma* ('seed, offspring') is singular, which later Christian interpretation (cf. Galatians 3:16) applied to Christ individually, though the original context includes collective meaning.
- 25.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 22:18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 26.** The sermon ends where it began — with God's servant (*paida*, the same word as v. 13). The word *prōton* ('first') is crucial: the gospel goes to Israel first, before extending to the Gentiles — a priority that Luke will trace through the entire book of Acts (cf. 13:46). The blessing is defined not as material prosperity but as moral transformation: 'turning each of you from your wicked ways' (*apostrephein hekaston apo tōn ponērion hymōn*). The verb *anastēsas* ('having raised up') again carries the double sense of 'appointing' and 'resurrecting.'

4

Summary: *Acts 4 recounts the arrest of Peter and John by the temple authorities following the healing in chapter 3. Brought before the Sanhedrin, Peter boldly declares that the healing was done in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom they crucified but God raised. He proclaims that salvation is found in no one else. The council, unable to deny the miracle but unwilling to accept the message, threatens the apostles and releases them. Peter and John return to the believing community, which prays for boldness. The Spirit shakes the meeting place, and the chapter closes with a description of the community's radical sharing of possessions.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Peter's declaration in verse 12 — "There is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved" — is one of the most definitive christological claims in the New Testament. The Sanhedrin's dilemma in verses 14-16 is striking: the healed man stands before them as undeniable evidence, yet they cannot accept its implications. The community prayer in verses 24-30 quotes Psalm 2 and provides the first recorded instance of the early church interpreting its persecution through the lens of the Psalms. Barnabas appears for the first time (v. 36).*

Translation Friction: *The number of believers reaches 'about five thousand men' (v. 4), raising questions about whether this includes only males or the total community. Peter is described as 'filled with the Holy Spirit' (v. 8) though he was already filled at Pentecost — Luke presents Spirit-filling as repeated rather than one-time. The community's property sharing (vv. 32-37) is idealized and will be complicated by the Ananias and Sapphira episode in chapter 5.*

Connections: *The Sanhedrin trial echoes Jesus's own trial before the same body (Luke 22:66-71). Peter's use of Psalm 118:22 (the rejected stone) connects to Jesus's use of the same text (Luke 20:17). The community prayer's citation of Psalm 2 (vv. 25-26) provides the theological framework for understanding opposition to the church. The sharing of possessions continues the pattern from 2:44-45 and anticipates 5:1-11.*

¹While they were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees confronted them, ²They were deeply disturbed that the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming that the resurrection of the dead had been proven through Jesus. ³They seized them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴But many of those who heard the message believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand. ⁵The next day their rulers and elders and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, ⁶Annas the elevated priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as numerous as were of the kindred of the elevated priest, were gathered as one at Jerusalem. ⁷They placed them in the center

and began to question them: "By what power or by what name did you do this?" ⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, ⁹If we are being questioned today about an act of kindness shown to a disabled man and how he was healed, ¹⁰Be it known to you all, and to every one of the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him does this man stand here before you whole. ¹¹This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹²And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among people by which we must be saved." ¹³Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated, ordinary men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. ¹⁴And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in opposition. ¹⁵After ordering them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, ¹⁶"What should we do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a remarkable miracle, and we cannot deny it." ¹⁷But so that it does not spread any further among the people, let us warn them with threats to speak no longer to anyone in this name." ¹⁸So they called them in and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge. ²⁰For we are not able to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." ²¹After threatening them further, they released them, finding no way to punish them because of the people, for everyone was glorifying God for what had happened. ²²For the man on whom this sign of healing had been performed was more than forty years old. ²³When they were released, they went to their own people and reported everything that the chief priests and elders had said to them. ²⁴When they heard this, they raised their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, you who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵Who by the mouth of your servant David hast stated, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain matters? ²⁶The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers gathered together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.' ²⁷For truly in this city there gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸For to do whatsoever your hand and your counsel determined prior to to be done. ²⁹And now, Lord, consider their threats and grant your servants the ability to speak your word with all boldness, ³⁰Indeed, by stretching forth your hand to heal. And that signs and wonders may be done by the name of your holy child Jesus. ³¹When they had prayed, the place where they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness. ³²Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of their possessions was their own, but they held everything in common. ³³With great power the apostles continued to give their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of what was sold ³⁵Laid them down at the apostles' feet — and distribution was appointed to every man according as he had need. ³⁶Joseph, who was called Barnabas by the apostles (which means 'Son of Encouragement'), a Levite and a native of Cyprus, ³⁷Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and placed it at the messengers' feet.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The 'captain of the temple' (ho stratēgos tou hierou) was the sagan, the second-ranking temple official after the high priest, responsible for temple security. The Sadducees appear as the primary opponents because the apostles' preaching of resurrection directly challenged Sadducean theology, which denied resurrection (Luke 20:27). The verb epestēsan ('confronted, stood over, came upon') has a hostile overtone — this is an official intervention, not a casual interruption.
2. The participle diaponoumenoi ('greatly annoyed, deeply disturbed, indignant') reveals the emotional motivation behind the arrest — this is not calm judicial procedure but irritated reaction. The phrase 'proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead' (katangelein en tō Iēsou tēn anastasin) can mean either 'proclaiming the resurrection through Jesus' (Jesus as the agent) or 'proclaiming in the case of Jesus the resurrection' (Jesus as the example). Both readings are theologically valid.
3. Jewish law prohibited trials at night (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:1), so Peter and John are held overnight. The phrase epebalon tas cheiras ('laid hands on, seized') indicates physical arrest. The detail 'it was already evening' (ēn gar hespera ēdē) explains the delay and shows that Peter's sermon lasted through the afternoon.

4. Despite the arrest, the message spreads — Luke consistently shows that persecution cannot stop the gospel's advance. The number 'about five thousand' (hōs chiliades pente) likely refers to the total male believers, not just those converted this day. The word *andrōn* ('men') may indicate a male-only count following Jewish census conventions, meaning the total community including women and children would be significantly larger.
5. The three groups — rulers (archontas), elders (presbyterous), and scribes (grammateis) — constitute the Sanhedrin, the supreme Jewish council. This is the same body that tried Jesus. Luke's description of a formal assembly emphasizes the gravity of the proceedings.
6. Annas served as high priest from AD 6-15 and remained the power behind the office, which was held by his son-in-law Caiaphas (AD 18-36). Luke calls Annas 'the high priest' reflecting his continued authority and influence. John and Alexander are otherwise unknown — they may be sons of Annas who later held the office. The phrase 'high-priestly family' (genous archieratikou) indicates the aristocratic priestly clan that controlled the temple.
7. The positioning 'in the center' (en tō mesō) reflects formal judicial proceedings — the accused stand surrounded by the seated council. The question about 'power' (dynamei) and 'name' (onomati) is legally significant: they want to know the source of authority behind the miracle. Ironically, their question plays directly into Peter's hands, giving him the opportunity to proclaim the name of Jesus before the highest authority in Israel.
8. The phrase 'filled with the Holy Spirit' (plēstheis pneumatōs hagiou) marks this as Spirit-empowered testimony, fulfilling Jesus's promise in Luke 12:11-12 that the Spirit would teach them what to say when brought before authorities. This is a fresh filling for a specific moment, not a reference back to Pentecost — Luke presents the Spirit's empowerment as dynamic and situational.
9. Peter's opening is rhetorically masterful: he reframes the trial as an absurdity — they are being interrogated for performing a 'good deed' (euergesia, 'act of beneficence'). The word *sesōtai* ('has been healed/saved') is deliberately ambiguous: *sōzō* means both 'to heal' and 'to save,' and Peter will exploit this double meaning in verse 12.
10. Peter answers the council's question from verse 7 with maximum directness: the name is Jesus Christ the Nazarene. The parallel clauses 'whom you crucified / whom God raised' compress the entire gospel into a single antithesis. The healed man standing before them (*parestēken... hygiēs*) is living evidence that cannot be cross-examined away. Peter addresses both the council ('all of you') and the broader nation ('all the people of Israel').
11. Peter quotes Psalm 118:22, a text Jesus himself applied to his own rejection (Luke 20:17). The 'builders' (*oikodomōn*) are now explicitly identified as the council members themselves — 'by you, the builders' (*hyph' hymōn tōn oikodomōn*). The 'cornerstone' (*kephalēn gōnias*, literally 'head of the corner') is the foundational or capstone that holds the structure together. The one the builders rejected has become the most important stone.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 118:22. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. This verse is the theological climax of Peter's defense. The double negative construction — 'salvation in no one else' (*ouk estin en allō oudeni hē sōtēria*) and 'no other name' (*oude onoma estin heteron*) — is emphatic and exclusive. The word *sōtēria* ('salvation') now carries its full theological weight, expanding from the physical healing of the lame man to cosmic salvation. The verb *dei* ('it is necessary, must') indicates divine necessity — salvation through Jesus is not one option among many but the singular provision of God.
13. The word *parrhēsia* ('boldness, frank speech, freedom of expression') was prized in Greek democratic culture as the right of free citizens. The council expects deference from *agrammatōi* ('uneducated, unlettered' — meaning without formal rabbinic training) and *idiōtai* ('ordinary, untrained, laymen'). The final recognition — 'they had been with Jesus' (*syn tō Iēsou ēsan*) — is both identification and explanation: their boldness comes from the same source as their former master's.
14. The healed man's physical presence is the unanswerable argument. The verb *tetherapeumenon* ('having been healed') is a perfect participle — the healing is a completed fact with ongoing results. The phrase *ouden eichon anteipein* ('they had nothing to say against it') captures the council's impotence: they cannot deny the miracle, cannot discredit the witnesses, and cannot refute the theology.
15. The private deliberation (*syneballon pros allēlous*, 'conferred with one another') reveals the political nature of the proceedings. The Sanhedrin is not seeking truth but managing a crisis. Luke's ability to report their private discussion may come from later sources, possibly including council members who became believers (cf. 6:7, 'a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith').
16. The council's admission is extraordinary: 'a remarkable sign' (*gnōston sēmeion*) that is 'evident to all' (*phaneron*) and 'we cannot deny it' (*ou dynametha arneisthai*). They acknowledge the miracle's reality while seeking to suppress its implications. The word *sēmeion* ('sign') rather than *teras* ('wonder') is significant — a sign points beyond itself to a greater reality, which the council refuses to follow.
17. The council's strategy is containment: stop the message from spreading (*dianeēthē*, 'to spread, to distribute'). Their concern is not theological truth but public order and their own authority. The phrase 'this name' (*tō onomati toutō*) — they avoid saying 'Jesus' — betrays their awareness that the name itself carries power. The irony is thick: threatening people for performing an act of mercy.
18. The prohibition covers both informal speech (*phtheggēsthai*, 'to utter, to speak out') and formal instruction (*didaskein*, 'to teach'). The phrase to *katholou* ('at all, entirely') makes the ban absolute. This is a direct attempt to silence the apostolic witness — the very thing Jesus commissioned them to do in 1:8.
19. Peter and John's response establishes the principle of divine authority over human authority — when the two conflict, God takes precedence. The phrase 'in the sight of God' (*enōpion tou theou*) appeals to the council's own religious convictions. The invitation 'you must judge' (*krinate*) turns the tables: the judges are now asked to judge their own judgment. This principle of civil disobedience on religious grounds echoes the Hebrew midwives (Exodus 1:17) and Daniel's companions (Daniel 3:16-18).

19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 1:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 3:16-18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The double negative *ou dynametha... mē lalein* ('we are not able not to speak') expresses compulsion: the apostles literally cannot stop themselves. Their witness is not a choice that can be turned off but an inner necessity driven by what they have personally experienced (*eidamen*, 'we saw'; *ēkousamen*, 'we heard'). The eyewitness nature of their testimony is again emphasized.
21. The council is caught between their desire to punish and their fear of the people (*dia ton laon*). Public opinion constrains their power — the same dynamic that protected Jesus during his ministry (Luke 20:19). The phrase 'everyone was glorifying God' (*pantes edoxazon ton theon*) shows that popular sentiment sided with the apostles and their miracle.
22. Luke adds this detail to emphasize the miracle's magnitude: the man had been lame for over forty years, making the healing all the more remarkable and undeniable. The age also echoes Israel's forty years in the wilderness — a symbolic period of waiting that ends in restoration.
23. The phrase 'their own people' (*tous idious*) designates the believing community — a distinct group identity is forming. The apostles' first instinct after release is corporate: they return to the community to share and to pray. The response that follows (vv. 24-30) is communal, not individual.
24. The word *homothymadon* ('with one accord, together') is the characteristic Lukan term for early church unity. The address *despota* ('Sovereign Lord, Master') is distinct from *kyrios* ('Lord') — it emphasizes God's absolute sovereignty and is used in contexts of prayer under persecution (cf. Revelation 6:10). The creation language echoes Exodus 20:11 and Psalm 146:6, establishing God's authority as Creator before addressing the specific crisis.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 20:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 146:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The community quotes Psalm 2:1-2, a royal psalm traditionally read at the coronation of Davidic kings. The attribution is triply layered: God spoke through the Holy Spirit through David — a rich statement of inspiration. David is called *pais* ('servant'), the same title applied to Jesus in verse 27 and 3:13, creating a servant-parallel between David and Jesus. The Greek text here is grammatically difficult in the manuscripts; we follow the SBLGNT reading.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 2:1-2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The Psalm speaks of 'kings' and 'rulers' conspiring against 'the LORD and his Anointed' (*christou*, 'Christ/Messiah'). The community will apply these four categories to specific historical actors in verses 27-28. The phrase 'his Anointed One' (*tou christou autou*) preserves the messianic title in its original context before the christological application.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 2:1-2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The Psalm's categories are now mapped onto the passion narrative: 'kings' = Herod Antipas (Luke 23:6-12), 'rulers' = Pontius Pilate, 'nations' = the Gentile (Roman) soldiers, 'peoples' = the peoples of Israel. The verb *echrisas* ('you anointed') connects Jesus's title 'Christ/Anointed' to a specific divine act — God anointed Jesus, making the conspiracy against him a conspiracy against God's own chosen one.
28. The community affirms what Peter stated in 2:23: the crucifixion was simultaneously a human crime and a divine plan. The verb *proōrisen* ('predestined, determined beforehand') is a strong predestination term. 'Your hand and your plan' (*hē cheir sou kai hē boulē sou*) attributes both the power and the purpose to God. The prayer finds comfort not in denying the opposition's reality but in placing it within God's sovereign design.
29. The prayer's request is remarkable for what it does not ask for: they do not pray for the persecution to stop, for their enemies to be punished, or for deliverance from danger. They pray for boldness (*parrhēσίας*) — the same quality the council noticed in Peter and John (v. 13). The word *doulois* ('servants, slaves') expresses their self-understanding as God's owned people, contrasting with the authority claims of the Sanhedrin.
30. The prayer ends by requesting continued miraculous activity 'through the name of your holy servant Jesus' — the very name the council tried to suppress. 'Stretching out your hand' (*tēn cheira sou ekteinein*) is an Old Testament image of divine intervention (Exodus 6:6, Deuteronomy 4:34). The prayer boldly asks for more of exactly what provoked the persecution.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 6:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 4:34 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. The physical shaking (*esaleuthē*) of the meeting place recalls Sinai (Exodus 19:18) and serves as divine confirmation of the prayer. This is a second Pentecost-like experience — the community is again filled with the Spirit, confirming that Spirit-filling is repeatable and responsive to prayer. The prayer asked for boldness (v. 29); the answer is immediate: they 'began to speak the word of God with boldness' (*elaloun ton logon tou theou meta parrhēσίας*). Prayer requested, God granted.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 19:18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

32. The phrase 'one heart and soul' (*kardia kai psychē mia*) echoes Deuteronomy 6:5 ('with all your heart and all your soul') — the community's unity fulfills the Shema's call to wholehearted devotion. The radical economic sharing — no one claiming private ownership — is described as voluntary disposition ('no one said,' *elegen*, indicating attitude) rather than compulsion. This idealizing summary will be qualified by the Ananias and Sapphira episode in 5:1-11.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 6:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. The twin superlatives — 'great power' (*dynamei megalē*) and 'great grace' (*charis megalē*) — characterize the community. The apostles' central message remains the resurrection (*tēs anastaseōs tou kyriou Iēsou*). The 'great grace' upon them could refer to divine favor, the community's generosity, or both — Luke allows the ambiguity to stand.
34. The phrase 'not a needy person among them' (*oude endees tis ēn en autois*) echoes Deuteronomy 15:4, where Moses envisions a community with no poor 'if you carefully obey the LORD your God.' The early church is presented as fulfilling the Deuteronomic ideal. Property owners voluntarily liquidated assets to fund communal welfare. The imperfect tenses (*pōlountes epheron*) indicate repeated, ongoing action over time.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 15:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. Placing funds 'at the apostles' feet' (*para tous podas tōn apostolōn*) is a gesture of deference and trust — the apostles served as administrators of the communal fund. Distribution was need-based (*kathoti an tis chreian eichen*), not equal — the principle was sufficiency, not uniformity. This administrative arrangement will later require modification as the community grows (6:1-6).
36. Barnabas is introduced here and will become one of the most important figures in Acts (chapters 9-15). His given name is Joseph; 'Barnabas' is a nickname meaning 'Son of Encouragement' (*huios paraklēseōs*) or 'Son of Consolation' — the Aramaic *bar-nabas*. The etymology is debated: *nabas* may relate to Aramaic or Hebrew words for 'prophecy' or 'consolation.' As a Levite, he would have had temple responsibilities; as a Cypriot, he represents the diaspora Jewish community.
37. Barnabas serves as the positive example of communal generosity, standing in deliberate contrast to Ananias and Sapphira in the immediately following passage (5:1-11). His action — selling property and giving the full proceeds — illustrates the ideal described in verses 34-35. The fact that Luke names him specifically, among many who presumably did the same, suggests that Barnabas's generosity was especially notable or that his later prominence warranted this introduction.

5

Summary: *Acts 5 opens with the sobering story of Ananias and Sapphira, who sell property but secretly withhold part of the proceeds while claiming to give the full amount. Peter confronts each of them separately, and both fall dead — producing great fear in the church. The chapter then describes the apostles' ongoing miraculous ministry in Solomon's Portico, including healings that draw crowds from surrounding cities. The Sanhedrin arrests the apostles again, but an angel releases them from prison. Brought before the council, the apostles declare they must obey God rather than men. Gamaliel's wise counsel — 'if this plan is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them' — leads the council to release them after a flogging.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Ananias and Sapphira episode serves as a warning parallel to Achan's sin in Joshua 7 — just as the conquest community was purified through judgment, so the church community faces divine discipline for deception. Peter's statement 'You have not lied to men but to God' (v. 4) and the reference to 'testing the Spirit of the Lord' (v. 9) reveal a high pneumatology — the Holy Spirit is identified with God himself. Gamaliel, the great Pharisaic teacher (Paul's mentor per 22:3), provides the most moderate voice on the council. His historical examples (Theudas and Judas the Galilean) frame the Christian movement within the broader context of first-century Jewish messianic movements.*

Translation Friction: *The deaths of Ananias and Sapphira raise difficult theological questions about divine judgment in the age of grace. Peter makes clear in verse 4 that the property was theirs to keep and the proceeds were theirs to control — the sin was deception, not withholding. Gamaliel's historical references present chronological difficulties: Josephus places Theudas's revolt around AD 44-46, after Gamaliel's speech, raising questions about Luke's sources.*

Connections: *The Ananias and Sapphira story connects to Achan (Joshua 7) and to the theme of testing God (Deuteronomy 6:16). The apostles' prison release anticipates Peter's more dramatic release in chapter 12. Gamaliel's 'if it is from God' principle echoes Elijah's challenge on Carmel (1 Kings 18). The apostles' joy in suffering (v. 41) connects to Jesus's teaching in Luke 6:22-23.*

¹But a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property. ²Kept back part of the price, his wife as well being privy to it, and brought a specific part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. ³But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? ⁴While it remained unsold, was it not your own? And after it was sold, were the proceeds not at your disposal? Why is it that you conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to people but to God." ⁵When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. ⁶The young men rose, wrapped his body, carried him out, and buried him. ⁷About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸Peter said to her, "Tell me, did you sell the land for this amount?" She said, "Yes, for that amount." ⁹Peter said to her, "How is it that you agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well." ¹⁰Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in, they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹Great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard about these things. ¹²Now many signs and wonders were being done among the people through the hands of the apostles. They were all together in Solomon's Portico, ¹³No one else dared to associate with them publicly, yet the people held them in high regard. ¹⁴Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, ¹⁵To these people a degree that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and placed them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. ¹⁶The people also gathered from the towns surrounding Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. ¹⁷Then the high priest and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees) rose up, filled with jealousy, ¹⁸Placed their hands on the messengers, and put them in the common prison. ¹⁹But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, brought them out, and said, ²⁰"Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life." ²¹When they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach. When the high priest and those with him arrived, they convened the Sanhedrin — the full council of elders of the people of Israel — and sent to the jail to have the apostles brought. ²²But when the officers arrived at the jail, they did not find them there. So they returned and reported, ²³"We found the jail securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one inside." ²⁴When the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them, wondering what this might come to. ²⁵Then someone came and reported to them, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple and teaching the people." ²⁶Then the captain went with the officers and brought them back, but without force, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people. ²⁷When they had brought them, they stood them before the Sanhedrin, and the high priest questioned them, ²⁸Indeed, declaring, Did not we straitly command you that you should not teach in this name? and, take notice, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. ²⁹But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men. ³⁰The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. ³¹God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. ³²And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." ³³When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. ³⁴But a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law respected by all the people, stood up and ordered that the men be put outside for a short time. ³⁵He said to them, "Men of Israel, be careful about what you are about to do with these men. ³⁶For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. ³⁷After him, Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew people away after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. ³⁸So in the present case I tell you: stay away from these men and let them go. For if this plan or this work is of human origin, it will fail. ³⁹But if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them — you may even be found fighting against God!" ⁴⁰They were persuaded by him, and after calling in the apostles, they had them flogged, ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and released them. ⁴¹So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be dishonored for the sake of the Name. ⁴²And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The name Ananias (Hananiah) means 'the LORD is gracious' — the irony is sharp given the story that follows. Sapphira (Sapphirē) means 'beautiful' or 'sapphire.' Luke introduces them together because their sin is collaborative. The word *ktēma* ('property, possession') refers to real estate, likely land, connecting to the land-selling of 4:34-37.
2. The verb *enosphisato* ('kept back, embezzled, misappropriated') is the same word the LXX uses for Achan's theft from the devoted things in Joshua 7:1 — Luke deliberately echoes that earlier story of deception within a covenant community. The phrase *syneiduiēs kai tēs gynaikos* ('his wife also being privy to it') establishes Sapphira as a knowing co-conspirator, not an unwitting partner.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Joshua 7:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. Peter attributes the deception to satanic influence — 'Satan filled your heart' (*eplērōsen ho satanas tēn kardian sou*) — using filling language that contrasts with the Spirit-filling of 4:31. Where the Spirit fills for bold truth, Satan fills for calculated deception. The verb *pseusasthai* ('to lie to, to deceive') takes the Holy Spirit as its object, establishing the Spirit as a personal being who can be lied to, not merely an impersonal force.
4. Peter makes two crucial clarifications. First, the giving was voluntary — the property was Ananias's to keep and the money his to control (*en tē sē exousia*, 'in your own authority'). The sin was not in withholding but in pretending to give everything while secretly keeping back. Second, Peter equates lying to the Holy Spirit (v. 3) with lying to God (v. 4) — a direct identification of the Spirit with God that has significant trinitarian implications.
5. The verb *exepsyxen* ('breathed his last, expired') is clinical — Luke does not say God struck him dead, though the implication is divine judgment. The 'great fear' (*phobos megas*) that results is distinct from the reverential awe of 2:43; this is genuine terror at the holiness of God active in the community. The immediate death without opportunity for repentance parallels the judgment on Achan (Joshua 7:25) and on Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2).
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 7:25 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 10:1-2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The 'young men' (*neōteroi*) appear to serve as practical helpers in the community — not an official order but an informal group of younger members. The verb *synesteilan* ('wrapped up') refers to preparing the body for burial. Jewish custom required prompt burial, usually on the same day of death. The speed of the burial — no mention of mourning rites — adds to the narrative's severity.
7. The three-hour interval (*hōs hōrōn triōn diastēma*) provides time for the burial and sets up the separate testing of Sapphira. Her ignorance of Ananias's death (*mē eiduia to gegonos*) means her responses are uncoerced — she has a genuine opportunity to tell the truth.
8. Peter's question gives Sapphira an opportunity for honesty — 'for this amount?' (*ei tosoutou*) presumably indicating the amount Ananias had presented. Her affirmative answer (*nai, tosoutou*) confirms her complicity in the deception. She could have told the truth and been spared; the test reveals her heart.
9. The phrase *synephōnēthē hymin* ('you agreed together') reveals a deliberate conspiracy — the same verb gives us 'symphony,' indicating coordinated action. 'Testing the Spirit of the Lord' (*peirasai to pneuma kyriou*) echoes Israel's sin of testing God in the wilderness (Exodus 17:2, Deuteronomy 6:16). Peter's announcement of the burial party at the door is simultaneously a prophecy and a judgment.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 17:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 6:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The word *parachrēma* ('immediately') emphasizes the instantaneous nature of the judgment. The parallel with Ananias's death is exact — the same verb *exepsyxen* ('breathed her last') and the same agents (the young men) performing the burial. She is buried 'beside her husband' (*pros ton andra autēs*) — united in death as they were in deception.
11. This is the first use of *ekklēsia* ('church, assembly, congregation') in Acts. The word derives from *ek-kaleō* ('to call out') and was used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew *qahal* ('assembly'). Luke introduces the term at a moment of holy fear rather than celebration. The fear extends beyond the church to outsiders ('all who heard'), creating a double effect: purification within and reverence without.
12. The summary returns to the pattern of 2:43 — signs and wonders accompany the apostles' ministry. Solomon's Portico (*Stoa Solomōntos*) has become the church's regular public meeting place (cf. 3:11). The phrase 'through the hands' (*dia tōn cheirōn*) emphasizes that the apostles are instruments, not the source of the miraculous power.
13. The 'rest' (*tōn loipōn*) likely refers to non-believers or marginal sympathizers who respected the movement but feared full commitment — perhaps because of the Ananias and Sapphira episode. The verb *etolma* ('dared') suggests that joining required courage given the Sanhedrin's opposition and the community's evident holiness. The paradox is that fear kept some away while admiration drew others in.
14. Despite (or because of) the fear, the church grows — 'more than ever' (*mallon*) indicates accelerating growth. Luke explicitly notes 'both men and women' (*andrōn te kai gynaikōn*), a detail that emphasizes the inclusive nature of the community and corrects the male-only counting of 4:4.

15. The detail about Peter's shadow (hē skia) is remarkable — people believed that even his shadow carried healing power. Luke does not explicitly confirm that shadow-healings occurred, only that people sought them. The parallel to Jesus's ministry is clear: people touched the fringe of Jesus's garment seeking healing (Luke 8:44). The two types of beds — klinarion ('small bed, cot') and krabattos ('pallet, stretcher, mat') — indicate both middle-class and poor patients.
16. The ministry expands beyond Jerusalem to the surrounding region, beginning to fulfill the geographical progression of 1:8 ('Judea'). Two categories of affliction are distinguished: physical illness (astheneis, 'sick, weak') and spiritual oppression (ochloumenous hypo pneumatōn akathartōn, 'harassed/tormented by unclean spirits'). The comprehensive result — 'they were all healed' (etherapeuonto hapantes) — mirrors Jesus's own healing ministry (Luke 6:19).
17. The word zēlou can mean either 'zeal' or 'jealousy' — in this context, jealousy at the apostles' popularity is the primary motivation, though it may include religious zeal against perceived heresy. Luke identifies the opposition party as Sadducees, consistent with 4:1 — the resurrection preaching is the primary irritant for this group that denies resurrection. The word hairesis ('party, sect, school of thought') is the root of 'heresy' but does not yet carry that negative connotation.
18. Unlike the previous arrest of just Peter and John (4:3), all the apostles are now arrested. The 'public jail' (tērēsei dēmosia) distinguishes this from private temple detention — this is official civic imprisonment, escalating the conflict. The phrase epebalon tas cheiras ('laid hands on') indicates physical seizure.
19. The phrase angelos kyriou ('angel of the Lord') echoes the Hebrew malak YHWH — a divine messenger acting on God's authority. The prison escape is narrated with minimal dramatic detail, in contrast to Peter's more elaborate release in chapter 12. The angel does not merely free them but gives them a commission (v. 20), indicating that the release serves the mission, not merely the apostles' comfort.
20. The angel's command is direct and defiant: return to the very place where you were arrested and continue teaching. The phrase 'all the words of this Life' (panta ta rhēmata tēs zōēs tautēs) is remarkable — the gospel message is summarized as 'this Life,' identifying the message with the life it proclaims. Some scholars capitalize 'Life' here as a christological reference.
21. The apostles obey the angel immediately, entering the temple 'at daybreak' (hypo ton orthron), the earliest possible hour. Meanwhile, the Sanhedrin assembles in formal session. Luke emphasizes the full body: both the synedrion ('Sanhedrin, council') and the gerousia ('council of elders, senate') — possibly the same body described two ways, or a reference to the plenary session as opposed to an executive committee. The dramatic irony builds: the council sends for prisoners who are no longer there.
22. The hypēretai ('officers, servants, attendants') are the temple police, subordinate to the captain of the temple (v. 26). The empty jail creates a narrative parallel to the empty tomb — divine power has overturned human confinement.
23. The officers' report emphasizes the impossibility of the escape by natural means: the prison was 'securely locked' (kekleisimenon en pasē asphaleia), the guards were at their posts ('standing at the doors'), yet the prisoners were gone. Every security measure was intact. The supernatural nature of the release is undeniable, adding to the council's bewilderment in the next verse.
24. The verb diēporoun ('were perplexed, were at a loss') is the same word used for the Pentecost crowd's confusion (2:12). The authorities cannot explain what has happened and fear where events are heading. The phrase ti an genoito touto ('what this might become') reveals anxiety about the movement's trajectory — a concern Gamaliel will address in verses 35-39.
25. The dramatic irony reaches its peak: while the council deliberates about the missing prisoners, the apostles are doing exactly what they were arrested for — standing in the temple teaching. The unnamed reporter's exclamation 'Look!' (idou) captures the absurdity of the situation from the authorities' perspective.
26. The detail 'without force' (ou meta bias) is significant — the temple police feared the people more than they feared the Sanhedrin's displeasure. The ironic reversal is complete: the authorities are the ones afraid, while the apostles who should be afraid are freely teaching. The threat of stoning (mē lithasthōsin) shows how popular the apostles had become.
27. The scene replicates 4:7 — the apostles again stand before the council. The repetition underscores the escalating conflict: the first hearing produced warnings (4:17-18), this one will produce violence (v. 40).
28. The high priest's complaint inadvertently confirms the success of the apostles' mission: 'you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching' (peplērōkate tēn Ierousalēm tēs didachēs hymōn). The phrase 'this man's blood upon us' (to haima tou anthrōpou toutou) is deeply ironic: in Matthew 27:25, the crowd accepted precisely this responsibility ('His blood be on us and on our children'). The high priest avoids saying Jesus's name, calling him 'this man' (tou anthrōpou toutou).
29. This sharpens the principle stated in 4:19. There, Peter asked the council to judge; here, he simply declares the verdict. The verb peitharchein ('to obey, to submit to authority') is a strong term for compliance with authority — the apostles recognize the Sanhedrin's authority but assert a higher one. The word dei ('it is necessary, one must') expresses divine compulsion, not personal preference.
30. Peter again begins with 'the God of our fathers' (ho theos tōn paterōn hēmōn), maintaining the claim that the apostles represent authentic Israelite faith. The verb diecheirisasthe ('killed, laid violent hands on, did away with') is blunt. The phrase 'hanging on a tree' (kremasantes epi xylou) deliberately evokes Deuteronomy 21:22-23, where a person hung on a tree is 'cursed by God.' Peter turns the curse into an argument: Jesus bore the covenant curse, but God reversed it through resurrection (cf. Galatians 3:13).

- 30.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 21:22-23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 31.** The twin titles archēgon ('Leader, Author, Pioneer') and sōtēra ('Savior') recall 3:15 ('Author of life'). Jesus is exalted 'at his right hand' (tē dexia autou), echoing Psalm 110:1 and Peter's Pentecost sermon (2:33). The purpose of the exaltation is dual: 'to give repentance' (dounai metanoian) and 'forgiveness of sins' (aphesin hamartiōn). That repentance is something Jesus 'gives' suggests it is a divine gift, not merely a human decision.
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 110:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 32.** Peter names two witnesses: the apostles ('we are witnesses') and the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's witness is not merely internal but observable — the Pentecost phenomena and the ongoing miraculous signs are the Spirit's public testimony. The Spirit is given to 'those who obey' (tois peitharchousin) — the same verb used in verse 29, creating an implicit contrast: the apostles obey God and receive the Spirit; the council disobeys and opposes.
- 33.** The verb diepionto ('were cut through, were sawn in two') describes a visceral, furious reaction — literally 'cut to the quick.' This is rage, not conviction (contrast the pierced hearts of 2:37). The same word appears in 7:54 at Stephen's trial. The council's impulse is murderous (eboulonto anein, 'wanted to kill') — the conflict has escalated from warnings (4:17) to threats (4:21) to now lethal intent.
- 34.** Gamaliel I (Rabban Gamaliel the Elder) was one of the most respected rabbis of the first century, grandson of Hillel, and the teacher of Saul of Tarsus (22:3). He is the first Pharisee to speak in Acts — significantly, the Pharisees are more moderate than the Sadducees toward the Christian movement, a pattern Luke emphasizes throughout. His title nomodidaskalos ('teacher of the law') and the description timios ('honored, respected') underscore his authority.
- 35.** Gamaliel addresses the council, not the apostles. His opening — prosechete heautois ('take heed to yourselves, be careful about yourselves') — warns that rash action could harm the council's own interests and reputation. His concern is pragmatic wisdom, not theological agreement with the apostles.
- 36.** Gamaliel's first historical example is Theudas, who 'claimed to be somebody' (legōn einai tina heauton) — a vague messianic or prophetic pretension. Josephus records a Theudas who led a movement around AD 44-46 (Antiquities 20.97-98), but that would be after this speech. Either Luke or Josephus has the chronology wrong, or there were two figures named Theudas (not uncommon), or the historical problem remains unresolved. Gamaliel's point is clear regardless: the movement died with its leader.
- 37.** Judas the Galilean is well-attested historically. He led a revolt against the Roman census of AD 6 conducted by Quirinius (Josephus, Antiquities 18.1-10, War 2.118). His movement gave rise to the Zealot ideology that Rome must be resisted as a matter of religious principle. Josephus records that his descendants continued the revolutionary tradition. Gamaliel's point: another self-proclaimed leader, another failure.
- 38.** Gamaliel's counsel is pragmatic: let time decide. If the movement is merely human (ex anthrōpōn), it will collapse on its own as Theudas's and Judas's did. The verb katalythēsetai ('will be destroyed, will be overthrown, will come to nothing') indicates complete dissolution. His argument does not require the council to approve of the apostles — only to wait.
- 39.** The warning theomachoi ('fighters against God, God-fighters') is Gamaliel's strongest word — to oppose what God has initiated is not merely futile but sacrilegious. The compound word theo-machoi appears only here in the New Testament. Gamaliel does not say the movement is from God; he says the risk of opposing it if it is from God is too great to take. His logic is asymmetric: if human, no harm in waiting; if divine, catastrophic to oppose.
- 40.** The council accepts Gamaliel's advice but still inflicts punishment. The verb deirantes ('having beaten, having flogged') refers to the malkot or makkot — the standard judicial flogging of up to thirty-nine lashes (2 Corinthians 11:24). This is not a light punishment; it left the body severely bruised and lacerated. The repeated command 'not to speak in the name of Jesus' (mē lalein epi tō onomati tou Iēsou) echoes 4:18 — the order the apostles have already declared they cannot obey.
- 41.** The apostles' response to flogging is joy (chairontes) — a radical reversal of normal human response to violence. They consider it an honor to 'be dishonored' (atimasthēnai) for 'the Name' (tou onomatos). The paradox is intentional: worldly shame becomes spiritual honor. This fulfills Jesus's beatitude: 'Blessed are you when people hate you... on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy' (Luke 6:22-23). 'The Name' without further specification has become a shorthand for Jesus.
- 42.** The chapter's final verse shows complete defiance of the council's order: 'they did not stop' (ouk epauonto) teaching. The dual venue — temple and homes — continues the pattern from 2:46. The content of their message is precisely identified: 'the Christ, Jesus' (ton christon Iēsou) — that Jesus is the Messiah. The verb euangelizomenoi ('proclaiming good news') gives us 'evangelizing.' The flogging accomplished nothing; the gospel advances without pause.

6

Summary: *Acts 6 presents the first internal crisis in the church: Greek-speaking Jewish widows are being overlooked in the daily food distribution. The apostles propose that the community select seven men to manage this practical service, freeing the apostles for prayer and teaching. The seven are chosen, all bearing Greek names, and are commissioned by prayer and the laying on of hands. Stephen, described as full of grace and power, performs great signs and engages in synagogue debates. Unable to refute him, his opponents bring false witnesses who accuse Stephen of speaking against the temple and the law. The chapter ends with Stephen standing before the Sanhedrin, his face appearing like the face of an angel.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The selection of the Seven represents the first organizational development of the church beyond the apostles. All seven have Greek names, suggesting the community addressed the complaint by giving the Hellenists oversight of the distribution — a remarkably generous solution. Stephen emerges as a figure whose theological vision will prove more radical than the apostles' own preaching: his accusers claim he speaks of Jesus destroying the temple and changing Mosaic customs. The description of Stephen's face 'like the face of an angel' echoes Moses' shining face after encountering God (Exodus 34:29-35).*

Translation Friction: *The term 'Hellenists' (Hellenistai) versus 'Hebrews' (Hebraioi) likely refers to a linguistic and cultural division within the Jewish-Christian community: Greek-speaking diaspora Jews versus Aramaic-speaking Palestinian Jews. The Seven are traditionally called 'deacons' though Acts never uses that title. The charges against Stephen in verses 13-14 are called 'false' by Luke, yet Stephen's speech in chapter 7 will arguably confirm some of their substance — the relationship between the false charges and Stephen's actual teaching is complex.*

Connections: *The appointment of the Seven parallels Moses' appointment of elders in Numbers 11:16-17. Stephen's story anticipates and parallels Jesus's passion: false witnesses, a Sanhedrin trial, and a prayer for his persecutors. The Freedmen's synagogue (v. 9) connects to the diaspora communities listed in 2:9-11. The note about priests becoming obedient to the faith (v. 7) represents a remarkable penetration of the gospel into the temple establishment.*

1Now in those days, as the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose from the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2So the twelve summoned the full body of the disciples and said, "It is not right for us to neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. 4And we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5This proposal pleased the whole group, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a convert to Judaism from Antioch. 6They presented them before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. 7The word of God kept spreading, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly, and a large number of the priests became obedient to the faith. 8Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. 9But some from the synagogue called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (including Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and people from Cilicia and Asia) rose up and debated with Stephen. 10But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking. 11Then they secretly instigated men who said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." 12They stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him before the Sanhedrin. 13They produced false witnesses who said, "This man never stops speaking against this holy place and the law. 14For we have heard him say that this Jesus the Nazarene will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us." 15And gazing at him, all who sat in the Sanhedrin saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *gonguysmos* ('complaint, murmuring, grumbling') echoes Israel's murmuring in the wilderness (Exodus 16:7-8, Numbers 11:1). The 'Hellenists' (*Hellēnistai*) are Greek-speaking Jewish Christians, likely from the diaspora, while the 'Hebrews' (*Hebraioi*) are Aramaic/Hebrew-speaking Jewish Christians from Palestine. The complaint is specific: widows — the most vulnerable members of ancient society — were being neglected (*paretheōrounto*, 'overlooked, neglected') in the daily food distribution (*diakonia*, 'service, ministry'). Growth has created administrative strain.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 16:7-8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 11:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The Twelve convene the entire community (to *plēthos tōn mathētōn*, 'the full number of the disciples') for a communal decision — this is not top-down decree but participatory governance. The phrase 'wait on tables' (*diakonein trapezais*) refers to the practical administration of the food distribution. The apostles do not disparage this work but recognize a division of labor: their primary calling is the word of God, not logistics. The verb *kataleipsantas* ('having neglected, having abandoned') suggests that attempting both was already causing neglect of preaching.
3. The community selects; the apostles appoint (*katastēsomen*, 'we will install, we will place in charge'). The qualifications are spiritual, not administrative: 'full of the Spirit and of wisdom' (*plēreis pneumatōs kai sophias*). The number seven may echo the tradition of seven elders in Jewish communities, or it may simply be a practical number. The word *martyroumenous* ('of good reputation, well-attested, testified about') means people whose character is publicly verified.
4. The apostles describe their own work using the same word (*diakonia*, 'ministry, service') used for the food distribution — both are forms of service. The two priorities — prayer (*proseuchē*) and the ministry of the word (*diakonia tou logou*) — define the apostolic calling. The verb *proskarterēsomen* ('we will devote ourselves') is the same word used for the community's devotion in 1:14 and 2:42.
5. All seven names are Greek, which is remarkable given that the complaint was about Hellenist widows being neglected by Hebrew administrators. The community's solution was to give the Hellenists themselves oversight — a generous and trust-building response. Stephen is singled out with an expanded description: 'full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.' Nicolaus is identified as a *prosēlytos* ('proselyte, convert') from Antioch — the only non-born-Jew in the list, showing the community's diversity. Antioch will become a major center of the Gentile mission in chapters 11-13.
6. The laying on of hands (*epethēkan autois tas cheiras*) is a biblical gesture of commissioning and empowerment, rooted in Moses' commissioning of Joshua (Numbers 27:18-23) and the Levitical practice of transferring authority. Prayer accompanies the physical gesture, indicating that the power comes from God, not from the apostles' touch. This becomes the standard pattern for church leadership appointment in Acts (cf. 13:3, 14:23).
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 27:18-23. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. This is one of Luke's periodic growth summaries (cf. 9:31, 12:24, 16:5, 19:20). The phrase 'the word of God kept spreading' (*ho logos tou theou ēuxanen*) personifies the word as a growing, living force. The most striking detail is that 'a large number of priests' (*polys te ochlos tōn hierēōn*) joined the faith. Given the thousands of priests who served in rotational courses at the temple, even a 'large number' could represent a significant minority. Their conversion represents the gospel's penetration into the heart of the temple establishment.
8. The SBLGNT reads *charitos* ('grace') rather than *pisteōs* ('faith') found in some manuscripts. Stephen's ministry goes beyond the food distribution — he is performing 'great wonders and signs' (*terata kai sēmeia megala*), the same language used for the apostles in 5:12. The Seven are not limited to administrative roles; they are Spirit-empowered ministers in their own right.
9. The 'Freedmen' (*Libertinōn*, from Latin *libertinus*) were likely descendants of Jews taken to Rome as slaves by Pompey in 63 BC and later freed. These diaspora Jews had their own synagogue in Jerusalem. The list includes Jews from North Africa (Cyrene, Alexandria), Asia Minor (Cilicia, Asia), and Rome — Greek-speaking Jews like Stephen himself. Cilicia is Paul's home province (Tarsus), raising the possibility that Paul was among the debaters. The verb *syzētoutes* ('debating, disputing') indicates formal argument.
10. Stephen's irrefutability fulfills Jesus's promise in Luke 21:15: 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.' The phrase 'the wisdom and the Spirit' (*tē sophia kai tō pneumati*) echoes the qualifications for the Seven in verse 3. Unable to win the argument, his opponents resort to other means (v. 11).
11. The verb *hypebalon* ('secretly instigated, suborned, put up to it') indicates a covert operation — the opponents coach false witnesses, exactly as happened at Jesus's trial (Matthew 26:59-60). The charge is twofold blasphemy: against Moses (representing the Torah) and against God. These are the most serious possible accusations in a Jewish context, capable of triggering the death penalty.
12. The verb *synekinēsan* ('stirred up, aroused, incited') indicates a deliberate campaign to turn public opinion against Stephen. For the first time in Acts, 'the people' (*ton laon*) are part of the opposition — previously the people supported the apostles (4:21, 5:26). The combination of popular anger, elder and scribe involvement, and Sanhedrin proceedings creates a judicial lynching atmosphere.

13. Luke explicitly labels these as 'false witnesses' (*martyras pseudeis*), using the same language as Jesus's trial (Matthew 26:60). The charge refines the earlier accusation: Stephen speaks against 'this holy place' (the temple) and 'the law' (the Torah). As with Jesus's trial, the charges likely contain a distorted kernel of truth — Stephen probably did teach that Jesus's coming relativized both temple and law, which his opponents twisted into blasphemy.
14. The specific charges are: (1) Jesus will destroy the temple (*katalyseĩ ton topon touton*) and (2) Jesus will change Mosaic customs (*allaxeĩ ta ethē*). Both echo charges made against Jesus himself (Mark 14:58, John 2:19). The word *ethē* ('customs, traditions, practices') refers to the oral and written legal traditions. Stephen's speech in chapter 7 will address both charges, not by denying them outright but by reframing Israel's relationship to temple and law through salvation history.
15. The chapter ends with this arresting image: Stephen's face radiates like an angel's. The parallel to Moses is unmistakable — when Moses descended from Sinai after meeting God, his face shone (Exodus 34:29-35). The man accused of speaking against Moses now bears Moses' own mark of divine encounter. The verb *atenisantes* ('gazing intently') is the same word used repeatedly for intense, fixed attention in Acts. The council sees divine glory on the face of their prisoner but will refuse to recognize what it means.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 34:29-35 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

7

Summary: *Acts 7 contains Stephen's monumental speech before the Sanhedrin — the longest speech in Acts at 53 verses. Stephen recounts Israel's history from Abraham through Moses to Solomon, arguing that God's presence has never been confined to a single place, that Israel has a pattern of rejecting God's chosen messengers, and that the temple was never intended to contain God. His narrative moves from Abraham in Mesopotamia, to Joseph in Egypt, to Moses in the wilderness, to the tabernacle, and finally to Solomon's temple — where he turns accusatory. He charges his hearers with being stiff-necked resisters of the Holy Spirit who, like their ancestors, have betrayed and murdered the Righteous One. The council erupts in fury. Stephen sees a vision of Jesus standing at God's right hand, and they drag him out and stone him to death. He dies praying for his killers. Saul of Tarsus appears for the first time, approving Stephen's execution.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Stephen's speech is a radical rereading of Israel's sacred history. He systematically demonstrates that every pivotal encounter between God and his people happened outside the promised land: Abraham received his call in Mesopotamia, Joseph was God's instrument in Egypt, Moses met God at the burning bush in Midian, the Torah was given at Sinai — not in Jerusalem. The heroes of faith were all initially rejected by their own people before being vindicated. The theological implications are devastating: if God has never been bound to a place, the temple cannot contain him; if Israel has always resisted its prophets, rejecting Jesus fits the pattern. Stephen becomes the first Christian martyr, and his death mirrors Jesus's in profound ways: he prays for his persecutors and commits his spirit to the Lord.*

Translation Friction: *Stephen's retelling contains several historical details that differ from the Genesis account: he says Abraham left Haran after his father died (v. 4, but Genesis 11:26, 32 and 12:4 suggest Terah lived another 60 years), he places 75 members of Jacob's family going to Egypt (v. 14, following the LXX) rather than 70 (Hebrew text), and he attributes the purchase of the Machpelah tomb to Abraham rather than to Jacob (v. 16, conflating Genesis 23 and 33:19). These discrepancies likely reflect Stephen's use of the Septuagint and Jewish interpretive tradition rather than strict historical error. We render the Greek as given without harmonizing.*

Connections: *Stephen's speech draws on Genesis 12-50 (Abraham, Joseph), Exodus 1-20 (Moses), Deuteronomy 18:15 (prophet like Moses), 1 Kings 6-8 (temple), Isaiah 66:1-2 (heaven as God's throne), and Amos 5:25-27 (idolatry). Stephen's martyrdom anticipates Paul's persecution-to-conversion arc. The stoning scene echoes Jesus's crucifixion (Luke 23:34, 46). Saul's introduction here foreshadows the dramatic reversal of chapter 9.*

¹The high priest said, "Are these things so?" ²Stephen replied, "Brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, ³Said to him, Get you out of your country, and from your kindred, and come into the land which I will shew you. ⁴Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After his father died, God moved him from there into this land in which you are now living. ⁵He gave him no inheritance in

it, not even a foot's length, but he promised to give it to him as a possession and to his descendants after him, even though he had no child. ⁶And God spoke in this way: that his descendants would be strangers in a foreign land, and that the people there would enslave and mistreat them for four hundred years. ⁷'But I will judge the nation they serve,' God said, 'and after that they will come out and worship me in this place.' ⁸And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. So Abraham fathered Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac fathered Jacob, and Jacob fathered the twelve patriarchs. ⁹The patriarchs, out of jealousy, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him ¹⁰Delivered him out of all his afflictions, and offered him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Then he appointed him governor over Egypt and all his house. ¹¹Then a famine came over all of Egypt and Canaan, with great suffering, and our fathers could find no food. ¹²When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there on their first visit. ¹³On the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. ¹⁴Then Joseph sent and invited his father Jacob and all his relatives, seventy-five persons in all. ¹⁵So Jacob went down to Egypt, and he died there — he and our fathers. ¹⁶Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. ¹⁷"As the time of the promise that God had made to Abraham drew near, the people increased and multiplied in Egypt, ¹⁸Till another king arose, which recognized not Joseph. ¹⁹He exploited our people and oppressed our fathers, forcing them to abandon their infants so they would not survive. ²⁰At that time Moses was born, and he was beautiful before God. He was raised for three months in his father's house, ²¹When he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter picked up him up, and nourished him for her own son. ²²Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his words and deeds. ²³When he was about forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel. ²⁴When he saw one of them being wronged, he came to his defense and avenged the oppressed man by striking down the Egyptian. ²⁵He assumed his brothers would understand that God was giving them deliverance through him, but they did not understand. ²⁶The next day he appeared to them as they were fighting and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers! Why are you wronging each other?' ²⁷But the man who was wronging his neighbor pushed him away, saying, 'Who appointed you as a ruler and judge over us? ²⁸Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' ²⁹At this remark, Moses fled and became a foreigner in the land of Midian, where he fathered two sons. ³⁰"When forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush. ³¹When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight. As he approached to look more closely, the voice of the Lord came to him: ³²'I am the God of your fathers — the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled and did not dare to look. ³³The Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.' ³⁴'I have surely seen the mistreatment of my people in Egypt and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to rescue them. Now come, I will send you to Egypt.' ³⁵"This Moses whom they rejected, saying, 'Who appointed you as ruler and judge?' — this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. ³⁶This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for forty years. ³⁷This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers.' ³⁸This is the one who was in the assembly in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers. He received living oracles to give to us. ³⁹Our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt, ⁴⁰Indeed, declaring to Aaron, Make us gods to go prior to us — for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. ⁴¹They made a calf in those days, offered sacrifice to the idol, and celebrated the works of their hands. ⁴²But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: 'Did you bring me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during those forty years in the wilderness, house of Israel? ⁴³You took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the images you made to worship. I will exile you beyond Babylon.' ⁴⁴"Our fathers had the tabernacle of testimony in the wilderness, just as the one who spoke to Moses directed him to make it according to the pattern he had seen. ⁴⁵Our fathers who received it in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our fathers. It remained until the days of David, ⁴⁶Who discovered favour prior to God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷But it was Solomon who built a house for him. ⁴⁸Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands, as the prophet says: ⁴⁹'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my

footstool. What kind of house will you build for me?' says the Lord. 'Or what is the place of my rest? ⁵⁰Did not my hand make all these things?' ⁵¹"You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. ⁵²Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become — ⁵³Who possess received the instruction of Moses by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. ⁵⁴When they heard these things, they were enraged in their hearts and ground their teeth at him. ⁵⁵But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶He said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" ⁵⁷But they cried out with a loud voice, covered their ears, and rushed at him with one impulse. ⁵⁸They drove him out of the city and began to stone him. The witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹As they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" ⁶⁰Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" And having said this, he fell asleep.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The high priest's question is brief and procedural — he gives Stephen the formal opportunity to respond to the charges of 6:13-14. The question *ei tauta houtōs echei* ('are these things so?') is open-ended, allowing Stephen to speak at length.
2. Stephen opens respectfully — 'brothers and fathers' (*andres adelphoi kai pateres*) — but his argument will be deeply confrontational. The title 'the God of glory' (*ho theos tēs doxēs*) echoes Psalm 29:3 and immediately establishes the theme: God's glorious presence is not bound to a place. His first point is geographical: God appeared to Abraham in Mesopotamia — in pagan territory, far from any sacred site. The Hebrew Bible records God's call to Abraham in Genesis 12:1 while he was in Haran, but Jewish tradition (following Genesis 15:7 and Nehemiah 9:7) understood a prior call while still in Ur of the Chaldees.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 29:3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 12:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 15:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Nehemiah 9:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. Stephen quotes Genesis 12:1 (LXX). God's first command to Abraham was to leave — departure, not settlement, begins the covenant story. The phrase 'the land that I will show you' emphasizes divine initiative and Abraham's trust: he went without knowing the destination.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 12:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Stephen says Abraham left Haran 'after his father died' (*meta to apothanein ton patera autou*). According to Genesis 11:26, Terah was 70 when Abraham was born; Abraham left Haran at 75 (Genesis 12:4); and Terah died at 205 (Genesis 11:32) — which would mean Terah lived 60 more years after Abraham's departure. Stephen follows the Samaritan Pentateuch and possibly a Jewish tradition that placed Terah's death at 145, or he may simply be following narrative logic. We render the Greek as given.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 11:26. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 12:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Stephen's point is theologically sharp: Abraham received the promise but not the land. The covenant patriarch lived his entire life in the promised land without owning any of it — 'not even a foot's length' (*oude bēma podos*). This undermines any theology that ties God's blessing to a specific place. The paradox is heightened by the note that Abraham had no child (*ouk ontos autō teknou*) when the promise was given — promise precedes fulfillment by generations.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 12:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Stephen quotes Genesis 15:13-14. The word *paroikon* ('strangers, resident aliens, sojourners') describes Abraham's descendants as outsiders in someone else's land — again emphasizing that God's people were not defined by their territory. The four hundred years is a round number (Exodus 12:40 gives 430 years). Stephen's retelling emphasizes suffering and displacement as characteristic of God's people.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 15:13-14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 12:40. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The phrase 'worship me in this place' (latreusousin moi en tō topō toutō) is from Exodus 3:12 rather than Genesis 15, where God tells Moses the people will worship 'on this mountain' (Sinai). Stephen may deliberately blur the reference so that 'this place' could mean Sinai, Canaan, or wherever God chooses to meet his people — supporting his argument that worship is not location-bound.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 3:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The 'covenant of circumcision' (diathēkēn peritomēs) refers to Genesis 17, where circumcision is the sign of the Abrahamic covenant. Stephen quickly traces the lineage from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob to the twelve patriarchs (tous dōdeka patriarchas) — the ancestors of Israel's twelve tribes. The rapid genealogical summary moves the narrative toward Joseph and Egypt.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 17 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Here Stephen introduces his central theme: Israel rejects its own deliverers. The patriarchs — the revered ancestors — acted out of jealousy (zēlōsantes, the same word used for the Sanhedrin's jealousy in 5:17) and sold their brother into slavery. Yet 'God was with him' (ēn ho theos met' autou) — divine presence follows the rejected one, not those who reject. The parallel to Jesus is unmistakable.
10. God rescues the rejected one and exalts him to authority — the Joseph pattern prefigures the Jesus pattern. The terms 'favor' (charin) and 'wisdom' (sophian) echo Stephen's own description in 6:8, 10. Joseph rules over the very nation where he was sold as a slave — divine reversal of human injustice.
11. The famine (limos) drives the plot: the brothers who sold Joseph are now dependent on him for survival. Stephen's phrase 'our fathers' (hoi pateres hēmōn) identifies himself with his audience — he is not attacking their heritage but interpreting it.
12. The word prōton ('first') sets up the pattern: the brothers go to Egypt twice. On the first visit, they do not recognize Joseph. Stephen emphasizes the two-visit structure because it parallels his argument about Jesus: rejected on the first encounter, recognized on the second.
13. The phrase en tō deuterō ('on the second') is emphatic. Stephen's point: the brothers rejected Joseph initially but recognized him on their second encounter. The implied parallel: Israel rejected Jesus on his first coming but will recognize him at his return. The pattern of initial rejection followed by recognition is the interpretive key to Stephen's entire speech.
14. Stephen gives the number as seventy-five (hebdomēkonta pente), following the Septuagint of Genesis 46:27 and Exodus 1:5, while the Hebrew text gives seventy. The difference likely reflects whether or not Joseph's descendants born in Egypt are included. Stephen follows the Greek textual tradition available to his Hellenistic audience.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 46:27. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 1:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. Stephen moves quickly through the narrative. Jacob and the patriarchs die in Egypt, not in the promised land — again emphasizing that God's people spent their formative period as foreigners in a foreign land.
16. This verse conflates two Old Testament traditions: Abraham bought a burial site at Machpelah from the sons of Heth near Hebron (Genesis 23:3-16), and Jacob bought a plot at Shechem from the sons of Hamor (Genesis 33:19). Stephen appears to combine these transactions, attributing the Shechem purchase to Abraham. This may reflect a Jewish interpretive tradition unknown to us, or it may be a compressed retelling. We render the Greek as Stephen spoke it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 23:3-16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 33:19. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. Stephen now transitions from the patriarchal era to the Exodus. The phrase 'the time of the promise' (ho chronos tēs epangelias) introduces the concept of divine timing — God works according to a predetermined schedule. The people's growth 'in Egypt' (en Aigyptō) fulfills the Abrahamic promise of numerous descendants, but in a foreign land under oppression.
18. Stephen quotes Exodus 1:8. The 'different king' (basileus heteros) who 'did not know Joseph' marks a political and social rupture. The word heteros ('another of a different kind') may suggest a change of dynasty. The loss of Joseph's memory leads directly to Israel's oppression.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 1:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

19. The verb *katasophisamenos* ('dealing shrewdly, exploiting by craft') implies calculated, cunning oppression. The forced exposure of infants (*ta brephe ektheta*, 'making the babies exposed/abandoned') was the standard method of infanticide in the ancient world — leaving newborns outside to die of exposure. Stephen's retelling emphasizes the brutality to heighten the drama of Moses' rescue.
20. The phrase *asteios to theō* ('beautiful before God' or 'divinely beautiful') uses a dative of reference that intensifies the adjective — Moses was not merely attractive but superlatively so, beautiful in God's sight. This echoes Exodus 2:2 where his mother saw he was 'good' (*tov*). The phrase carries overtones of divine destiny.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 2:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The verb *aneilato* ('took up, adopted') is a technical term for picking up and claiming an exposed infant — in Roman and Egyptian practice, this constituted legal adoption. Moses is rescued from death by the oppressor's own daughter — a divine irony that Stephen highlights.
22. Stephen's portrayal of Moses trained in Egyptian wisdom is not from Exodus directly but from Jewish interpretive tradition (cf. Philo, *Life of Moses* 1.21-24). The description 'powerful in words and deeds' (*dynatos en logois kai ergois*) echoes the description of Jesus in Luke 24:19. Moses' competence was developed in a pagan environment — again, God works outside Israel's boundaries.
23. Stephen divides Moses' life into three forty-year periods (vv. 23, 30, 36): forty years in Egypt, forty years in Midian, forty years in the wilderness. This tripartite scheme comes from Jewish tradition rather than Exodus directly. The phrase *anebe epi ten kardian autou* ('it came up into his heart') is a Hebraism suggesting an inner prompting, possibly divine.
24. Stephen portrays Moses' killing of the Egyptian (Exodus 2:11-12) positively — as defense of the oppressed (*emynato*, 'defended') and justice for the wronged (*epoiēsen ekdikēsin*, 'avenged'). This sets up the devastating irony of the next verse: Moses acts as deliverer, but his own people reject him.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 2:11-12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. This verse is not in Exodus — it is Stephen's theological interpretation. Moses expected recognition as God's deliverer, but 'they did not understand' (*hoi de ou synēkan*). This is the critical parallel to Jesus: God sent a deliverer, the deliverer expected recognition, and the people failed to understand. Stephen is building his case that Israel has a pattern of rejecting the very ones God sends to save them.
26. Moses tries to be a peacemaker among his own people. The word *synēlassen* ('reconciled, brought together') indicates an attempt at mediation. His appeal — 'you are brothers' (*adelphoi este*) — invokes shared identity as a basis for peace. But the appeal fails.
27. The verb *apōsato* ('pushed away, rejected, repudiated') is the key word — it will be reused in verse 39 about Israel's rejection of Moses in the wilderness. Stephen quotes Exodus 2:14. The question 'Who appointed you ruler and judge?' (*tis se katestēsen archonta kai dikastēn*) is a challenge to Moses' authority — the same kind of challenge the Sanhedrin makes against the apostles. The irony: God did appoint Moses, but the people refuse to recognize it.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 2:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The accusation forces Moses to flee. His attempt at deliverance is met not with gratitude but with hostility and exposure. Stephen's audience would recognize the parallel: those who should welcome God's deliverer instead threaten and accuse him.
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 2:14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. Moses becomes a *paroikos* ('foreigner, resident alien') in Midian — the same word used for Abraham's descendants in verse 6. The rejected deliverer lives in exile for forty years. Stephen's parallel: Jesus was rejected and has departed to heaven (3:21), but he will return.
30. The second forty-year period ends with theophany — but where? In the wilderness, far from any temple or sacred city. God appears at a random bush on a mountain in the desert. Stephen's geographical point is relentless: God's most important self-revelations happen in the least expected places.
31. Moses' curiosity draws him toward the divine presence. The verb *ethaumazen* ('was amazed, marveled') captures the initial wonder. Stephen's retelling follows Exodus 3:3-4, emphasizing the auditory encounter — 'the voice of the Lord' (*phōnē kyriou*) speaks from the bush.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 3:3-4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
32. God identifies himself through the covenant lineage — the same formula used in Exodus 3:6. Moses' response is trembling (*entromos genomenos*) and aversion of his gaze. The God of the patriarchs speaks to Moses in Midian — covenantal identity transcends geography.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 3:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. This verse is devastating to Stephen's opponents' theology: 'holy ground' (*gē hagia*) is in the Midian wilderness, not in Jerusalem or at the temple. If God can make pagan desert soil holy by his presence, then holiness is not a property of places but of divine encounter. Stephen is dismantling the theological foundation for temple-exclusivism.

33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 3:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
34. Stephen quotes Exodus 3:7-8, 10. The phrase *idōn eidon* ('seeing I have seen,' a Hebraism for emphasis) conveys God's intense, compassionate attention to suffering. God both sees and acts — 'I have come down to rescue them' (*katebēn exelesthai autous*). And the instrument of rescue is Moses — the same Moses his brothers rejected in verses 27-28. God is about to send the rejected deliverer back.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 3:7-8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. This is the rhetorical climax of the Moses section. Stephen uses the emphatic 'this Moses' (*touton ton Mousēn... touton*) with anaphoric repetition: the very one they rejected, that one God sent as ruler (*archonta*) and redeemer (*lytrōtēn*). The word *lytrōtēs* ('redeemer, deliverer') echoes the Hebrew *go'el* — the kinsman who rescues family. The parallel to Jesus is now unmistakable: the rejected one is the sent one.
36. Moses' ministry spans three geographical zones — Egypt, Red Sea, wilderness — none of which is the promised land. Stephen continues to emphasize that God's mighty acts occurred outside the land. The third forty-year period begins. The 'wonders and signs' (*terata kai sēmeia*) echo the description of Jesus's ministry (2:22) and the apostles' ministry (5:12).
37. Stephen quotes Deuteronomy 18:15, the same text Peter used in 3:22. The implication is clear: if Moses himself pointed to a future prophet like himself, then Moses' authority is not undermined by recognizing Jesus but fulfilled by it. Rejecting the prophet-like-Moses is rejecting Moses himself.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 18:15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. The word *ekklēsia* ('assembly, church') is used here for Israel's wilderness congregation — the same word used for the Christian community in 5:11. Moses stood as mediator between 'the angel who spoke at Sinai' and 'our fathers.' He received 'living oracles' (*logia zōnta*) — the Torah is described as alive, not dead tradition. Stephen is not anti-Torah; he honors Moses and the law even as he reinterprets them.
39. The verb *apōsanto* ('rejected, pushed away') is the same word used in verse 27 — the pattern repeats. Israel rejected Moses twice: first in Egypt (vv. 27-28), then in the wilderness (v. 39). 'In their hearts turned back to Egypt' (*estraphēsan en tais kardiais autōn eis Aigipton*) — they may have left Egypt physically, but their hearts remained enslaved to it. The accusation builds toward the climax.
40. Stephen quotes Exodus 32:1. The dismissive phrase 'this Moses' (*ho Mōysēs houtos*) on the people's lips contrasts with Stephen's reverent 'this Moses' (*houtos*) in verses 35-38. The demand for 'gods who will go before us' (*theous hoi proporeuontai hēmōn*) is a request for a visible, controllable deity — the opposite of the invisible, sovereign God who appeared in bush and cloud.
40. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 32:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
41. The verb *emoschopoiēsan* ('made a calf') is a single word describing the golden calf incident (Exodus 32:4). The phrase 'the works of their hands' (*tois ergois tōn cheirōn autōn*) is a standard Old Testament description of idols (Psalm 115:4, Isaiah 2:8). Stephen's point: at the very moment God gave the Torah through Moses, the people turned to handmade idols. The pattern of rejection includes idolatry.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 32:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 115:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 2:8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
42. God's response to their idolatry is judicial abandonment — 'gave them over' (*paredōken autous*) to the consequences of their choices (cf. Romans 1:24, 26, 28). Stephen now quotes Amos 5:25-27 (LXX), a prophetic critique of Israel's worship. The rhetorical question expects the answer 'no' — even during the wilderness period, Israel's worship was compromised by idolatry.
42. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Amos 5:25-27. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
43. Stephen continues the Amos quotation. The Hebrew of Amos 5:26 has 'Sikkuth' and 'Kiyyun'; the LXX renders these as 'tent of Moloch' and 'Rephan' (*Raiphan*). Amos originally said 'beyond Damascus'; Stephen (following the LXX) says 'beyond Babylon' — an update that reflects the actual Babylonian exile. The point: Israel's history of idolatry led to exile. Stephen implies that rejecting Jesus may lead to a worse judgment.
43. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Amos 5:25-27 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
44. Stephen now turns to the temple issue. He begins with the tabernacle (*skēnē tou martyriou*, 'tent of testimony/witness'), not the temple — the original place of God's dwelling with Israel was portable, not permanent. It was made 'according to the pattern' (*kata ton typon*) God showed Moses on Sinai (Exodus 25:40). The tabernacle's design was divine, but it traveled with the people rather than binding them to a location.

44. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 25:40. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
45. The Greek *Iēsou* here refers to Joshua (the Greek forms of 'Joshua' and 'Jesus' are identical). The tabernacle accompanied Israel through the conquest and the period of the judges — for centuries, the portable tabernacle was sufficient for God's presence among his people. Stephen's implicit argument: if the tabernacle served for over four hundred years, the temple is not essential.
46. The SBLGNT reads 'house of Jacob' (*oikō Iakōb*) rather than 'God of Jacob' — a textual variant with significant theological implications. If 'house of Jacob,' David sought a dwelling for God's people; if 'God of Jacob,' he sought a dwelling for God. Both readings are attested in ancient manuscripts. We follow the SBLGNT. David asked (*ētēsato*) but was not permitted to build — even the greatest king's request was redirected.
47. The sentence is terse and pointed. The adversative 'but' (*de*) sets up the contrast with what follows: Solomon built a house, but... The brevity is striking after the extended narration — Stephen moves quickly past the temple's construction because his argument is that the temple, however magnificent, cannot contain God.
48. This is the theological pivot of Stephen's entire speech. The word *cheiropoiētois* ('made by hands, handmade') is the same word used for idols in Isaiah 46:6 and Mark 14:58. Stephen does not call the temple an idol, but the vocabulary creates an unsettling association. Solomon himself acknowledged this truth at the temple's dedication: 'But will God indeed dwell on the earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you, how much less this house I have built' (1 Kings 8:27).
48. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 46:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
48. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Kings 8:27 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
49. Stephen quotes Isaiah 66:1-2a. God's throne is heaven; his footstool is the entire earth. The rhetorical questions — 'what house?' and 'what resting place?' — expose the absurdity of thinking any building can house the Creator. Isaiah's own words undermine temple-centrism from within the prophetic canon.
49. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 66:1-2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
50. The final line of the Isaiah quotation is devastatingly simple: God made everything — heaven, earth, and every material that could be used to build a temple. How can the creature house the Creator? Stephen's argument from Scripture is complete. Now he turns to direct accusation.
50. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 66:1-2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
51. Stephen's tone shifts abruptly from historical narration to prophetic indictment. 'Stiff-necked' (*sklērotracheloi*) echoes Exodus 33:3, 5 and Deuteronomy 9:6 — a charge God himself made against Israel. 'Uncircumcised in heart and ears' (*aperitmētoi kardiais kai tois ōsin*) quotes Jeremiah 6:10 and Ezekiel 44:7 — outward circumcision without inner transformation. The charge of 'always resisting the Holy Spirit' (*aei tō pneumati tō hagiō antipēte*) makes the accusation timeless: not just your fathers, but you too.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 33:3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 9:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 6:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
51. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 44:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
52. The rhetorical question expects the answer 'none' — every prophet was persecuted. 'The Righteous One' (*tou dikaïou*) is a messianic title (cf. 3:14, Isaiah 53:11). The accusation escalates: your fathers persecuted prophets; you have become 'betrayers and murderers' (*prodotai kai phoneis*) of the Messiah himself. These are the most inflammatory words spoken in Acts.
52. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 53:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
53. The final charge is devastating: accused of speaking against the law (6:13), Stephen turns the accusation on his accusers — you received the law and did not keep it (*ouk ephylaxate*). The reference to angels delivering the law (*eis diatagas angelōn*) reflects Jewish tradition that angels mediated the Sinai covenant (cf. Galatians 3:19, Hebrews 2:2, Deuteronomy 33:2 LXX). Stephen's defense is now complete: he has not blasphemed the law; they have broken it.
53. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 33:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

54. The verb *dieprionto* ('were cut through, were sawn') is the same word used in 5:33 — visceral, uncontrolled rage. 'Ground their teeth' (*ebrychon tous odontas*) is an expression of furious hostility, used in the Psalms for enemies of the righteous (Psalm 35:16, 37:12). The council has become a mob.
54. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 35:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
55. While the council rages, Stephen sees a vision. The phrase 'full of the Holy Spirit' (*plērēs pneumatōs hagiou*) echoes 6:5 — the Spirit fills him in his final hour. He sees 'the glory of God' (*doxan theou*) — the *kavod*, the weighty divine presence. Uniquely, Jesus is described as 'standing' (*hestōta*) at God's right hand, not sitting (as in Psalm 110:1 and elsewhere). Interpreters debate whether Jesus stands to receive Stephen, to testify on his behalf, or to vindicate him.
55. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 110:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
56. Stephen announces his vision publicly. The title 'Son of Man' (*ton huion tou anthrōpou*) echoes Daniel 7:13-14 and Jesus's own self-designation. This is the only time in the New Testament that someone other than Jesus uses this title. The 'opened heavens' (*tous ouranous diēnoigmenous*) recall Jesus's baptism (Luke 3:21) and Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 1:1). For the Sanhedrin, this claim is the ultimate provocation — it confirms Jesus's own claim before this same body (Luke 22:69).
56. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 7:13-14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
56. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 1:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
57. The council's reaction is primal: screaming (*kraxantes phōnē megalē*), covering their ears (*syneschon ta ōta autōn*) — the physical refusal to hear what the 'uncircumcised in ears' (v. 51) cannot bear — and a collective rush (*hōrmēsan homothymadon*). The word *homothymadon* ('with one accord') is grimly ironic: the same word Luke uses for the church's beautiful unity (1:14, 2:46) now describes a mob's unified violence.
58. The stoning takes place outside the city (*exō tēs poleōs*), following the Levitical requirement (Leviticus 24:14). Jesus was also executed outside the city (Hebrews 13:12). The 'witnesses' (*martyres*) are those who testified against Stephen — Jewish law required accusers to cast the first stones (Deuteronomy 17:7). They remove their outer garments for freedom of movement and place them at the feet of Saul — this is Luke's introduction of the man who will dominate the second half of Acts. Saul's role as garment-guardian indicates approval and likely active participation in the proceedings.
58. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 24:14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
58. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 17:7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
59. Stephen's dying prayer is addressed to Jesus (*kyrie Iēsou*), not to God the Father — a remarkable expression of early Christian devotion to Jesus as Lord. The prayer 'receive my spirit' (*dexai to pneuma mou*) echoes Jesus's own final words in Luke 23:46 ('Father, into your hands I commit my spirit,' quoting Psalm 31:5), but Stephen directs his prayer to Jesus rather than the Father.
59. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 31:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
60. Stephen's second dying prayer parallels Jesus's prayer on the cross: 'Father, forgive them' (Luke 23:34). The phrase *mē stēsēs autois* ('do not set against them, do not charge to their account') uses accounting language — do not record this sin in their ledger. Kneeling under a hail of stones to pray for his killers is the ultimate expression of the Christ-like life.
60. The euphemism 'fell asleep' (*ekoimēthē*) is the early Christian term for death (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14). It implies the expectation of resurrection — sleep is temporary. Among those for whom Stephen prayed was Saul, who would become the greatest apostle. Augustine later wrote: 'If Stephen had not prayed, the church would not have had Paul.'

8

Summary: Acts 8 narrates the aftermath of Stephen's martyrdom. A great persecution scatters the church beyond Jerusalem, fulfilling Jesus's commission to Judea and Samaria (1:8). Saul leads the persecution. Philip, one of the Seven, preaches in Samaria with great success, performing signs and exorcisms. Simon the magician believes and is baptized but later attempts to purchase apostolic power with money, earning Peter's sharp rebuke. The chapter concludes with Philip's encounter with an Ethiopian official who is reading Isaiah 53 on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. Philip explains the passage, baptizes the Ethiopian, and is then transported by the Spirit to Azotus.

What Makes This Remarkable: *The scattering of the church becomes the mechanism of its expansion — persecution intended to destroy the movement instead propagates it. The Samaritan mission is theologically significant: Samaritans were considered half-pagans by Jews, and the gospel's acceptance there breaks the first ethnic barrier. Simon Magus becomes a symbol of spiritual corruption (the term 'simony' derives from his attempt). The Ethiopian eunuch represents multiple boundary-crossings: he is African, a eunuch (excluded from the assembly per Deuteronomy 23:1), and a Gentile God-fearer — yet he receives the gospel without conditions.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between water baptism, the laying on of hands, and receiving the Holy Spirit is complex in this chapter. The Samaritans believe and are baptized but do not receive the Spirit until Peter and John come (vv. 15-17) — a sequence that does not match Pentecost or later conversion accounts. Various theological traditions interpret this differently. The sudden transportation of Philip (v. 39) is one of the most unusual supernatural events in Acts. Verse 37 is absent from the earliest manuscripts and the SBLGNT; we follow the critical text and omit it.*

Connections: *The persecution fulfills Jesus's pattern in 1:8 (Jerusalem Judea and Samaria). Philip's Samaritan mission connects to Jesus's own engagement with Samaritans (Luke 9:52, 10:30-37, 17:11-19, John 4). The Ethiopian reading Isaiah 53 connects to the Suffering Servant theology of 3:13, 26. Philip's transport by the Spirit echoes Elijah's experiences (1 Kings 18:12, 2 Kings 2:16). The Ethiopian's conversion anticipates the full Gentile mission.*

¹Now Saul was in full agreement with Stephen's execution. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. ²Devout men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him. ³But Saul was ravaging the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and had them thrown into prison. ⁴Now those who were scattered went about proclaiming the good news of the word. ⁵Philip went down to a city in Samaria and began proclaiming the Christ to them. ⁶The crowds paid close attention with one mind to what Philip was saying, as they heard and saw the signs he was performing. ⁷For unclean spirits came out of many who had them, screaming with a loud voice, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. ⁸There was remarkable joy in that city. ⁹Now a man named Simon had previously practiced sorcery in the city and had amazed the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great. ¹⁰Everyone, from the least to the greatest, paid attention to him, saying, "This man is the power of God called 'the Great Power.'" ¹¹They paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his sorcery. ¹²But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³Even Simon himself believed and was baptized. He stayed close to Philip, and when he saw the signs and great miracles being performed, he was amazed. ¹⁴When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶For as yet he was fallen upon none of them — only they were baptized by the authority of the Lord Jesus.). ¹⁷Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸When Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹Declaring, Give me also this authority, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may accept the Holy Ghost. ²⁰But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could acquire the gift of God with money! ²¹You have no part or share in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. ²²Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³For I see that you are full of bitter poison and bound by wickedness." ²⁴Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me." ²⁵After they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, proclaiming the good news in many Samaritan villages along the way. ²⁶An angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.) ²⁷So he got up and went. And there was an Ethiopian man, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸Indeed, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet of old. ²⁹The Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join that chariot." ³⁰Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹He said, "How could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³²Now the passage of Scripture he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before

its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. ³³In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken from the earth." ³⁴The eunuch said to Philip, "I ask you, about whom does the prophet say this — about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth and, beginning from this Scripture, proclaimed the good news about Jesus to him. ³⁶As they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?" ³⁸He ordered the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water — Philip and the eunuch — and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again but went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through, he proclaimed the good news in all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The participle *syneuddokōn* ('approving, consenting, being in full agreement') is stronger than passive tolerance — Saul actively endorsed Stephen's death. The word *diōgmos* ('persecution') is intensified by *megas* ('great'). The verb *diesparēsan* ('were scattered') uses agricultural imagery — scattering seed — and Luke may intend the irony: persecution scatters the believers like seed, producing a wider harvest. The apostles alone remain in Jerusalem, perhaps because their public profile made them targets who needed to stand their ground, or because they refused to abandon the Jerusalem base.
2. The word *eulabeis* ('devout, reverent') may refer to pious Jews rather than Christians — burying the dead was a sacred duty, and even opponents of Stephen might have ensured proper burial. The 'great lamentation' (*kopeton megan*) defied the rabbinic rule that prohibited public mourning for those executed by the court (Mishnah Sanhedrin 6:6), suggesting these mourners considered Stephen's death unjust.
3. The verb *elymaineto* ('was ravaging, was destroying, was laying waste to') is used in the LXX for a wild boar devastating a vineyard (Psalm 80:13). Saul's persecution is systematic — house by house (*kata tous oikous*) — and indiscriminate in targeting both men and women (*andras kai gynaikas*). The verb *syron* ('dragging') implies physical violence. This is the man who will become Paul.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 80:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The scattered believers do not go into hiding — they go preaching. The verb *euangelizomenoi* ('proclaiming good news') indicates that mission is not the exclusive work of apostles but the activity of ordinary believers. Persecution accomplishes exactly the opposite of its intention: instead of silencing the message, it multiplies the messengers.
5. This is Philip the evangelist (one of the Seven from 6:5), not Philip the apostle. Some manuscripts read 'the city' (*tēn polin*, a specific city, possibly Sebaste/Samaria or Shechem/Sychar) while others read 'a city' — we follow the reading that treats it as a specific city. The Samaritan mission is momentous: Samaritans worshiped YHWH but rejected the Jerusalem temple in favor of Mount Gerizim, making them the first non-Jewish audience for the gospel.
6. The Samaritan response is positive and unified — *homothymadon* ('with one mind') describes the same kind of communal agreement that characterized the Jerusalem church (1:14, 2:46). The combination of hearing the message and seeing the signs creates a complete witness — word and deed together, as in Jesus's own ministry.
7. The signs parallel those of Jesus and the apostles: exorcisms and physical healings. The unclean spirits (*pneumata akatharta*) cry out as they depart — as they did when confronted by Jesus (Luke 4:33-35). The two categories of healing — paralyzed (*parelumenoi*) and lame (*chōloi*) — echo Isaiah 35:5-6, the prophetic description of messianic restoration.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 35:5-6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The phrase 'great joy' (*pollē chara*) characterizes the gospel's arrival in new territory throughout Acts (cf. 13:52, 15:3). Joy is the consistent fruit of the gospel wherever it is received.
9. Simon Magus becomes one of the most discussed figures in early Christianity — later tradition (especially the Church Fathers) identified him as the founder of Gnosticism. The verb *mageuōn* ('practicing sorcery/magic') places him in the tradition of pagan magical practice. His self-aggrandizement — 'claiming to be someone great' (*legōn einai tina heauton megan*) — echoes the description of Theudas in 5:36. The contrast between Simon's magic and Philip's signs will be a key theme.
10. The title 'the Great Power of God' (*hē dynamis tou theou hē kaloumenē megalē*) appears to be a Samaritan religious title, possibly related to Samaritan theology's emphasis on divine power. The phrase 'from the least to the greatest' (*apo mikrou heōs megalou*) indicates Simon's universal influence across all social levels.
11. The phrase *hikanō chronō* ('for a long time, for a considerable period') indicates Simon's established influence — this was not a recent phenomenon. The verb *exestakenai* ('had amazed, had astonished') suggests a hold over the people through supernatural display. Philip's ministry will break this hold.

12. Philip's message has two components: 'the kingdom of God' (tēs basileias tou theou) and 'the name of Jesus Christ' (tou onomatos Iēsou Christou). The kingdom message connects to Jesus's own preaching; the name of Jesus identifies the king. Both men and women are baptized — gender equality in baptism is consistently noted in Acts.
13. Simon's belief (episteusen) and baptism raise the question of whether his faith was genuine. His subsequent behavior (vv. 18-24) suggests his attraction was to the power rather than to the person of Christ. The verb existato ('was amazed') — the same word used for the crowds' response to Simon (v. 9, 11) — now describes Simon himself. The sorcerer is out-astonished by genuine divine power.
14. The apostles' dispatch of Peter and John serves to validate the Samaritan mission and to ensure continuity with the Jerusalem church. That 'Samaria had received the word of God' (dedektai hē Samareia ton logon tou theou) is a landmark statement — the ancient enmity between Jews and Samaritans is being overcome by the gospel.
15. Peter and John pray specifically for the Samaritan believers to receive the Holy Spirit — indicating that the Spirit had not yet been given to them. This raises theological questions: were they truly converted without the Spirit? Various traditions explain this differently. Luke may be emphasizing that the Samaritan church needed apostolic validation to prevent a schism between Jewish and Samaritan Christianity.
16. Luke describes the Spirit as having 'fallen' (epeptōkos) — a dramatic term suggesting a sudden, powerful descent (cf. 10:44, 11:15). The word 'only' (monon) does not diminish baptism but distinguishes it from the Spirit's empowering presence. The Samaritan situation is unique in Acts and may reflect special circumstances rather than a normative sequence.
17. The laying on of hands (epitithēsas tas cheiras) conveys the Spirit — the physical gesture accompanies the spiritual gift. The reception of the Spirit is described without specifying its outward manifestation, though verse 18 implies something visible occurred that Simon could observe.
18. Simon 'saw' (idōn) something — the Spirit's reception had visible manifestations. His response reveals his fundamental misunderstanding: he treats the Spirit's power as a commodity that can be purchased, like a magical technique. The verb prosēnenken ('offered, brought forward') implies a formal business transaction. The word chrēmata ('money') derives from chraomai ('to use') — Simon sees the Spirit as a useful tool.
19. Simon wants the exousia ('authority, power, right') to confer the Spirit — he seeks control over the distribution of divine power. This is the fundamental error: the Spirit is God's gift, not a human transaction. The term 'simony' — the buying or selling of spiritual offices or privileges — derives from this episode.
20. Peter's response is fierce: 'may your silver perish with you' (to argyriou sou syn soi eiē eis apōleian) is a conditional curse — may your money go to destruction, and you with it. The key theological principle: the gift of God (tēn dōrean tou theou) is exactly that — a gift (dōrea). It cannot be purchased (ktasthai, 'to acquire, to possess'). This verse draws a permanent line between God's grace and human commerce.
21. The phrase 'no part or share' (meris oude klēros) echoes the language of inheritance in Israel — Simon has no portion in the kingdom. The diagnosis is cardiovascular: 'your heart is not right' (hē kardia sou ouk estin eutheia, literally 'not straight') before God. The problem is not the outward act but the inward orientation.
22. Peter offers repentance as a possibility, not a certainty — the phrase 'if possible' (ei ara) introduces genuine uncertainty about whether forgiveness is available for this particular sin. The word epinoia ('intent, thought, scheme') suggests a calculated plan, not a momentary impulse. Peter calls him to repent and pray, leaving the outcome to God.
23. Peter's diagnosis echoes Deuteronomy 29:18 (LXX), where Moses warns against 'a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit' among the covenant people. The phrase 'gall of bitterness' (cholēn pikrias) and 'bond of iniquity' (syndesmon adikias) describe both Simon's internal condition (bitter poison) and his external bondage (chained by sin). Peter sees through Simon's profession of faith to the corruption beneath.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 29:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. Simon's response is ambiguous — he asks for prayer but does not repent himself. He asks Peter and John to pray for him rather than praying directly, and his concern is avoiding punishment rather than seeking transformation. Luke leaves Simon's fate unresolved; later patristic tradition (especially Irenaeus and Justin Martyr) developed extensive accounts of Simon as the arch-heretic.
25. Peter and John expand the Samaritan mission on their return journey — they do not merely validate Philip's work but extend it. The phrase 'many villages of the Samaritans' (pollas kōmas tōn Samaritōn) shows the gospel spreading throughout the region, not limited to a single city. The Jewish apostles are now evangelizing Samaritans — a remarkable transformation from the attitudes described in Luke 9:52-54.
26. The divine direction shifts Philip from a successful urban ministry in Samaria to a deserted highway — God's priorities do not always match human expectations. The phrase kata mesēmbrian can mean 'toward the south' or 'at midday'; we follow the directional sense. The parenthetical 'this is desert' (hautē estin erēmos) may describe the road or the city of Gaza itself, which had been destroyed and rebuilt.
27. The Ethiopian eunuch represents multiple boundary-crossings. He is African (from the kingdom of Meroe, modern Sudan), a eunuch (castrated court officials served as trusted treasury administrators), and a God-fearer (he came to Jerusalem to worship but as a eunuch could not fully convert to Judaism per Deuteronomy 23:1). 'Candace' (Kandakēs) is not a personal name but the title of the queen mother who wielded executive power in the Meroitic kingdom, similar to 'Pharaoh' or 'Caesar.' His high position as treasurer (epi pasēs tēs gazēs, 'over all her treasury') indicates great authority and trust.

- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 23:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** The eunuch reads Isaiah aloud (ancient practice was to read aloud even when alone). His choice of Isaiah is significant — Isaiah 56:3-5 specifically promises eunuchs a place in God's house: 'I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters.' The eunuch's reading is a search for inclusion.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 56:3-5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** Now it is the Spirit (to pneuma) rather than the angel (v. 26) who directs Philip. The command kollēthēti ('join yourself to, attach yourself to, stay close to') suggests walking alongside the slowly moving chariot. Divine orchestration brings the right messenger to the right seeker at the right moment.
- 30.** Philip runs (prosdramōn) — urgency marks Spirit-directed encounters. His question creates a Greek wordplay: ginōskeis ha anaginōskeis ('do you know what you are reading?' — ginōskō and anaginōskō share the root gnō-). The question is not condescending but opens the door for dialogue.
- 31.** The eunuch's response is humble and eager — he recognizes his need for interpretation and welcomes a guide (hodēgēsei, 'will lead along the way'). The verb parekalesen ('invited, urged, encouraged') shows genuine desire for understanding. He invites Philip into his chariot — a foreigner climbing into a court official's chariot represents the breaking of social barriers.
- 32.** The eunuch is reading Isaiah 53:7-8 (LXX), the heart of the Suffering Servant passage. The image of a lamb led to slaughter in silence is the defining portrait of redemptive suffering in the Old Testament. That this particular passage is what the eunuch happened to be reading when Philip arrived is presented as divine providence.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 53:7-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 33.** The LXX of Isaiah 53:8 differs from the Hebrew in some details. 'In his humiliation his justice was taken away' (en tē tapeinōsei hē krisis autou ērthē) — the Servant was denied a fair trial. 'Who can describe his generation?' (tēn genean autou tis diēgēsetai) is ambiguous: it could refer to his descendants (he died without offspring), his lifespan (cut short), or the wickedness of his contemporaries. 'His life is taken from the earth' — a statement of violent death.
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:7-8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 34.** The eunuch's question reflects genuine scholarly inquiry — who is the Suffering Servant? Jewish interpretation offered multiple answers: the prophet himself (Isaiah), the nation of Israel collectively, a future messiah, or a specific historical figure. The eunuch's question is the right question, and Philip is about to give the Christian answer.
- 35.** The phrase 'opened his mouth' (anoixas to stoma autou) is a solemn introduction to important speech (cf. Matthew 5:2). Philip begins with the text the eunuch is reading and moves from there to Jesus — arxamenos apo tēs graphēs tautēs ('beginning from this Scripture'). The method is christological interpretation of the Old Testament: Isaiah 53 finds its fulfillment in Jesus. Luke does not record the content of Philip's explanation, but the result (v. 36) shows that it included instruction about baptism.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 53 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** The eunuch's question 'What prevents me?' (ti kōlyei me) is deeply poignant. As a eunuch, he had been prevented from full participation in Israel's worship (Deuteronomy 23:1). His whole life has been defined by barriers. Now he asks whether there is a barrier to baptism — and the answer is no. The gospel removes the exclusions that the old covenant imposed. Finding water on a 'desert road' (v. 26) adds to the sense of divine provision.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 23:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 38.** Note: Verse 37 is absent from the SBLGNT and the earliest manuscripts. It appears in later manuscripts as the eunuch's confession of faith ('I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God') and was likely added by scribes who felt the baptism needed an explicit confession. We follow the critical text and omit it.
- 38.** Both Philip and the eunuch go 'down into the water' (katebēsan amphoteroi eis to hydōr), suggesting immersion rather than sprinkling, though the text does not specify the precise method. The baptism of a eunuch — someone excluded from the assembly of Israel — is a powerful statement of the gospel's inclusive scope.
- 39.** The verb hērpasen ('snatched away, carried off, caught up') describes a sudden, supernatural transportation — the same word used for Paul's rapture to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2) and the catching up of the church (1 Thessalonians 4:17). The Spirit literally relocates Philip. The eunuch's response is joy (chairōn) — the characteristic mark of genuine conversion in Acts. He continues his journey to Ethiopia, presumably carrying the gospel with him. Church tradition credits him with founding the Ethiopian church.
- 40.** Azotus (the Greek name for the old Philistine city of Ashdod) is on the Mediterranean coast, about 20 miles north of Gaza. Philip evangelizes along the coastal plain northward to Caesarea, the major Roman administrative center, where he apparently settles (cf. 21:8, where Paul visits 'Philip the evangelist' in Caesarea). The gospel now has a foothold on the coast, opening a corridor from Jerusalem to the wider Mediterranean world.

9

Summary: Acts 9 narrates the dramatic conversion of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. While traveling with letters authorizing him to arrest Christians, Saul is confronted by a blinding light and the voice of the risen Jesus: 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' Blinded for three days, Saul is visited by Ananias of Damascus, who restores his sight, baptizes him, and conveys God's commission. Saul immediately begins preaching Jesus as the Son of God in Damascus synagogues. After escaping a murder plot in Damascus, Saul goes to Jerusalem where Barnabas vouches for him to the apostles. The chapter then describes Peter's ministry in Lydda and Joppa, including the healing of Aeneas (paralyzed for eight years) and the raising of Tabitha (Dorcas) from the dead. Peter stays in Joppa with Simon the tanner, setting the stage for the Cornelius episode in chapter 10.

What Makes This Remarkable: Saul's conversion is the pivotal event in Acts and is narrated three times (here, 22:3-21, 26:9-23), reflecting its importance. The identification of Jesus with his persecuted church — 'why are you persecuting me?' — is a profound christological statement: to persecute the church is to persecute Christ himself. Ananias's reluctance and God's response reveal Jesus's plan for Saul: 'he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.' The raising of Tabitha parallels Elijah's raising of the widow's son and Jesus's raising of Jairus's daughter.

Translation Friction: The three accounts of Saul's conversion differ in details: whether companions heard the voice (9:7 vs. 22:9), whether they saw the light, and whether Saul received his commission directly or through Ananias. These variations likely reflect the different rhetorical settings of each retelling rather than contradictions. Peter's lodging with 'Simon the tanner' (v. 43) is notable because tanning was considered an unclean occupation in Jewish law — Peter is already relaxing purity boundaries before the Cornelius vision.

Connections: Saul's conversion fulfills Jesus's statement to Ananias about suffering for his name (v. 16), which will play out through the rest of Acts. The Damascus road experience connects to prophetic call narratives (Isaiah 6, Jeremiah 1, Ezekiel 1-3). Peter's miracles in Lydda and Joppa mirror Jesus's miracles and demonstrate that the apostolic mission continues Jesus's work. The tanner's house in Joppa prepares for the vision of clean and unclean animals in 10:9-16.

1Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2He asked for letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found anyone who belonged to the Way — whether men or women — he could arrest them and bring them back to Jerusalem. 3As he was traveling and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" 5He said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he replied, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 6But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you must do." 7The men traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the sound but seeing no one. 8Saul got up from the ground, and although his eyes were open, he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. 9For three days he was without sight, and he neither ate nor drank. 10Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He said, "Here I am, Lord." 11The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. 12He has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." 13But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man — how much harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. 14And here he has authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name." 15But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel. 16For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." 17So Ananias departed and entered the house. Laying his hands on him, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18Immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized. 19Following he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the followers which were at Damascus. 20And immediately he began

proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." ²¹All who heard him were astonished and said, "Is this not the man who destroyed those in Jerusalem who called on this name? And did he not come here for the very purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?" ²²But Saul kept growing stronger and was confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ. ²³When many days had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him. ²⁴But their plot became known to Saul. They were also watching the gates day and night in order to kill him. ²⁵But his disciples took him at night and lowered him through an opening in the wall, letting him down in a large basket. ²⁶When he arrived in Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. ²⁷But Barnabas took him, brought him to the apostles, and described to them how on the road Saul had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. ²⁸So he went in and out among them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. ²⁹He spoke and debated with the Hellenists, but they were trying to kill him. ³⁰When the brothers learned of this, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. ³¹So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. Walking in the fear of the Lord and in the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers. ³²As Peter was traveling through all the region, he came down also to the saints living in Lydda. ³³There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. ³⁴Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed." And immediately he got up. ³⁵All the residents of Lydda and the Sharon Plain saw him and turned to the Lord. ³⁶In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. ³⁷In those days she became ill and died. After washing her body, they laid her in an upper room. ³⁸Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the urgent request, "Please come to us without delay." ³⁹So Peter rose and went with them. When he arrived, they took him to the upper room, and all the widows stood beside him weeping and showing him the tunics and garments that Dorcas had made while she was with them. ⁴⁰But Peter sent them all out, knelt down, and prayed. Then turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹He gave her his hand and raised her up. Then calling the saints and the widows, he presented her alive. ⁴²This became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³He stayed in Joppa for many days with a man named Simon, a tanner.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The participle *empneōn* ('breathing') creates a vivid image: Saul exhaled threats as naturally as he exhaled air — persecution was his very breath. The combination 'threats and murder' (*apeilēs kai phonou*) intensifies from words to actions. The present participle indicates ongoing, habitual activity. The phrase 'disciples of the Lord' (*tous mathētas tou kyriou*) is the first use of 'disciples' since chapter 6, now describing the broader Christian community.
2. The 'letters' (epistolās) from the high priest would authorize Saul to act with Sanhedrin authority in the Damascus synagogues. The term 'the Way' (*tēs hodou*) is the earliest designation for the Christian movement in Acts (cf. 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22) — it identifies Christianity as a path or way of life, possibly echoing Isaiah 40:3 ('prepare the way of the Lord'). Damascus had a significant Jewish population and was within the traditional boundaries of the land of Israel as understood by some authorities, justifying Jerusalem's jurisdictional claim.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 40:3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The adverb *exaiphnēs* ('suddenly') marks the divine irruption — there is no preparation, no gradual awareness. The light (*phōs ek tou ouranou*) comes 'from heaven,' establishing its divine origin. The verb *periēstrapsen* ('flashed around') describes light enveloping Saul from every direction. In 26:13, Paul will specify it was brighter than the midday sun. The theophanic light recalls Moses at the burning bush and Ezekiel's vision of divine glory.
4. The double address 'Saul, Saul' (*Saoul Saoul*) uses the Hebrew/Aramaic form of the name (not the Greek *Saulos*), echoing divine addresses in the Old Testament: 'Abraham, Abraham' (Genesis 22:11), 'Moses, Moses' (Exodus 3:4), 'Samuel, Samuel' (1 Samuel 3:10). The question 'why are you persecuting me?' (*ti me diōkeis*) contains the explosive identification: Jesus is so united with his church that persecuting believers is persecuting him personally. This is not metaphor — it is christological reality.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 22:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 3:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Samuel 3:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

5. Saul's question 'Who are you, Lord?' (tis ei, kyrie) uses kyrie, which could mean simply 'sir' at this point — Saul does not yet know who speaks. The response 'I am Jesus' (egō eimi Iēsous) is devastating: the one Saul believed was a dead false messiah is alive and speaking from heaven. The addition 'whom you are persecuting' (hon sy diōkeis) repeats the identification from verse 4. The SBLGNT does not include 'it is hard for you to kick against the goads,' which appears in later manuscripts and in Paul's retelling in 26:14.
6. The SBLGNT omits the initial question 'Lord, what do you want me to do?' which appears in later manuscripts. Jesus's command is simple: go to the city and wait. The phrase ho ti se dei poiein ('what you must do') uses the divine necessity verb dei — Saul's future is determined by God's plan, not his own.
7. The companions hear the 'sound' (phōnēs) but see no one. In 22:9, Paul says they saw the light but 'did not hear the voice of the one speaking to me.' The apparent discrepancy likely reflects the difference between hearing a sound and understanding speech — they perceived noise but not articulate words. The adjective enei ('speechless') captures their stunned inability to respond.
8. The man who set out to Damascus with authority and purpose arrives blind and dependent. The irony is profound: the one who could not 'see' who Jesus was now literally cannot see. His eyes are open (aneōgmenōn tōn ophthalmōn) but perceive nothing — a physical condition mirroring his previous spiritual state. Being led by the hand (cheiragōgountes) reduces the powerful persecutor to the helplessness of a child.
9. The three days of blindness and fasting echo death and burial — Saul's old life as persecutor is dying. The three-day period recalls Jonah's three days in the fish and, most significantly, Jesus's three days in the tomb. Saul's emergence from this period will be a kind of resurrection.
10. Ananias is simply called a 'disciple' (mathētēs) — an ordinary believer, not an apostle or leader. The vision dialogue follows the pattern of Old Testament call narratives: God calls by name, the person responds 'Here I am' (idou egō, echoing Abraham in Genesis 22:1, Moses in Exodus 3:4, Samuel in 1 Samuel 3:4). This Ananias should be distinguished from the Ananias of chapter 5 and the high priest Ananias of chapter 23.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 22:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 3:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Samuel 3:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The 'street called Straight' (tēn rhymēn tēn kaloumenēn Eutheian) is likely the main east-west thoroughfare of Damascus, still identifiable today. The specific address — Judas's house on Straight Street — gives the narrative historical particularity. The note 'for he is praying' (idou gar proseuchetai) signals Saul's transformation: the persecutor is now a petitioner. God orchestrates a double vision: Saul prays and sees Ananias coming; Ananias receives instructions to go.
12. Saul's vision of Ananias arriving is a confirming vision — when Ananias actually appears, Saul will know this is from God. The divine coordination of the two visions (Ananias's in v. 10, Saul's in v. 12) mirrors the coordination in the Cornelius-Peter narrative (10:3-6, 10:9-16). God prepares both parties for the encounter.
13. Ananias's protest is understandable — he is being asked to visit the most dangerous man in the world for a Damascus Christian. His intelligence about Saul is accurate: 'how much harm he has done to your saints' (hosa kaka tois hagiois sou epoiēsen). The word hagiois ('saints, holy ones') is used here for the first time in Acts for believers — those set apart for God. Ananias's reluctance adds dramatic tension and makes his eventual obedience all the more commendable.
14. Ananias knows Saul's mission: arrest 'all who call on your name' (pantas tous epikaloumenous to onoma sou). The phrase 'calling on the name' echoes Joel 2:32 quoted in 2:21 — the very act of salvation (calling on the Lord's name) is the crime Saul has come to punish. The irony deepens: Saul will soon be calling on that name himself.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joel 2:32. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The Lord overrides Ananias's objection with a revelation of Saul's destiny. The phrase 'chosen instrument' (skeuos eklogēs, literally 'vessel of election/choice') presents Saul as a container selected by God for a specific purpose. His mission has three audiences: Gentiles (ethnōn), kings (basileōn), and the sons of Israel (huiōn Israēl) — all three will be fulfilled in Acts. The order is significant: Gentiles first, reflecting Paul's primary calling.
16. Saul's calling includes suffering (pathein) — the word dei ('must') makes suffering a divine necessity, not an accident. 'For the sake of my name' (hyper tou onomatos mou) — the name Saul tried to destroy will become the name he suffers for. The rest of Acts will document this suffering: beatings, imprisonments, shipwreck, stoning, and ultimately martyrdom.
17. Ananias's first word to the feared persecutor is 'brother' (adelphe) — a single word of reconciliation that bridges the chasm between persecutor and persecuted. Ananias identifies the Lord who sent him as 'Jesus' (Iēsous), confirming for Saul the identity of the voice on the road. The mission is twofold: physical healing ('regain your sight') and spiritual empowerment ('be filled with the Holy Spirit'). Ananias obeys despite his fear — faith overcomes terror.
18. The 'scales' (lepides, 'flakes, scales') falling from Saul's eyes is both a physical healing and a spiritual metaphor — the blindness that covered his understanding is removed. The sequence is immediate: sight restored rising baptism. The brevity contrasts with the elaborate detail of the vision and conversion — Luke gives the baptism just four words (anastas ebaptisthē), suggesting it is the natural, expected response to faith.

19. After three days of fasting (v. 9), Saul eats and recovers physical strength (enischysen). He immediately joins 'the disciples in Damascus' (tōn en Damaskō mathētōn) — the very people he came to arrest. The persecutor has become a brother. The phrase 'several days' (hēmeras tinas) covers an unspecified period during which Saul transitions from persecutor to preacher.
20. The adverb eutheōs ('immediately') captures the urgency of Saul's new conviction. He preaches in the very synagogues (en tais synagōgais) where he had authority to make arrests. His message: Jesus is 'the Son of God' (ho huios tou theou) — this title appears only here in Acts and represents the highest christological claim. The man who came to destroy the Way now proclaims its central confession.
21. The audience's astonishment (existanto) mirrors the amazement that follows every major event in Acts. The verb porthēsas ('destroyed, ravaged') is a military term describing the sacking of a city — Saul's persecution was remembered as devastation. The rhetorical questions express the shock of radical transformation: the same man, the same name, but everything has reversed.
22. The verb enedynamouto ('was being strengthened, was growing in power') indicates progressive empowerment by the Spirit. The verb synechynnen ('was confounding, was bewildering') means he left them unable to respond — his arguments were irrefutable. The participle symbibazon ('proving, demonstrating, bringing together') suggests logical argumentation from Scripture — Saul was already using the method that would characterize his later ministry: demonstrating from the Hebrew Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.
23. The phrase 'many days' (hēmerai hikanai) covers a significant period. According to Galatians 1:17-18, Paul spent time in Arabia and then returned to Damascus before going to Jerusalem — a period of about three years. Luke compresses the timeline. The plot to kill Saul mirrors the plots against Jesus and the apostles — the pattern of rejection continues, but now directed at the former persecutor.
24. The conspirators watch the city gates (tas pylas) to prevent Saul's escape. According to 2 Corinthians 11:32-33, the ethnarch under King Aretas IV was guarding the city — suggesting cooperation between Jewish opponents and the Nabatean authorities. The surveillance is around the clock (hēmeras te kai nyktos), indicating serious intent.
25. The escape 'through the wall' (dia tou teichous) likely means through a window in a house built into the city wall (cf. Joshua 2:15, Rahab's house). The word spyridi ('large basket') is the same word used for the baskets at the feeding of the 4,000 (Mark 8:8). Paul himself recounts this humiliating escape in 2 Corinthians 11:33. The phrase 'his disciples' (hoi mathētai autou) is remarkable — Saul already has followers of his own.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 2:15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. Saul's reception in Jerusalem is understandably hostile — 'they were all afraid of him' (pantes ephobounto auton). His reputation as a persecutor preceded him, and his conversion was too dramatic to be easily believed. The verb epeirazen ('tried, attempted') suggests repeated, unsuccessful efforts to gain acceptance. Saul is caught between two worlds: hunted by his former allies and mistrusted by his new brothers.
27. Barnabas, the 'Son of Encouragement' (4:36), lives up to his name by bridging the gap between Saul and the apostles. The verb epilabomenos ('took hold of, took charge of') indicates decisive action. Barnabas vouches for three things: the Damascus road vision, the Lord's direct speech to Saul, and Saul's bold preaching in Damascus. This mediation was crucial for Saul's acceptance and for the unity of the church. Barnabas's willingness to stake his reputation on a former persecutor is an act of extraordinary faith.
28. The phrase 'going in and going out' (eisporuomenos kai ekporuomenos) is the same Semitic idiom used in 1:21 for daily life and activity. Saul is now a full member of the Jerusalem community, speaking with parrhēsia ('boldness') — the same quality the church prayed for in 4:29.
29. Saul engages the same Greek-speaking Jews (Hellēnistas) who had opposed Stephen (6:9). The verb synezētei ('debated, disputed') suggests vigorous intellectual engagement. Their response — attempted murder (epecheiroun anein auton) — mirrors the response to Stephen. Saul has stepped into Stephen's role and faces Stephen's fate, creating a narrative parallel that Luke emphasizes.
30. The community protects Saul by evacuating him — first to Caesarea (the port city) and then to Tarsus (his hometown in Cilicia). According to Galatians 1:21, Paul went to 'the regions of Syria and Cilicia.' Saul disappears from the narrative until Barnabas retrieves him in 11:25-26. The 'silent years' in Tarsus were likely a period of further reflection and teaching preparation.
31. This is one of Luke's major summary statements. The singular 'church' (ekklēsia) encompasses the entire community across three regions — Judea, Galilee, and Samaria — indicating a unified body despite geographical spread. The description includes peace (eirēnē), edification (oikodomoumenē, 'being built up'), reverent living ('walking in the fear of the Lord'), and the Spirit's encouragement (paraklēsei tou hagiou pneumatos). Saul's departure from active persecution may have contributed to the period of peace.
32. The narrative shifts from Saul to Peter, who will dominate chapters 9-12 before Saul/Paul takes center stage. Peter is traveling (dierchomenon, 'passing through') the churches, exercising an itinerant oversight ministry. Lydda (modern Lod) was a town about 25 miles northwest of Jerusalem, on the road to Joppa and the coast.
33. The name Aeneas (Ainean) is Greek, suggesting he may have been a Hellenistic Jew or Gentile. His paralysis for eight years (ex etōn oktō) establishes the chronic, hopeless nature of his condition. The detail 'bedridden' (katakeimenon epi krabattou, 'lying on a pallet') emphasizes his complete immobility.
34. Peter explicitly credits Jesus Christ as the healer — 'Jesus Christ heals you' (iatai se Iēsous Christos) is present tense, indicating Jesus's active power in the present moment. The command 'make your bed' (strōson seautō) is a practical instruction that demonstrates the completeness of the healing — the man who has been bedridden for eight years can now perform ordinary domestic tasks. The healing is immediate (eutheōs), as in Jesus's own healings.

35. The miracle has a regional impact — not only Lydda but the entire Sharon Plain (ton Sarōna, the fertile coastal plain stretching from Joppa to Mount Carmel) responds. The phrase 'turned to the Lord' (epstrepsan epi ton kyrion) describes conversion, using the same language as the Old Testament prophets' call to return to God.
36. Tabitha is explicitly called a 'disciple' (mathētria) — the feminine form of mathētēs, used only here in the New Testament. Her Aramaic name Tabitha and its Greek equivalent Dorcas both mean 'gazelle.' Luke characterizes her by her deeds: 'full of good works and acts of charity' (plērēs ergōn agathōn kai eleēmosynōn). She is defined not by theology but by practical compassion.
37. The washing of the body (lousantes) was the customary Jewish preparation for burial. Placing her in an upper room (hyperōō) rather than immediately burying her (Jewish custom normally required same-day burial) suggests the community hoped for intervention — they had heard that Peter was nearby in Lydda (v. 38).
38. Lydda was about 10-12 miles from Joppa, a distance easily traveled in a few hours. The urgency of the request — mē oknēsēs ('do not hesitate, do not delay') — suggests they hoped Peter could do something about Tabitha's death, though they do not explicitly ask for a resurrection.
39. The widows' display of Dorcas's handiwork is deeply moving — each garment (chitōnas, 'tunics/undergarments' and himatia, 'cloaks/outer garments') is a tangible memorial of her charity. The phrase 'while she was with them' (met' autōn ousa) is the language of grief — she is no longer with them. The scene echoes Jesus at Jairus's house, where mourners surrounded the dead girl.
40. Peter's actions closely follow Jesus's pattern at the raising of Jairus's daughter (Luke 8:51-56): he sends everyone out, addresses the dead person directly by name, and she rises. The Aramaic 'Tabitha, arise' (Tabitha, anastēthi) is phonetically similar to Jesus's 'Talitha, arise' (Talitha koum, Mark 5:41) — only one letter differs. Peter prays first (prosēuxato), acknowledging that the power comes from God, not from himself. The response is immediate: she opens her eyes and sits up.
41. Peter gives Tabitha his hand (dous autē cheira) — the same gesture he used to raise the lame man in 3:7. He then 'presented her alive' (parestēsen autēn zōsan) to the community — the word zōsan ('living') is emphatic. The distinction between 'the saints' (tous hagious, the believers generally) and 'the widows' (tas chēras, those who especially benefited from her ministry) suggests two overlapping groups.
42. As with Aeneas's healing (v. 35), the miracle produces widespread faith. The pattern repeats: sign testimony belief. Each miracle extends the reach of the gospel geographically and numerically.
43. Peter's lodging with Simon the tanner (Simōni byrsei) is theologically significant. Tanners worked with animal carcasses and were considered ritually unclean in Jewish tradition — their occupation required constant contact with dead animals. That Peter stays with a tanner suggests his purity boundaries are already loosening, preparing the reader for the revolutionary vision that will come in 10:9-16. Joppa (modern Jaffa/Tel Aviv) is on the Mediterranean coast, positioning Peter for the Gentile mission that is about to begin.

10

Summary: *Acts 10 narrates the pivotal conversion of Cornelius, a Roman centurion in Caesarea, and the dramatic expansion of the gospel to Gentiles. Cornelius, a God-fearer, receives a vision directing him to send for Peter. Meanwhile, Peter receives his own vision on a rooftop in Joppa: a sheet descending from heaven filled with unclean animals, with a voice commanding him to 'kill and eat.' Peter refuses three times, and the voice responds, 'What God has made clean, do not call common.' When Cornelius's messengers arrive, the Spirit instructs Peter to go with them. Peter preaches at Cornelius's house, and while he is still speaking, the Holy Spirit falls on the Gentile listeners — astonishing the Jewish believers present. Peter orders their baptism.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter is the theological hinge of Acts. Luke devotes more space to this episode than to any other single event (it is retold in chapter 11 and referenced in chapter 15), signaling its centrality. The vision of unclean animals does not primarily concern dietary laws — Peter himself interprets it as God showing him 'not to call any person common or unclean' (10:28). The falling of the Spirit before baptism reverses the Pentecost pattern (baptism then Spirit) and removes any human gatekeeping from God's acceptance of Gentiles. The phrase 'God shows no partiality' (10:34) becomes a foundational principle of early Christian theology.*

Translation Friction: *The Greek koinos ('common') and akathartos ('unclean') carry specific Levitical connotations. Peter's vision does not explicitly abrogate Torah dietary laws — it redefines the categories of clean and unclean as they apply to persons. We render the Greek as given without resolving the ongoing theological debate about the vision's implications for food laws versus ethnic boundaries. The term phobeomai ton theon ('God-fearer') describes Cornelius's status as a Gentile who worshiped Israel's God without full conversion — a historically attested category in Second Temple Judaism.*

Connections: The Cornelius episode fulfills Jesus's commission in Acts 1:8 to be witnesses 'to the ends of the earth.' It connects to the Ethiopian eunuch's baptism (Acts 8:26-40) as a progressive opening to outsiders. Peter's sermon echoes the kerygma of Acts 2 but now explicitly includes 'every nation.' The vision of clean and unclean connects to Leviticus 11 and Mark 7:19. The Spirit's sovereign action parallels Joel 2:28-32, quoted at Pentecost.

¹Now there was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of the cohort called the Italian Cohort. ²He was a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave generously to the people, and prayed to God continually. ³About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God come in to him and say, "Cornelius." ⁴He stared at the angel in fear and said, "What is it, Lord?" The angel said to him, "Your prayers and your acts of charity have ascended as a memorial offering before God. ⁵Now send men to Joppa and summon a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶He is staying with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea." ⁷When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him. ⁸After explaining everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. ⁹The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. ¹⁰He became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet descending, being let down by its four corners to the earth. ¹²In it were all kinds of four-footed animals and reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³And a voice came to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." ¹⁴But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything common or unclean." ¹⁵And the voice came to him again a second time: "What God has made clean, do not call common." ¹⁶This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken up into heaven. ¹⁷Now while Peter was puzzling over what the vision might mean, the men sent by Cornelius, having asked directions to Simon's house, stood at the gate. ¹⁸They called out and asked whether Simon, who was called Peter, was staying there. ¹⁹While Peter was still reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look, three men are looking for you. ²⁰Rise, go down, and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them." ²¹Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason you have come?" ²²They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear a message from you." ²³So he invited them in and gave them lodging. The next day he rose and went with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. ²⁴The following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet to worship him. ²⁶But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also just a man." ²⁷And as he talked with him, he went in and found many people gathered. ²⁸He said to them, "You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner. But God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. ²⁹So when I was sent for, I came without objection. Now I ask, for what reason did you send for me?" ³⁰Cornelius said, "Four days ago at this very hour, I was praying at the ninth hour in my house, and a man stood before me in bright clothing ³¹Stated, Cornelius, your prayer is listened to, and your alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. ³²Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is staying in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea." ³³So I sent for you at once, and you were kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear everything that the Lord has commanded you to say." ³⁴So Peter opened his mouth and said, "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵However, in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh moral integrity, is accepted with him. ³⁶As for the word that he sent to the children of Israel, proclaiming the good news of peace through Jesus Christ — he is Lord of all — ³⁷You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed — ³⁸How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with authority — who traveled concerning doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. For God was with him. ³⁹We are witnesses of everything he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰God raised him on the third day and allowed him to be seen openly. ⁴¹Not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God, indeed to us, who did consume and feast with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." ⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all who were

hearing the message. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in tongues and magnifying God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷"Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay for some days.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. A centurion (hekatontarches) commanded approximately eighty soldiers within a cohort (speira). The Italian Cohort (speira Italiike) was a Roman auxiliary unit composed of Italian-born soldiers stationed in the province of Judea. Caesarea Maritima was the Roman administrative capital, making it a natural location for a Roman military officer.
2. The description 'fearing God' (phoboumenos ton theon) is a semi-technical term for Gentiles who worshiped Israel's God, observed certain Jewish practices, and attended synagogue, but had not undergone full proselyte conversion including circumcision. Archaeological evidence confirms this category in the Second Temple period.
3. The ninth hour (approximately 3 PM) was one of the established Jewish times of prayer. That Cornelius observes this practice confirms his devotion to Israel's God. The adverb phaneros ('clearly, openly') emphasizes that this was not a vague impression but a distinct vision.
4. The language of 'ascending as a memorial' (anebesan eis mnemosunon) echoes the Old Testament sacrificial vocabulary — particularly the memorial portion (azkarah) of grain offerings (Leviticus 2:2). Cornelius's prayers and charity are presented as a kind of sacrifice that has reached God, even though he is uncircumcised.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 2:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Joppa (modern Jaffa/Yafo) lies approximately 30 miles south of Caesarea along the Mediterranean coast. The angel does not deliver the message himself but directs Cornelius to send for Peter — God orchestrates the encounter through human agents.
6. That Peter lodges with a tanner (burseus) is significant: tanning involved contact with animal carcasses, rendering tanners ritually unclean in Jewish practice. Peter is already crossing purity boundaries before his rooftop vision. Some manuscripts add 'he will tell you what you must do,' but the SBLGNT omits this addition.
7. The devout soldier (stratioten eusebe) reflects Cornelius's influence — his piety has shaped those under his command. The word proskarterounton ('attending, waiting on') suggests personal aides assigned to his service.
8. Cornelius shares the full vision with his servants before sending them — he does not merely issue orders but explains the divine directive. This transparency characterizes him throughout the narrative.
9. The sixth hour (approximately noon) was another established time of prayer. Flat-roofed houses in the ancient Mediterranean provided private space for prayer. Luke carefully synchronizes the two narratives — as Cornelius's men approach, Peter is being prepared through vision.
10. The word ekstasis ('trance, ecstasy') denotes a state in which normal consciousness is suspended and divine vision becomes possible. Peter's physical hunger becomes the occasion for a vision about food — God uses his immediate experience to communicate a deeper truth.
11. The opened heaven (ton ouranon aneogmenon) signals divine revelation — the same imagery appears at Jesus's baptism (Luke 3:21) and Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 7:56). The 'four corners' suggest universality, representing all directions and all peoples.
12. The categories echo the creation account in Genesis 1:24-26 and the clean/unclean distinctions of Leviticus 11. The word 'all' (panta) is emphatic — the sheet contains every category without distinction, deliberately mixing what Torah separates.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 1:24-26. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The command thuson ('slaughter, sacrifice') followed by phage ('eat') uses sacrificial vocabulary. The voice does not specify which animals to eat — the command is comprehensive and undifferentiated, challenging the entire clean/unclean classification system.
14. Peter's refusal combines two terms: koinon ('common,' i.e., not sanctified, profane) and akatharton ('unclean,' i.e., forbidden by Torah). His response echoes Ezekiel's protest when commanded to eat unclean food (Ezekiel 4:14). The juxtaposition of 'by no means' (medamos) with 'Lord' (kyrie) captures Peter's inner conflict — he refuses a divine command out of devotion to divine law.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ezekiel 4:14. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. This is the interpretive key to the entire vision. The verb ekatharisen ('has made clean, has cleansed') is aorist, indicating a completed divine action. God has already declared clean what Peter still considers common. The imperative me koinou ('do not call common, do not treat as profane') directly countermands Peter's categories. As Peter himself will explain in verse 28, the vision is ultimately about people, not food.

16. The threefold repetition recalls Peter's threefold denial (Luke 22:54-62) and his threefold restoration (John 21:15-17). The pattern of three emphasizes divine persistence in overcoming human resistance. The sheet's return to heaven confirms its heavenly origin and authority.
17. The verb *diaporeo* ('be puzzled, be at a loss') shows that Peter does not immediately understand the vision's meaning. God's timing is precise: the vision's interpretation arrives not through explanation but through the arrival of Gentile visitors. The narrative structure itself teaches Peter — and the reader — what the vision means.
18. The verb *xenizomai* ('stay as a guest, be hosted') is related to *xenos* ('stranger, foreigner'). Peter is himself a guest — a stranger in someone else's house — when he is asked to go to another stranger's house. The theme of hospitality across boundaries pervades this chapter.
19. The Spirit speaks directly to Peter, connecting the vision to the arriving visitors. Some manuscripts read 'two men' instead of 'three' (accounting only for the servants, not the soldier). The SBLGNT reads 'three,' which matches the narrative in verse 7.
20. The participle *diakrinomenos* can mean 'doubting' or 'making distinctions' — both senses are relevant. Peter is not to doubt the Spirit's instruction, and he is not to make ethnic distinctions about his visitors. The Spirit claims responsibility: 'I have sent them' (*ego apostalka autous*), making the Gentile visitors divine emissaries.
21. Peter's obedience is immediate — he goes down from the rooftop without further argument. His self-identification ('I am the one you are looking for') and his question show readiness to hear what God has arranged.
22. The servants' description emphasizes Cornelius's credentials to reassure Peter: he is righteous, God-fearing, and respected even by Jews. The verb *echrematisthe* ('was directed, received a divine instruction') is used in the New Testament specifically for divine oracles and revelations (cf. Matthew 2:12, 22).
23. Peter's act of inviting Gentiles in and hosting them overnight is itself a boundary-crossing act — sharing table and lodging with Gentiles violated Jewish purity conventions. The 'brothers from Joppa' (six of them, according to 11:12) serve as witnesses to what will happen at Cornelius's house.
24. Cornelius's faith is shown by his preparation — he assembles a gathering before Peter arrives, fully trusting that God's plan will unfold. The phrase *anagkaious philous* ('close friends, intimate friends') suggests deep personal relationships. This is not an individual conversion but a household event.
25. The verb *prosekunesen* ('worshiped, did obeisance') can denote either divine worship or extreme honor toward a superior. Cornelius, accustomed to Roman hierarchy and perhaps viewing Peter as a divine messenger, offers an excessive gesture that Peter immediately corrects.
26. Peter's refusal of worship contrasts sharply with Herod's acceptance of divine honors in Acts 12:22-23. The phrase 'I myself am also a man' (*kai ego autos anthropos eimi*) emphasizes shared humanity — precisely the lesson Peter has just learned from his vision.
27. The casual verb *synomilon* ('conversing, talking together') suggests Peter and Cornelius speak as equals. Peter enters a Gentile house — a boundary he would not have crossed days earlier — and finds a large assembly waiting.
28. Peter now reveals his interpretation of the rooftop vision: it was about people, not food. The word *athemiton* ('unlawful, forbidden') does not refer to Torah prohibitions per se but to the extra-biblical purity traditions that had developed prohibiting table fellowship with Gentiles. Peter's declaration 'I should not call any person common or unclean' (*medena koinon e akatharton legein anthronon*) applies the categories of his vision directly to human beings.
29. The adverb *anantirretos* ('without objection, without contradiction') shows that Peter has accepted the vision's teaching fully, at least in principle. His question to Cornelius is not hesitation but an invitation for Cornelius to share his own divine encounter, establishing that both sides have been led by God.
30. Cornelius retells his vision, now describing the angel as 'a man in bright clothing' (*aner en estheti lampira*). The 'bright clothing' is a standard biblical marker for heavenly beings (cf. Luke 24:4, Acts 1:10). Some manuscripts add 'fasting and' before 'praying,' but the SBLGNT omits it.
31. The passive verbs — 'has been heard' (*eisekousthe*) and 'have been remembered' (*emnesthesan*) — use the divine passive: God is the one hearing and remembering. Cornelius's devotion has not gone unnoticed.
32. Cornelius faithfully recounts the angel's specific instructions, including the detail about the tanner's house by the sea. The precision of the directions confirms the vision's divine origin.
33. Cornelius's words 'we are all here in the presence of God' (*enopion tou theou*) frame the gathering as a sacred assembly. His readiness to hear 'everything commanded' shows complete openness to divine instruction. This is one of the most receptive audiences in all of Acts.
34. The phrase 'opened his mouth' (*anoixas to stoma*) is a Semitic idiom signaling a solemn, weighty declaration. The word *prosopolempptes* ('one who shows partiality, respecter of persons') appears only here in the New Testament. It derives from the Hebrew *nasa panim* ('to lift the face'), meaning to show favoritism. Peter's new understanding directly contradicts the ethnic exclusivism he held before the vision.
35. This verse does not teach salvation by works apart from the gospel — Peter is about to preach Christ. Rather, it declares that God's acceptance is not limited by ethnicity. The person who fears God and practices righteousness, in any nation, is one whom God welcomes to hear the gospel and receive its promise.

36. The grammatical structure is difficult; the sentence begins here but does not resolve easily until verse 37. The parenthetical declaration 'he is Lord of all' (houtos estin panton kyrios) is theologically explosive in this setting: if Jesus is Lord of all, not just of Israel, then Gentiles are included in his lordship. The phrase 'good news of peace' (euangelizomenos eirenen) echoes Isaiah 52:7.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 52:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. Peter assumes his audience has heard about Jesus's ministry — the events were widely known. The summary that follows (vv. 37-43) is a compressed kerygma (gospel proclamation) covering Jesus's ministry, death, and resurrection, structured similarly to the Gospel of Mark.
38. The verb echrisen ('anointed') connects Jesus to his title Christos ('Anointed One'). The anointing refers to Jesus's baptism and the Spirit's descent (Luke 3:22). The description of Jesus 'doing good and healing' (euergeton kai iomenos) is the most concise summary of Jesus's ministry in the New Testament. The phrase 'God was with him' echoes the Emmanuel theme.
39. Peter claims eyewitness authority (hemeis martyres, 'we are witnesses'). The phrase 'hanging on a tree' (kremasantes epi xylou) alludes to Deuteronomy 21:22-23, where one hung on a tree is 'cursed by God.' This Old Testament allusion appears repeatedly in early Christian preaching (Acts 5:30, Galatians 3:13) as part of the scandal and theology of the cross.
39. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 21:22-23. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
40. The contrast is sharp: 'they put him to death' (v. 39) but 'God raised him' (v. 40). Human violence is overturned by divine action. The verb edoken ('gave, caused') with emphane genesthai ('to become visible') suggests that the resurrection appearances were God's deliberate act of disclosure, not something Jesus did independently.
41. The risen Jesus appeared not to the general public but to chosen witnesses (martusin tois prokecheirotonemenois). The detail of eating and drinking with the risen Jesus (synepagomen kai synepiomen) emphasizes the bodily, physical reality of the resurrection — this was not a ghost or a vision but a person who shared meals.
42. Jesus is presented not only as Savior but as judge (krites) — the one who will evaluate all humanity, both living and dead. The verb horismenos ('appointed, designated') is related to the English word 'horizon' — God has set the boundary of final judgment in the person of Jesus.
43. Peter grounds the gospel in the prophetic witness of the entire Old Testament — 'all the prophets' (pantes hoi prophetai). The offer of forgiveness is universal: 'everyone who believes' (panta ton pisteuonta), with no ethnic qualification. This is the climax of Peter's sermon, and the Spirit will dramatically confirm it in the next verse.
44. The Spirit interrupts Peter's sermon — he is 'still speaking' (eti lalountos) when the Spirit falls. God does not wait for Peter to finish, issue an altar call, or baptize. The verb epepesen ('fell upon') conveys sudden, powerful, uninvited arrival. This is the Gentile Pentecost — the Spirit's sovereign act that settles the question of Gentile inclusion before any human decision can be made.
45. The phrase 'circumcised believers' (hoi ek peritomes pistoi) identifies Peter's Jewish Christian companions. Their astonishment (exestesan) reveals how unexpected Gentile inclusion was — even after Peter's vision, they did not anticipate this. The verb ekkechutai ('has been poured out') echoes Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17-18, explicitly linking this event to Pentecost.
45. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joel 2:28 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
46. The evidence of the Spirit's presence is the same as at Pentecost: speaking in tongues (glossais) and praising God. This parallel is essential to Luke's argument — the same Spirit, the same manifestation, the same gift given to Gentiles as to Jews. No additional requirement can be imposed.
47. Peter's rhetorical question expects a negative answer: no one can deny baptism to those whom God has already accepted. The phrase 'just as we have' (hos kai hemeis) is the decisive argument — the Gentiles' experience is identical to the apostles' own. Water baptism follows Spirit baptism as confirmation, not as prerequisite.
48. Peter commands baptism 'in the name of Jesus Christ' (en to onomati Iesou Christou), the standard formula in Acts (cf. 2:38, 8:16, 19:5). The invitation to stay (epimeinai) indicates table fellowship — Peter remains in a Gentile household, sharing meals and life with the newly baptized. The barrier has been permanently broken.

11

Summary: *Acts 11 opens with Peter defending his visit to Cornelius's household before the Jerusalem church, which criticizes him for eating with uncircumcised Gentiles. Peter recounts his vision and the Spirit's falling on the Gentiles in sequence, and the critics are silenced, glorifying God that 'even to the Gentiles God has granted repentance leading to life.' The chapter then shifts to Antioch, where scattered believers from the persecution following Stephen's death begin preaching to Greeks (not just Jews). A thriving church emerges, and Barnabas is sent from Jerusalem to investigate. He recruits Saul from Tarsus, and together they teach in Antioch for a year. It is here that the disciples are first called 'Christians.' The chapter closes with the prophet Agabus predicting a famine, prompting the Antioch church to send relief to Judea through Barnabas and Saul.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Luke retells the Cornelius episode a second time through Peter's own lips — an unusually detailed repetition that underscores the event's theological centrality. The Jerusalem church's initial objection is not about doctrine but about table fellowship: 'You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.' The Antioch church represents a new model of community — Jew and Gentile worshiping together — and becomes the launching point for the Gentile mission. The name 'Christians' (Christianoi) appears here for the first time, coined by outsiders in Antioch, probably as a political designation meaning 'partisans of Christ.'*

Translation Friction: *The Greek Hellenistas in verse 20 is textually uncertain: some manuscripts read Hellenas ('Greeks,' i.e., Gentiles), while others read Hellenistas ('Hellenists,' i.e., Greek-speaking Jews). The SBLGNT reads Hellenistas, but the narrative logic — contrasting these recipients with the 'Jews only' of verse 19 — strongly favors the meaning 'Greek-speaking Gentiles' or simply 'Greeks.' We follow the SBLGNT text while noting the issue. The famine under Claudius (v. 28) is historically attested by Josephus and Suetonius, though its exact dating is debated.*

Connections: *Peter's defense echoes and completes the Cornelius narrative of chapter 10. The Antioch church connects to the scattering of Acts 8:1-4 — persecution intended to destroy the movement instead spreads it. The Barnabas-Saul partnership anticipates the first missionary journey (Acts 13). The famine relief establishes the pattern of Gentile churches supporting the Jerusalem church (cf. Romans 15:25-27, 2 Corinthians 8-9). The name 'Christians' connects to the broader Roman political context of the early church.*

¹Now the apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ²So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, ³Indeed, declaring, you wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. ⁴But Peter began and explained it to them step by step, saying, ⁵"I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision: something like a large sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came right down to me. ⁶Looking at it closely, I observed and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air. ⁷I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' ⁸But I said, 'By no means, Lord, for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' ⁹But the voice answered a second time from heaven, 'What God has made clean, do not call common.' ¹⁰This happened three times, and then everything was pulled back up into heaven. ¹¹And at that very moment, three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea arrived at the house where we were. ¹²The Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. ¹³He told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter. ¹⁴He will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' ¹⁵As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to stand in God's way?" ¹⁸When they heard these things, they fell silent and glorified God, saying, "Then God has granted even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life." ¹⁹Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews. ²⁰But among them were some men from Cyprus and Cyrene who, when they came to Antioch, began speaking to the

Greeks also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus as good news. ²¹The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number who believed turned to the Lord. ²²The report about them reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose of heart, ²⁴Since he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith — and much those present was added to the Lord. ²⁵Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶After he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it happened that, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the followers were called Christians first in Antioch. ²⁷In those days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that a severe famine was about to come over the whole inhabited world — this took place during the reign of Claudius. ²⁹So the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. ³⁰And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The news travels fast: the phrase 'the Gentiles also' (kai ta ethne) carries the force of surprise — this was unprecedented. The verb edexanto ('received, welcomed') implies active acceptance, not mere passive hearing.
2. The phrase hoi ek peritomes ('those of the circumcision') here denotes Jewish believers who insisted on maintaining Jewish identity markers, particularly circumcision, as requirements for fellowship. The verb diekrinonto ('contended, criticized, took issue') indicates serious objection, not casual questioning.
3. The charge focuses on table fellowship (synephages, 'you ate with'), not on preaching or baptism. Eating together implied social equality and religious communion. The phrase 'uncircumcised men' (andras akrobystian echontas, literally 'men having foreskin') is deliberately blunt, emphasizing the boundary Peter crossed.
4. The adverb kathexes ('in order, step by step') indicates a careful, sequential retelling. Peter does not argue from theology but from narrative — he lets the events speak for themselves.
5. Peter retells his vision from Acts 10:9-16 in the first person. The detail 'it came right down to me' (elthen achri emou) personalizes the vision — this was directed specifically at Peter.
6. Peter adds 'wild beasts' (theria) to the retelling, a detail not explicitly mentioned in 10:12 in all manuscripts. The comprehensive list emphasizes the indiscriminate mixture of clean and unclean creatures.
7. The command is identical to 10:13. In the retelling, Peter faithfully reproduces the divine directive that shocked him.
8. Peter's retelling makes the refusal even more emphatic with 'entered into my mouth' (eiselthen eis to stoma mou) — a visceral way of expressing his lifelong observance of dietary law.
9. The addition of 'from heaven' (ek tou ouranou) emphasizes the divine authority behind the command. The principle stands: God's cleansing overrides human categories of purity.
10. The verb anespasthe ('was pulled up, was drawn up') differs slightly from 10:16's anelemphthe but conveys the same idea. The threefold pattern confirms divine insistence.
11. The timing — 'at that very moment' (exautes) — underscores divine orchestration. The vision and the visitors arrive in perfect coordination.
12. Peter specifies 'these six brothers' (hoi hex adelphoi houtoi), indicating they are present in Jerusalem as witnesses. Their presence gives Peter's testimony legal weight — multiple witnesses confirm the events. The phrase 'making no distinction' (meden diakrinanta) can also mean 'without hesitation,' carrying both meanings simultaneously.
13. Peter now incorporates Cornelius's vision into his defense. The double vision — one to Cornelius, one to Peter — demonstrates that God was working from both sides simultaneously.
14. This detail — that Peter's message would bring salvation to Cornelius's entire household — is not explicitly stated in chapter 10's account of the angel's message. Peter either recalls additional detail or interprets the angel's directive in light of what subsequently happened. The household salvation motif is prominent in Acts (cf. 16:15, 31).
15. The phrase 'at the beginning' (en arche) refers to Pentecost (Acts 2). Peter draws a direct line from the original outpouring of the Spirit to this Gentile experience. The parallel is exact and undeniable: same Spirit, same manifestation, same divine initiative.
16. Peter quotes Jesus's words from Acts 1:5. The remembering (emnesthe) is prompted by the Spirit's own action — the event interprets the prophecy. The distinction between water baptism and Spirit baptism is not a contrast between inferior and superior but between preparation and fulfillment.
17. Peter's argument is simple and irrefutable: God acted first, giving the Gentiles the 'same gift' (ten isen dorean). To refuse them would be to oppose God himself. The rhetorical question 'who was I to stand in God's way?' (ego tis emen dynatos kolusai ton theon) is Peter's strongest argument — not theological reasoning but divine fait accompli.

18. The critics' response moves from silence (*hesuchasan*) to praise (*edoxasan*) — a dramatic reversal. The phrase 'repentance leading to life' (*ten metanoian eis zoen*) describes repentance not merely as a human act of turning but as a divine gift (*edoken*, 'granted, gave'). God gives repentance; he does not merely demand it.
19. Luke picks up the thread from Acts 8:1-4. The scattering (*diasparentes*) that began with Stephen's martyrdom has produced a diaspora mission, but initially only to Jews. Antioch, the third-largest city in the Roman Empire after Rome and Alexandria, will become the strategic center for the Gentile mission.
20. The SBLGNT reads *Hellenistas*, which typically means 'Greek-speaking Jews' (as in 6:1), but the context — contrasting with 'Jews only' in verse 19 — demands the meaning 'Greek-speaking Gentiles' or simply 'Greeks.' Some manuscripts read *Hellenas* ('Greeks'), which may be the original reading. These unnamed missionaries from Cyprus and Cyrene initiate the Gentile mission at Antioch independently of the Cornelius episode.
21. The phrase 'the hand of the Lord' (*cheir kyriou*) is a Hebraic idiom for divine power and blessing, frequent in the Old Testament (e.g., 1 Kings 18:46, Ezra 7:9). The combination of 'believed' (*pisteusas*) and 'turned' (*epetrepsen*) describes conversion as both cognitive assent and life reorientation.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Kings 18:46. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezra 7:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. Jerusalem sends Barnabas — not to suppress but to assess and encourage. The choice of Barnabas is strategic: he is a Levite from Cyprus (4:36), giving him cultural affinity with the Cypriots who started the work, and his name means 'son of encouragement.' His generous spirit (4:37) makes him ideal for this mission.
23. Barnabas 'saw the grace of God' (*idon ten charin tou theou*) — grace was visible in the transformed community. The wordplay between *charin* ('grace') and *echare* ('was glad, rejoiced') connects divine grace to human joy. His encouragement to 'remain faithful' (*prosmenein*) with 'purpose of heart' (*prothesei tes kardias*) addresses the challenge of perseverance in a new and vulnerable community.
24. Luke's character summary of Barnabas — 'a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith' — is one of the highest commendations in Acts. Similar language is used of Stephen (6:5). The passive 'were added to the Lord' (*proseteche to kyrio*) credits God with the growth, not Barnabas.
25. The verb *anazetesai* ('to look for, to search out') suggests Saul was not easily found — Tarsus was a large city and several years had passed since Saul's departure from Jerusalem (9:30). Barnabas's initiative in recruiting Saul is one of the most consequential acts in church history.
26. The name *Christianoi* ('Christians,' literally 'Christ-partisans' or 'those belonging to Christ') follows the Latin pattern of political party names (e.g., *Herodianoi*, *Kaisarianoi*). It was likely coined by Roman authorities or the general public in Antioch as a label for this new group. The term appears only three times in the New Testament (here, 26:28, and 1 Peter 4:16). That it was a name given by outsiders, not self-chosen, suggests the movement had become publicly visible and distinct from Judaism.
27. The verb *kathelthon* ('came down') reflects the geographical reality — Jerusalem is at a higher elevation — and the theological convention that one always 'goes up' to Jerusalem and 'comes down' from it. The presence of prophets (*prophetai*) in the early church is well attested (cf. 13:1, 15:32, 21:10).
28. Agabus appears again in 21:10-11, predicting Paul's arrest. The phrase 'the whole inhabited world' (*holen ten oikoumenen*) is a standard expression for the Roman Empire. Claudius reigned AD 41-54. Josephus records a severe famine in Judea around AD 46-47 (*Antiquities* 20.49-53), and Suetonius mentions food shortages under Claudius. Luke's parenthetical note — 'this took place' — confirms the prophecy's fulfillment.
29. The phrase 'each according to his ability' (*kathos euporeto tis*) establishes proportional giving as the standard — not equal amounts but equal sacrifice. The Gentile church in Antioch sends aid to the Jewish church in Judea, reversing the expected direction of benefaction and demonstrating the unity of the body across ethnic lines.
30. This is the first mention of 'elders' (*presbyterous*) in the Jerusalem church, indicating an organizational structure developing beyond the apostles alone. Barnabas and Saul serve as the delivery agents, a mission that brings them to Jerusalem (12:25) and sets the stage for their commissioning in chapter 13.

12

Summary: *Acts 12 narrates the persecution of the church under Herod Agrippa I. James the brother of John is executed by the sword — the first apostolic martyrdom. Herod arrests Peter during Passover, intending to bring him to trial afterward. The church prays earnestly for Peter. An angel appears in the prison at night, wakes Peter, causes his chains to fall off, and leads him past the guards and through the iron gate into the city. Peter goes to the house of Mary, mother of John Mark, where the church is gathered in prayer. The servant Rhoda recognizes his voice but in her joy leaves him standing at the gate. The chapter concludes with Herod's gruesome death: accepting divine acclamation from the crowd, he is struck down by an angel and eaten by worms.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The contrast between James and Peter is stark and unexplained: James is killed, Peter is rescued, and Luke offers no theological explanation for why one apostle dies and another is delivered. This narrative honesty is striking. The scene at Mary's house contains rare humor in Acts — the praying church refuses to believe their prayer has been answered, insisting it must be Peter's angel rather than Peter himself. Herod Agrippa I's death is independently confirmed by Josephus (Antiquities 19.343-350), who describes the same event at Caesarea with additional details.*

Translation Friction: *Herod Agrippa I (here called simply 'Herod') was the grandson of Herod the Great and ruled Judea from AD 41-44. His persecution of the church was politically motivated — currying favor with the Jewish leadership. The 'angel' (angelos) who rescues Peter and the 'angel of the Lord' who strikes Herod represent two sides of divine intervention: deliverance and judgment. The prayer gathering at Mary's house provides the earliest glimpse of a house church in Jerusalem.*

Connections: *James's execution fulfills Jesus's prediction that James and John would share his cup of suffering (Mark 10:39). Peter's deliverance from prison echoes the apostles' earlier prison escape (Acts 5:19-20). Herod's death by accepting divine honors contrasts with Peter's refusal of worship from Cornelius (10:25-26). The mention of John Mark (v. 12) introduces a figure who will feature prominently in 13:13 and 15:37-39.*

¹About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. ²He executed James, John's brother by the sword. ³When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. ⁴When he had seized him, he put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of four soldiers each to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out before the people. ⁵So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was being made to God by the church. ⁶The very night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. ⁷And suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his hands. ⁸The angel said to him, "Dress yourself and put on your sandals." And he did so. Then the angel said, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." ⁹He went out and followed, and he did not know that what was happening through the angel was real — he thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰When they had passed the first guard and the second, they came to the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel left him. ¹¹When Peter came to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from the hand of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting." ¹²When he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. ¹³When he knocked at the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. ¹⁴Recognizing Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that she did not open the gate but ran inside and reported that Peter was standing at the gate. ¹⁵They said to her, "You are out of your mind." But she kept insisting that it was so. They said, "It is his angel." ¹⁶But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door, they saw him and were astonished. ¹⁷Motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Report these things to James and to the brothers." Then he departed and went to another place. ¹⁸When day came, there was no small commotion among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. ¹⁹Herod searched for him and could not find him, and after examining the guards, he ordered them to be led away to execution. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. ²⁰No

w Herod was furious with the people of Tyre and Sidon. They came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace, because their country depended on the king's territory for food. ²¹On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat on the tribunal, and delivered a public address to them. ²²And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" ²³Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died. ²⁴But the word of God continued to increase and spread. ²⁵And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had completed their mission of relief, bringing with them John who was called Mark.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase 'laid violent hands on' (epebalen tas cheiras kakosai) combines physical seizure with intent to harm. 'Herod the king' is Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great, who ruled all of Judea from AD 41-44 under Emperor Claudius.
2. James son of Zebedee becomes the first of the Twelve to be martyred. Luke reports it in a single sentence with no elaboration — a striking restraint. Execution by sword (machaira) was considered a more honorable death than crucifixion. This James should be distinguished from James the brother of Jesus, who leads the Jerusalem church (15:13, 21:18).
3. Herod's motivation is political popularity (areston estin tois Ioudaiois, 'it was pleasing to the Jews'). The parenthetical note about the Feast of Unleavened Bread (immediately following Passover) creates a parallel with Jesus's arrest during the same festival season. The timing also explains why Herod delays the trial — he will not execute during the holy week.
4. Sixteen soldiers (four squads of four, tessarsin tetradiois) were assigned to Peter — an extraordinary security measure, likely prompted by the earlier escape in Acts 5:19. The KJV's 'Easter' is anachronistic; the Greek pascha refers to the Jewish Passover festival. Herod plans a public trial for maximum political effect.
5. The contrast is dramatic: 'Peter was kept in prison, but...' (ho men oun... de...) — human power holds Peter, divine power is invoked through prayer. The adverb ektenos ('earnestly, fervently, unceasingly') conveys intensity and persistence, not merely duration.
6. Peter sleeps soundly on the eve of his expected execution — a detail that suggests either extraordinary faith or exhaustion, likely both. He is chained to a soldier on each side (standard Roman practice for high-security prisoners), with additional guards at the door. The security emphasis makes the coming escape unmistakably supernatural.
7. The angel's appearance is accompanied by light (phos elampen) — a theophanic marker. The angel must physically strike (pataxas) Peter's side to wake him, reinforcing how deeply he was sleeping. The chains falling (exepesan hai haluseis) without waking the soldiers is the first of several miraculous details that bypass the elaborate security.
8. The step-by-step instructions — belt, sandals, cloak — suggest Peter is disoriented and needs explicit guidance. The detail is vivid and personal, likely reflecting Peter's own retelling of the experience. Each instruction must be given individually.
9. Peter's confusion between reality and vision (horama) is psychologically realistic. The experience is so extraordinary that he cannot distinguish it from a dream. Luke's honest portrayal of Peter's disorientation adds credibility to the account.
10. The word automate ('by itself, of its own accord') — from which English derives 'automatic' — describes the iron gate opening without human or visible cause. The angel departs abruptly (eutheos apeste) once Peter is safely in the city, having completed the rescue mission.
11. The phrase 'came to himself' (en heauto genomenos) marks the transition from trance-like confusion to clear awareness. Peter recognizes both the divine source of his rescue and its double significance: deliverance from Herod's power and from the people's expectation of a public execution.
12. Mary's house apparently served as a meeting place for the Jerusalem church — she was likely a woman of means to host such gatherings. John Mark (Ioannou tou epikaloumenou Markou) is traditionally identified as the author of the Gospel of Mark. He is Barnabas's cousin (Colossians 4:10) and will accompany Barnabas and Saul on their first journey (13:5).
13. The name Rhode ('Rhoda') means 'rose.' The paidiske ('servant girl') answering the outer gate suggests a household of some size and status. The detail of her name suggests she was known to the early Christian community and may have been a source for this account.
14. The scene is vividly comic: Rhoda recognizes Peter's voice, becomes so excited (apo tes charas, 'from joy') that she forgets to open the gate, and runs to tell the others while Peter remains standing outside. Luke preserves this detail — likely from eyewitness testimony — with evident delight.
15. The church that has been praying for Peter's deliverance refuses to believe it has happened. The accusation mainei ('you are mad, you are out of your mind') and the alternative explanation 'it is his angel' (ho angelos estin autou) reflect the Jewish belief that each person has a guardian angel who can appear in their likeness. The irony is rich: they would rather believe in an angel's appearance than in an answered prayer.
16. Peter's persistent knocking (epemenen krouon) while the church debates inside adds to the scene's humor and humanity. Their astonishment (exestesan) upon seeing him demonstrates that they were praying without fully expecting the answer they received.

17. Peter gestures for silence (*kataseisas te cheiri sigan*) — the excited group needs calming. The 'James' referenced is James the brother of Jesus, who has emerged as the leader of the Jerusalem church after the apostle James's execution. Peter's departure to 'another place' (*heteron topon*) is deliberately vague — Luke either does not know or chooses not to reveal where Peter went, perhaps for security reasons.
18. Luke's characteristic litotes — 'no small commotion' (*tarachos ouk oligos*) — means extreme agitation. Under Roman military law, guards who lost a prisoner could face the prisoner's punishment, making their distress a matter of life and death.
19. The verb *apachthenai* ('to be led away') is a euphemism for execution — the guards pay with their lives for Peter's escape. Herod's move from Jerusalem to Caesarea shifts the scene to the Roman administrative capital, where his own death will follow.
20. Tyre and Sidon were Phoenician coastal cities dependent on Galilee's agricultural production for grain — an economic reality attested since the time of Solomon (1 Kings 5:9-11). Their need for peace (*eirenēn*) was economic, not military. Blastus's role as chamberlain (*epi tou koitonos*, literally 'over the bedchamber') gave him personal access to Herod.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Kings 5:9-11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Josephus describes the same scene: Herod wore a garment made entirely of silver that glittered spectacularly in the morning sun (*Antiquities* 19.344). The *bema* ('tribunal, judgment seat') was the raised platform from which official pronouncements were made.
22. The crowd's acclamation — 'a god's voice, not a man's' (*theou phone kai ouk anthropou*) — is blasphemous flattery. In the Roman imperial context, divine honors for rulers were common, but Jewish sensibility found such claims abhorrent. Herod's failure to deflect this worship seals his fate.
23. The same angelic agency that rescued Peter now strikes Herod. The stated reason — 'he did not give God the glory' (*ouk edoken ten doxan to theo*) — is the opposite of Peter's response in 10:26 when Cornelius worshiped him. The detail of being 'eaten by worms' (*skolekobros*) describes a horrifying death. Josephus similarly reports that Herod was seized with sudden abdominal pain and died five days later (*Antiquities* 19.346-350). Herod Agrippa I died in AD 44.
24. Luke's summary statement contrasts human power with divine word: Herod dies, but the word grows. The verbs *euxanen* ('increased') and *eplethuneto* ('multiplied') are growth language that personifies the gospel as a living, expanding force. This is one of Luke's periodic progress reports (cf. 6:7, 9:31, 16:5, 19:20).
25. Some manuscripts read 'returned to Jerusalem' (*eis Ierousalem*) and others 'returned from Jerusalem' (*ex Ierousalem*). The SBLGNT reads *eis*, but the context — they had gone to Jerusalem with the famine relief (11:30) — means they are returning from Jerusalem to Antioch. They bring John Mark with them, setting the stage for the first missionary journey in chapter 13.

13

Summary: Acts 13 marks the beginning of the first missionary journey. The Holy Spirit commissions Barnabas and Saul from the church at Antioch. They travel to Cyprus, where they encounter the sorcerer Bar-Jesus (Elymas) and the proconsul Sergius Paulus. From this point, Saul begins using his Roman name Paul, and Paul emerges as the mission's leader. They sail to Perga in Pamphylia, where John Mark departs. In Pisidian Antioch, Paul delivers a major synagogue sermon surveying Israel's history from the exodus through David to Jesus, declaring forgiveness of sins through Christ and warning of judgment on those who reject the message. Many respond positively, but Jewish opposition arises, and Paul and Barnabas announce their turn to the Gentiles, citing Isaiah 49:6. The Gentiles rejoice, but the missionaries are expelled from the region.

What Makes This Remarkable: Paul's sermon in Pisidian Antioch is the longest recorded speech in Acts directed at a Jewish audience and serves as Luke's model for Paul's synagogue preaching. It parallels Peter's Pentecost sermon in structure but with distinctly Pauline emphases: justification, the inadequacy of the law of Moses, and the prophetic warning against rejection. The transition from 'Saul' to 'Paul' occurs mid-narrative (13:9) without explanation — Luke simply begins using the Roman name, signaling the shift toward the Gentile world. The declaration 'we are turning to the Gentiles' (13:46) is one of the most pivotal statements in Acts.

*Translation Friction: The identity of 'Simeon called Niger' (v. 1) has generated speculation — Niger means 'black' in Latin, suggesting African origin. Lucius of Cyrene is North African. Manaen is described as a *syntrophos* ('childhood companion') of Herod Antipas. This leadership team reflects remarkable ethnic and social diversity. Paul's sermon condenses Israelite history selectively, and his claim that the law of Moses could not justify (v. 39) introduces Pauline soteriology into the narrative. The quotation composite in verses 33-35 draws from Psalm 2, Isaiah 55, and Psalm 16.*

Connections: The commissioning scene (vv. 1-3) parallels Isaiah 6 and Jeremiah 1 as a prophetic sending. Paul's historical survey echoes Stephen's speech in Acts 7. The citation of Isaiah 49:6 ('a light for the Gentiles') connects to Simeon's prophecy in Luke 2:32. The pattern of synagogue preaching followed by Jewish rejection and Gentile reception becomes the template for Paul's ministry throughout Acts.

¹Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been a childhood companion of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. ²While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³Then after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off. ⁴So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. ⁵When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John as their assistant. ⁶When they had traveled through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a certain man, a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, ⁷Which was with the deputy of the region, Sergius Paulus, a prudent person. Who named for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to listen the message of God. ⁸But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. ⁹But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him ¹⁰Stated, O full of all cunning and all mischief, you child of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, wilt you not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? ¹¹And now, look, the hand of the Lord is against you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell on him, and he went about seeking someone to lead him by the hand. ¹²Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had happened, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. ¹³Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. But John left them and returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴But they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. On the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue leaders sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, speak." ¹⁶So Paul stood up and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. ¹⁷The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. ¹⁸And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. ¹⁹After destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance ²⁰Following that he offered to them judges concerning the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. ²¹Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. ²²After removing him, he raised up David as their king, to whom he also bore witness and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who will do all my will.' ²³From this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. ²⁴Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. ²⁵As John was finishing his course, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. But after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.' ²⁶Brothers, sons of Abraham's family, and those among you who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. ²⁷For the residents of Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. ²⁸Though they found no grounds for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰However, God brought him back to life. ³¹He was seen numerous days of them which arrived up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses to the people. ³²And we bring you the good news that the promise made to the fathers ³³God has fulfilled this for us, their children, by raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are my Son; today I have begotten you.' ³⁴And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no longer to return to decay, he has spoken in this way: 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.' ³⁵Therefore he also says in another psalm, 'You will not let your Holy One see decay.' ³⁶For David, after he had served God's purpose in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw decay, ³⁷Yet he, whom God raised again, noticed no corruption. ³⁸Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, ³⁹By him all that trust are justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. ⁴⁰Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the prophets should come about: ⁴¹'Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish, for I am doing a work in your days, a

work that you will never believe, even if someone tells you."⁴² As they went out, the people urged them to speak about these things the next Sabbath. ⁴³When the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God. ⁴⁴The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. ⁴⁶And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we are turning to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'" ⁴⁸When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. ⁴⁹And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. ⁵⁰But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. ⁵¹So they shook the dust off their feet against them and went to Iconium. ⁵²And with the holy ghost, and the followers were filled with joy.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The leadership team reflects extraordinary diversity: Barnabas (a Levite from Cyprus), Simeon Niger (likely of African descent, the Latin cognomen Niger meaning 'black'), Lucius of Cyrene (North African), Manaen (syntrophos, 'foster brother' or 'childhood companion' of Herod Antipas, thus from the ruling class), and Saul (a Pharisee from Tarsus). Barnabas stands first, Saul last — an order that will soon reverse.
2. The verb leitourgounton ('worshiping, ministering') is the root of 'liturgy' and denotes formal, communal worship. The Spirit speaks directly — how is not specified (through a prophet, an audible voice, or communal discernment). The command 'set apart for me' (aphorise de moi) echoes God's call of the prophets (cf. Jeremiah 1:5, Galatians 1:15 where Paul uses the same verb of his own calling).
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 1:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The laying on of hands (epithentes tas cheiras) is a commissioning gesture, not ordination in the later ecclesiastical sense. Barnabas and Saul are already prophets and teachers (v. 1); the church is confirming and releasing what the Spirit has directed. The verb apelusan ('released, sent away') suggests both permission and blessing.
4. Luke attributes the sending to the Holy Spirit (ekpempthentes hypo tou hagiou pneumatos), not merely to the church. Seleucia was Antioch's port city on the Mediterranean, about sixteen miles west. Cyprus was Barnabas's homeland (4:36), making it a natural first destination.
5. Salamis was the largest city on the eastern coast of Cyprus. The plural 'synagogues' indicates a significant Jewish population. The pattern of beginning in synagogues becomes standard Pauline practice. John (Mark) serves as hyperetes ('assistant, attendant'), a role that may have included practical arrangements and possibly catechetical instruction.
6. Paphos was the Roman capital of Cyprus, on the western coast. Bar-Jesus (Bariesou, 'son of Jesus/Joshua') is identified with three descriptors: magos ('sorcerer, magician'), pseudoprophetes ('false prophet'), and Ioudaios ('Jewish'). A Jewish man practicing sorcery and claiming prophetic gifts violated Torah prohibitions (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 18:10-12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Luke correctly identifies the governor as anthupatos ('proconsul'), the title for governors of senatorial provinces — Cyprus had been transferred to senatorial control in 22 BC. The name Sergius Paulus is attested in inscriptions. His description as sunetos ('intelligent, discerning') distinguishes him from Bar-Jesus's influence.
8. The name Elymas (Elymas) is presented as a translation or equivalent of his function, though the etymology is uncertain — it may derive from an Aramaic or Arabic root meaning 'wise man' or 'sorcerer.' His opposition is strategic: if the proconsul converts, Elymas loses his position and influence.
9. This is the pivotal moment when Luke introduces the name Paul (Paulos). The parenthetical 'who was also called Paul' (ho kai Paulos) indicates he had both names throughout — Saul was his Jewish name, Paul his Roman cognomen. From this point forward, Luke uses only 'Paul.' The transition occurs as Paul confronts a Roman-world figure, signaling the Gentile orientation of his mission.
10. Paul's denunciation is fierce and deliberate. The title 'son of the devil' (huie diabolou) is a pointed reversal of Bar-Jesus's name ('son of Jesus/salvation') — he is actually a son of the adversary. The phrase 'making crooked the straight paths of the Lord' (diastrephon tas hodous tou kyriou tas eutheias) alludes to Isaiah 40:3-4 and its call to prepare straight paths.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 40:3-4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

11. The punishment is temporary ('for a time,' *achri kairou*) and fitting: the one who sought to keep others in spiritual darkness is plunged into physical darkness. There may be a parallel with Paul's own experience of temporary blindness on the Damascus road (9:8-9), suggesting the possibility of eventual restoration and conversion.
12. The proconsul's faith is prompted by what he saw (*idon to gegonos*) but grounded in the teaching (*didache tou kyriou*). Luke distinguishes between the miracle as attention-getting and the teaching as the actual content of faith. This is the first conversion of a Roman official in Paul's ministry.
13. The phrase 'Paul and his companions' (*hoi peri Paulon*) marks the shift in leadership — Barnabas is now subordinate. John Mark's departure (*apochoresas*, 'having departed, withdrawn') is recorded without explanation, but Paul later viewed it as a desertion serious enough to cause a sharp disagreement with Barnabas (15:37-39). Perga was about eight miles inland from the coast of Pamphylia in southern Asia Minor.
14. Pisidian Antioch (distinct from Syrian Antioch) was a Roman colony in the interior of Asia Minor, about 100 miles north of Perga through difficult mountain terrain. Sitting down in the synagogue indicates their role as visitors; speakers were typically seated during instruction.
15. The synagogue service included readings from the Torah (*nomos*) and the Prophets (*prophetai*), followed by an invitation for qualified visitors to offer a 'word of encouragement' (*logos parakleseos*). This was standard practice and gave Paul a natural platform. The plural *archisynagogoi* ('synagogue leaders') suggests a council of leaders rather than a single ruler.
16. Paul addresses two groups: 'Men of Israel' (ethnic Jews) and 'those who fear God' (God-fearing Gentiles who attended synagogue). The dual address reflects the mixed audience and anticipates the sermon's universal conclusion. The gesture of motioning with the hand (*kataseisas te cheiri*) is characteristic of Paul in Acts (cf. 21:40, 26:1).
17. Paul begins his historical survey with the exodus, the foundational event of Israelite identity. The phrase 'with uplifted arm' (*meta brachionos hupselou*) is a classic Old Testament metaphor for divine power in the exodus (cf. Exodus 6:6, Deuteronomy 5:15). The word *paroikia* ('sojourning, stay as foreigners') emphasizes Israel's alien status in Egypt.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 6:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 5:15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verb *etropophoresn* has two possible readings: *tropophoresn* ('bore with their ways, endured their behavior') or *trophophoresn* ('nourished, cared for them'). The SBLGNT reads the former, emphasizing God's patience with Israel's wilderness rebellion. The forty-year period is standard (cf. Numbers 14:34, Deuteronomy 8:2).
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 14:34 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 8:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The seven nations of Canaan are listed in Deuteronomy 7:1. The verb *katekleronomesen* ('gave as an inheritance, allotted') connects the land to the covenant promise to Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21).
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 7:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 15:18-21. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The 450 years likely covers the period from the patriarchs through the judges, not the judges period alone. The chronology is approximate and theological rather than strictly historical. Samuel serves as the bridge between the judges and the monarchy.
21. Paul, himself from the tribe of Benjamin and originally named Saul, mentions his royal namesake. Saul's forty-year reign is not stated in the Old Testament but is attested by Josephus (*Antiquities* 6.378). The people's request for a king is presented negatively in 1 Samuel 8:4-22.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Samuel 8:4-22. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. Paul's quotation combines Psalm 89:20 ('I have found David'), 1 Samuel 13:14 ('a man after my heart'), and Isaiah 44:28 ('who will do all my will') into a composite testimony. The phrase 'a man after my heart' (*andra kata ten kardian mou*) is the theological apex of the historical survey — David's heart orientation toward God is the quality that defines his kingship.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Samuel 13:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 89:20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 44:28. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

23. The entire historical survey has been leading to this declaration: Jesus is David's descendant and Israel's promised Savior. The phrase *kat' epangelian* ('according to promise') grounds Jesus's coming in God's covenant faithfulness to David (2 Samuel 7:12-16). The title *sotera* ('Savior') connects to the meaning of Jesus's name ('the LORD saves').
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Samuel 7:12-16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. John the Baptist serves as the herald (*prokeryxantos*, 'having proclaimed beforehand') who prepared for Jesus's arrival. The 'baptism of repentance' (*baptisma metanoias*) was John's distinctive rite, calling Israel to prepare for the coming Messiah.
25. John explicitly denies being the Messiah and points to one greater. The image of untying sandals describes the task of the lowest slave — John considers himself unworthy even of this menial service for the one who follows him. The verb *ephlrou* ('was completing, was finishing') uses the same root as 'fulfill,' suggesting John's ministry had a divinely appointed course (*dromon*, 'race, course').
26. Paul again addresses both groups — Jewish descendants of Abraham and God-fearing Gentiles. The phrase 'message of this salvation' (*ho logos tes soterias tautes*) identifies the gospel as the fulfillment of the salvation story Paul has been narrating. The passive 'has been sent' (*exapestale*) indicates divine initiative.
27. The irony is profound: those who read the prophets every Sabbath fulfilled the prophets' words by rejecting the one the prophets foretold. Their ignorance (*agnoesantes*) does not absolve them but paradoxically accomplishes God's purpose. Paul presents the crucifixion as both human failure and divine plan.
28. The absence of legitimate charges (*medemianaitian thanatou*, 'no cause of death') echoes the trial narratives in the Gospels where Pilate repeatedly declares Jesus innocent. The request for execution despite innocence heightens the injustice that God's plan nevertheless encompasses.
29. Again, the 'tree' (*xylon*) alludes to Deuteronomy 21:22-23. The verb *etelesn* ('completed, fulfilled') shows that even the enemies' actions accomplished what Scripture had foretold. Paul compresses the burial narrative into a single clause, moving quickly toward the resurrection.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 21:22-23. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. The decisive 'but' (*de*) marks the reversal: human authorities condemned him, but God raised him. This is the kerygmatic core — the same proclamation found in every apostolic sermon in Acts.
31. Paul appeals to the testimony of eyewitnesses (*martyres*) who are still alive and active. He notably does not include himself among the Galilean witnesses, though he will later appeal to his own Damascus road encounter (26:12-18). The phrase 'many days' (*epi hemeras pleious*) refers to the forty-day period mentioned in Acts 1:3.
32. The verb *euangelizometha* ('we bring good news, we preach the gospel') gives the formal content of the mission: the promise to the patriarchs has been fulfilled. Paul presents the gospel not as something new but as the fulfillment of Israel's oldest hopes.
33. The quotation from Psalm 2:7 was originally spoken at the coronation of Israelite kings. Paul applies it to Jesus's resurrection — the 'begetting' is not biological but enthronement. The resurrection is Jesus's installation as the messianic King who fulfills the Davidic promise. The verb *anastesas* ('having raised up') can mean both 'raised to life' and 'raised up as a leader' — both senses may be intended.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 2:7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
34. The quotation from Isaiah 55:3 (LXX) promises the 'holy and faithful things of David' (*ta hosia Daud ta pista*) — the covenant mercies promised to David now fulfilled in Jesus's resurrection. The key point is 'no longer to return to decay' (*meketi mellonta hypostrephein eis diaphthoran*) — Jesus's resurrection is permanent and irreversible, unlike temporary resuscitations.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 55:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. This quotation from Psalm 16:10 (LXX 15:10) is the same text Peter used at Pentecost (Acts 2:27). Paul now applies the same argument: David's words cannot refer to David himself (who did see decay, v. 36) but must refer to the Messiah whose body did not decay in the tomb.
35. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 16:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
36. Paul's argument mirrors Peter's in Acts 2:29 — David died, was buried, and his body decayed. Therefore Psalm 16 must be prophetic, pointing beyond David to someone whose body would not decay. The phrase 'served God's purpose in his own generation' (*idia genea huperetesas te tou theou boule*) is a concise and dignified epitaph for David.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. The contrast is stark and simple: David saw decay; the one God raised did not. The argument depends on the historical fact of Jesus's resurrection and the physical preservation of his body in the brief period between death and resurrection.

38. Paul moves from the historical argument to the soteriological application. 'Through this man' (dia toutou) identifies Jesus as the agent of forgiveness. The noun aphesis ('forgiveness, release, remission') carries overtones of the Jubilee year's release of debts (Leviticus 25).
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 25 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. This is the most explicitly Pauline theological statement in Acts, introducing the concept of justification by faith. The verb dikaiontai ('is justified, is declared righteous') is the cornerstone of Pauline soteriology (cf. Romans 3:21-26, Galatians 2:16). The law of Moses could not achieve full justification; faith in Christ accomplishes what the law could not.
40. Paul shifts to warning, quoting the prophets as a cautionary voice. The imperative blepete ('beware, watch out') introduces urgency — the offer of grace carries the gravity of potential rejection.
41. Paul quotes Habakkuk 1:5 from the Septuagint. In its original context, the prophet warned that God was raising up the Babylonians as an instrument of judgment — an act so incredible that people would not believe it even when told. Paul applies this to the present: God is doing something through Jesus that scoffers will refuse to believe. The word kataphronetai ('scoffers, despisers') replaces the Hebrew's 'among the nations,' adapting the warning to the audience.
41. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Habakkuk 1:5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
42. The SBLGNT does not specify 'Gentiles' as the ones asking — the request comes from the general audience. The phrase eis to metaxy sabbaton ('on the next/intervening Sabbath') indicates eagerness to hear more.
43. The sebomenoi proselytoi ('devout converts/proselytes') are Gentiles who had fully converted to Judaism, distinct from the God-fearers. Paul and Barnabas encourage them to 'continue in the grace of God' (prosmenein te chariti tou theou) — to remain in what they have received rather than returning to previous ways.
44. The hyperbolic 'almost the whole city' (schedon pasa he polis) indicates an extraordinary response. The curiosity extends well beyond the synagogue community to the broader population of Pisidian Antioch. Some manuscripts read 'word of God' (tou theou) rather than 'word of the Lord' (tou kyriou).
45. The motivating emotion is zelos ('jealousy, zeal') — the crowds' enthusiasm for Paul's message threatened the synagogue leaders' authority and social standing. The verb blasphemountes ('blaspheming, reviling') likely means they spoke abusively about the claims being made for Jesus.
46. The adverb parresiasamenoi ('speaking boldly, with confidence') characterizes the apostolic proclamation throughout Acts. The theological principle 'to you first' (hymen proton) reflects Romans 1:16 — the gospel goes first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. The phrase 'judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life' (ouk axious krinete heautous tes aioniou zoes) is ironic — by rejecting the message, they pass sentence on themselves.
47. Paul quotes Isaiah 49:6, originally addressed to the Servant of the LORD, and applies it to his own mission. The 'light for the Gentiles' (phos ethnon) echoes Simeon's prophecy about the infant Jesus (Luke 2:32). Paul sees his Gentile mission not as a departure from God's plan but as its fulfillment — Isaiah had always envisioned salvation reaching 'the ends of the earth' (eschatou tes ges).
47. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 49:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
48. The phrase 'as many as were appointed to eternal life' (hosoi esan tetagmenoi eis zoen aionion) uses the perfect passive participle of tasso ('arrange, appoint, assign'). The divine passive indicates God as the one who appoints. This is one of the strongest statements of divine election in Acts, presented without qualification or explanation.
49. The verb diephereto ('was being carried through, was spreading') again personifies the word as an active agent. The spread is geographic — 'throughout the whole region' (di holes tes choras) — extending beyond Pisidian Antioch to the surrounding territory.
50. The opponents work through influential social networks — 'devout women of high standing' (sebomenas gynaikas tas euschemonas) were God-fearing Gentile women of the upper class who had synagogue connections. By mobilizing civic elites against the missionaries, the Jewish leaders use social pressure rather than theological argument.
51. Shaking off dust (ektinaxamenoi ton koniorton) is a gesture of renunciation commanded by Jesus (Luke 9:5, 10:11), symbolically declaring that those who reject the message bear responsibility for their own judgment. Iconium lay about 80 miles southeast of Pisidian Antioch.
52. The chapter ends not with the persecution but with the persecuted community's joy. Despite the missionaries' expulsion, the new believers remain, filled with joy (charas) and the Holy Spirit (pneumatou hagiou). Persecution has failed to destroy what God has planted.

14

Summary: *Acts 14 continues the first missionary journey as Paul and Barnabas preach in Iconium, where both Jews and Gentiles respond but opposition forces them to flee. They move to Lystra, where Paul heals a man lame from birth. The astonished crowds assume Paul and Barnabas are the Greek gods Hermes and Zeus and attempt to offer sacrifices to them. Paul and Barnabas rush to stop the worship, declaring themselves mere mortals and preaching the living God who made heaven and earth. Jews from Antioch and Iconium arrive and turn the crowd against them; Paul is stoned and dragged outside the city, left for dead. He survives, and they move on to Derbe. After making disciples there, they retrace their route, strengthening the new churches and appointing elders, before returning to Antioch in Syria.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Lystra episode reveals the volatile religious landscape of rural Asia Minor — the same crowd that tries to worship Paul as a god quickly turns to stoning him. The attempted sacrifice to 'Zeus and Hermes' reflects a local legend recorded by Ovid (Metamorphoses 8.611-724) about these gods visiting the region in human disguise. Paul's speech at Lystra (vv. 15-17) is the first recorded address to a purely pagan audience with no Jewish biblical framework, and it accordingly argues from creation and providence rather than from Scripture. The pattern of appointing elders (presbyters) in every church (v. 23) shows rapid institutional development.*

Translation Friction: *The identification of Barnabas as 'Zeus' and Paul as 'Hermes' (v. 12) is explained by the fact that Paul was the chief speaker (ho hegoumenos tou logou), and Hermes was the messenger god. Luke uses the Greek names Zeus and Hermes rather than the local Lycaonian equivalents. The Lycaonian language (v. 11) was a local Anatolian dialect distinct from Greek, which explains why Paul and Barnabas did not immediately understand what the crowd intended. Paul's survival of stoning (v. 20) is remarkable — whether by miracle or natural resilience, Luke does not specify.*

Connections: *The healing at Lystra parallels Peter's healing of the lame man at the temple gate (Acts 3:1-10). Paul's natural theology speech anticipates his fuller treatment on Mars Hill (Acts 17:22-31). The stoning at Lystra is likely the event Paul references in 2 Corinthians 11:25. The appointment of elders connects to Paul's later instructions to Timothy and Titus about church leadership. The return journey through hostile territory demonstrates the principle stated in verse 22: 'through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.'*

¹Now in Iconium they entered the Jewish synagogue together and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. ²But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. ³So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done through their hands. ⁴But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. ⁵When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat and stone them, ⁶Indeed, they were ware of it, and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the region that lieth round concerning:. ⁷In deed, there they preached the gospel. ⁸Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was lame from birth and had never walked. ⁹He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, ¹⁰Stated with a loud voice, Stand upright on your feet. Then he leaped and walked. ¹¹When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" ¹²They called Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes, because Paul was the chief speaker. ¹³The priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. ¹⁴But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, ¹⁵"Men, why are you doing these things? We too are men with the same nature as you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them. ¹⁶In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. ¹⁷Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." ¹⁸Even with these words they scarcely restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them. ¹⁹But Jews came from Antioch

and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. ²⁰But when the disciples gathered around him, he got up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. ²¹After they had proclaimed the good news to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, then to Iconium, and then to Antioch. ²²Confirming the souls of the followers, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must by way of much tribulation enter into God's kingdom. ²³And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. ²⁴Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. ²⁵And after speaking the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. ²⁶From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had now completed. ²⁷When they arrived, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. ²⁸And they remained no small time with the disciples.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Iconium (modern Konya, Turkey) was a significant city in the region of Phrygia/Galatia. The pattern continues: synagogue first, then broader response. The phrase 'spoke in such a way' (lalēsai houtōs hōste) credits the manner of their preaching, not merely its content, for the large response.
2. The verb apeithesantes ('who refused to believe, who were disobedient') combines unbelief with active resistance. The verb ekakosan ('poisoned, made evil, embittered') describes a deliberate campaign to turn Gentile opinion against the new believers.
3. Despite the opposition, they do not flee immediately but stay 'a long time' (hikanon chronon). The Lord himself is the active agent — he 'bore witness' (martyrounti) to the gospel message through signs and wonders. The missionaries are instruments ('through their hands'), not the source of miraculous power.
4. The verb eschisthe ('was divided, was split') is the root of 'schism.' Notably, Luke here calls Barnabas and Paul 'apostles' (apostolois) — one of only two places in Acts where this title extends beyond the Twelve (cf. v. 14). The city is literally torn between two allegiances.
5. The word horme ('attempt, rush, impulse') suggests a mob action rather than a legal proceeding. The coalition of Gentiles and Jews acting together is notable — opposition to the gospel unites otherwise divided groups.
6. Lystra was about 18 miles south-southwest of Iconium; Derbe about 60 miles southeast. Luke notes that these cities belong to Lycaonia, a distinct cultural region where the local language (v. 11) differed from Greek. Flight is strategic retreat, not cowardice — they continue preaching in the new location.
7. The periphrastic construction euangelizomenoi esan ('they were proclaiming the good news') emphasizes ongoing, continuous activity. Fleeing persecution does not interrupt the mission.
8. The threefold description — unable to use his feet, lame from birth, never walked — establishes the severity and permanence of the condition beyond any doubt, paralleling the description of the lame man at the temple gate (Acts 3:2). The healing that follows will be unmistakably miraculous.
9. Paul perceives the man's faith (pistin tou sothenai, literally 'faith to be saved/healed' — the verb sozo carries both meanings) through careful observation (atenisas, 'looking intently'). The connection between faith and healing echoes Jesus's own practice (cf. Mark 5:34, 10:52).
10. The loud voice (megale phone) makes the command public — this is no private healing but a demonstration before witnesses. The man's response — springing up (helato) and walking (periepatei) — is immediate and complete, echoing the healed man of Acts 3:8 who went 'walking and leaping and praising God.'
11. The crowds speak in Lycaonian (Lykaonisti), a local Anatolian language distinct from Greek, which is why Paul and Barnabas do not immediately understand what is being planned. Their interpretation — gods visiting in human form — reflects the local legend about Zeus and Hermes visiting the region, as recorded by the Roman poet Ovid.
12. The identification of Barnabas as Zeus (the chief god) may suggest that Barnabas had a more imposing physical presence. Paul is called Hermes because he was 'the chief speaker' (ho hegoumenos tou logou, literally 'the leader of the word'), and Hermes was the divine messenger and patron of speech. The KJV uses the Latin names Jupiter and Mercury.
13. The temple of Zeus 'at the entrance to the city' (tou ontos pro tes poleos) was a civic shrine guarding the city gates — a common feature of Greco-Roman cities. The priest brings oxen (tauros) for sacrifice and garlands (stemmata) of flowers for decorating the sacrificial animals and the honorees. This was a formal religious act, not merely spontaneous enthusiasm.
14. Tearing garments (diarrexantes ta himatia) is the traditional Jewish response to blasphemy (cf. Matthew 26:65). The urgency of their reaction — rushing (exepedesan) into the crowd, crying out (krazontes) — shows they understood the gravity of what was about to happen. Again Luke calls them 'apostles' (apostoloi), extending the title beyond the Twelve.
15. The word homoiopatheis ('of the same nature, with the same feelings') emphasizes shared humanity — we are not gods but people just like you. The term mataia ('worthless things, vain things, futilities') is the standard Septuagint designation for idols (cf. 1 Samuel 12:21, Jeremiah 2:5). Paul's appeal is to 'the living God' (theon zonta) who made everything — a creation-based argument for an audience without Jewish scriptural knowledge.

15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Samuel 12:21 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 2:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. Paul acknowledges a period of divine forbearance — God 'allowed' (eiasen) the nations to follow their own paths without direct intervention. This does not mean God approved of idolatry but that he did not immediately judge it. The same idea appears in Romans 3:25 and Acts 17:30.
17. God's 'witness' (amartyron) to himself is not Scripture (unknown to this audience) but creation's provision: rain, seasons, food, and joy. This is natural theology — the argument from creation and providence to the Creator. The agricultural imagery is especially appropriate for a rural Lycaonian audience dependent on seasonal rains for their crops.
18. The adverb *molis* ('scarcely, with difficulty') reveals how close they came to having sacrifices offered to them. The crowds' religious enthusiasm is so strong that even direct denial of divinity barely stops them. The cultural conditioning to honor visiting deities was deeply ingrained.
19. The volatility of the crowd is extreme: they shift from worshiping Paul as a god to stoning him at the instigation of visiting opponents. Jews traveled from Antioch (about 100 miles) and Iconium (about 18 miles) specifically to pursue and undermine Paul — their opposition was persistent and organized. Paul likely references this stoning in 2 Corinthians 11:25.
20. The scene is remarkable: Paul, left for dead after stoning, rises and walks back into the city. Luke does not call this a miracle, but the natural reading suggests something extraordinary. The 'disciples' (*matheton*) who gather around him are the new Lystran believers — the persecution has not prevented a community from forming. The very next day, Paul resumes the journey.
21. The verb *mathetheusantes* ('made disciples') goes beyond mere conversion — it implies instruction and formation. Remarkably, they retrace their route through the very cities from which they were expelled, risking renewed persecution in order to strengthen the fledgling churches.
22. The message is honest rather than triumphalist: 'through many tribulations' (*dia pollon thlipseon*) is presented not as a possibility but as a necessity (*dei*, 'it is necessary, one must'). Paul and Barnabas prepare the new believers for suffering, not from it. The phrase 'the kingdom of God' (*ten basileian tou theou*) is the eschatological goal that makes the tribulations bearable.
23. The verb *cheirotonestantes* ('having appointed, having chosen by raising hands') may indicate either appointment by the missionaries or election by the congregations with apostolic confirmation. The term *presbyterous* ('elders') follows the Jewish synagogue model of governance. These churches are mere weeks or months old, yet they receive formal leadership. The committing (*parethento*, 'entrusted') to the Lord acknowledges that the missionaries must leave and the Lord himself must sustain these communities.
24. The return journey moves south through the mountainous region of Pisidia to the coastal plain of Pamphylia, retracing their northward route.
25. On their initial passage through Perga (13:13-14), no preaching was recorded. Now, on the return, they preach there before descending to Attalia (modern Antalya), a port city on the Pamphylian coast from which they can sail back to Syria.
26. They return to their sending church — Syrian Antioch — completing a geographic and spiritual circle. The phrase 'commended to the grace of God' (*paradedomenoi te chariti tou theou*) recalls the commissioning in 13:1-3. The work (*ergon*) that the Spirit assigned (13:2) has been 'completed' (*eplerosen*) — the first missionary journey is finished.
27. The report emphasizes what 'God had done with them' (*ho theos epoiesen met auton*) — not their own accomplishments but God's work through them. The metaphor of an 'opened door of faith' (*enoixen thyran pisteos*) for the Gentiles becomes a recurring Pauline image (1 Corinthians 16:9, 2 Corinthians 2:12, Colossians 4:3).
28. Luke's *litotes* — 'no small time' (*chronon ouk oligon*) — means a considerable period. This interval in Antioch provides rest, reflection, and consolidation before the events of chapter 15 bring the question of Gentile inclusion to a head in Jerusalem.

15

Summary: Acts 15 records the Jerusalem Council, the most important deliberative assembly in the early church. Men from Judea arrive in Antioch teaching that Gentile believers must be circumcised to be saved. Paul and Barnabas dispute this strongly, and the church sends them to Jerusalem to resolve the question. Peter testifies about the Cornelius episode, arguing that God gave the Gentiles the same Spirit without requiring circumcision. Paul and Barnabas report the signs and wonders God performed among the Gentiles. James, the brother of Jesus, delivers the decisive judgment: Gentiles should not be burdened with circumcision but should abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from what has been strangled, and from blood. A letter is sent to the Gentile churches. The chapter closes with the sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark, resulting in their separation — Barnabas taking Mark to Cyprus, Paul taking Silas through Syria and Cilicia.

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Jerusalem Council resolves the most explosive question of the early church: must Gentile converts become Jews? The answer — no — is reached through a process combining testimony, scriptural argument, and communal discernment. James's citation of Amos 9:11-12 (from the Septuagint) provides the scriptural basis, arguing that God always intended to include Gentiles. The four prohibitions in the decree are widely debated: are they moral requirements, minimum purity rules for table fellowship, or echoes of the Noahide laws? The Paul-Barnabas split is recorded with remarkable honesty, showing that the early church was not free from personal conflict even among its greatest leaders.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between the Jerusalem Council's decree and Paul's letters (especially Galatians 2) is complex and debated. Paul never quotes the decree in his letters and seems to handle the food issues differently (Romans 14, 1 Corinthians 8-10). The four prohibitions — idolatry, sexual immorality (porneia), what has been strangled, and blood — may reflect the 'laws for resident aliens' in Leviticus 17-18, which applied to non-Israelites living among God's people. James's quotation of Amos 9:11-12 follows the Septuagint, which differs significantly from the Hebrew text. The sharp disagreement (paroxysmos) between Paul and Barnabas is the last mention of Barnabas in Acts.*

Connections: *The Council resolves the tension introduced by the Cornelius episode (Acts 10-11) and the first missionary journey (Acts 13-14). Peter's argument reprises his defense in 11:1-18. James's leadership role confirms his emergence as head of the Jerusalem church (cf. 12:17, 21:18, Galatians 2:9). The decree's four prohibitions connect to Leviticus 17-18. The Paul-Silas partnership launches the second missionary journey (Acts 15:40-18:22).*

¹But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." ²And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, the brothers appointed Paul and Barnabas and some others of them to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question. ³ So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and they brought great joy to all the brothers. ⁴When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. ⁵But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses." ⁶The apostles and the elders gathered together to consider this matter. ⁷After much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that through my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. ⁸And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, ⁹Indeed, put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by way of faith. ¹⁰Now therefore why are you testing God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? ¹¹But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." ¹²The whole assembly fell silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles. ¹³After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for his name. ¹⁵And with this the words of the prophets agree, as it is written, ¹⁶'After this I will return and rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins and restore it, ¹⁷That the residue of men might seek following the Lord, and every one of the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, says the Lord, who doeth all these things. ¹⁸Recognized to God are all his labors from the beginning of the age. ¹⁹Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, ²⁰However, that we write to them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from sexual immorality, and from things strangled, and from blood. ²¹For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues." ²²Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas — Judas called Barsabbas and Silas, leading men among the brothers, ²³They wrote letters by them following this manner. The apostles and elders and brothers and sisters send greeting to the brothers and sisters which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:. ²⁴Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds — though we gave them no instructions — ²⁵Inde

ed, it was decided by us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our dear Barnabas and Paul, ²⁶People that possess hazarded their lives for the identity of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. ²⁸For the Holy Spirit and we have decided, not to burden you beyond these essential requirements; ²⁹That you abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from sexual immorality — from which if you keep yourselves, you will do well. Fare you well. ³⁰So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. ³¹When they read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. ³²And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words. ³³After they had spent some time there, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them. ³⁵But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. ³⁶After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing." ³⁷Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. ³⁸But Paul insisted that they should not take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. ³⁹And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, ⁴⁰Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brothers and sisters to the grace of God. ⁴¹He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The issue is not circumcision as a cultural practice but as a soteriological requirement — 'you cannot be saved' (ou dynasthe sothenai) makes it a matter of eternal consequence. These teachers claim Mosaic authority for their position. They are not the apostles' representatives (v. 24 will clarify this).
2. The litotes 'no small dissension' (staseos ouk oliges) means a fierce argument. The decision to take the matter to Jerusalem shows the Antioch church's recognition of the Jerusalem apostles' authority on such fundamental questions. The delegation includes 'some others' — unnamed witnesses who can corroborate the Antioch church's experience.
3. The journey itself becomes a preaching tour — they tell the story of Gentile conversion (epistrophen ton ethnon, 'the turning of the Gentiles') and receive an enthusiastic response. The 'great joy' (charan megalen) of the believers in Phoenicia and Samaria suggests that opposition to Gentile inclusion was concentrated among a specific faction, not universal.
4. The warm welcome (paredechthesan, 'were received, welcomed') and the phrasing 'what God had done with them' (hosa ho theos epoiesen met auton) — identical to 14:27 — frames the report as a testimony of divine action, not human achievement.
5. These are believing Pharisees (ton apo tes haireseos ton Pharisaion pepisteukotes) — they have accepted Jesus as Messiah but insist that Gentile believers must also keep the entire Mosaic law. Their position goes beyond circumcision alone to full Torah observance. The word haireseos ('party, sect') here means 'faction' without the later connotation of 'heresy.'
6. The formal assembly of apostles and elders constitutes what is traditionally called the Jerusalem Council or Apostolic Council — the first church-wide deliberative body. The verb synechthesan ('gathered together') indicates a formal convening, not a casual meeting.
7. Peter speaks after 'much debate' (polles zeteseos), indicating the assembly first heard various arguments. His appeal is to his own experience with Cornelius — 'in the early days' (aph hemeron archaion) refers back to the events of Acts 10, perhaps a decade earlier. He frames it as God's choice (exelexato ho theos), not his own initiative.
8. The term kardiognostes ('knower of hearts, heart-knower') appears only here and in Acts 1:24. God's knowledge of hearts means he accepted the Gentiles based on their inner reality, not their external status. The repeated phrase 'just as he did to us' (kathos kai hemin) is Peter's decisive argument: identical gift, identical acceptance.
9. The verb diekrinen ('made a distinction, discriminated') directly addresses the issue: if God makes no distinction, neither should the church. The phrase 'cleansed their hearts by faith' (te pistei katharistas tas kardias) is remarkable — cleansing comes through faith, not through circumcision or Torah observance. This is Pauline theology from Peter's lips.
10. Peter characterizes the demand for circumcision and Torah observance as 'testing God' (peirazete ton theon) — acting against what God has clearly demonstrated. The 'yoke' (zugon) metaphor for the law is a Jewish image (cf. Galatians 5:1). Peter's honest assessment that 'neither our fathers nor we' could bear it is a striking admission of the law's inability to save.
11. Peter reverses the expected comparison: he does not say 'they will be saved like us' but 'we will be saved like them' — through grace, not through law. Jewish believers are saved the same way Gentile believers are: by grace through faith. This is the theological climax of Peter's argument.
12. The silence (esigesen) following Peter's speech indicates its persuasive power. Barnabas is named first — perhaps reflecting Jerusalem's greater familiarity with him. Their testimony is experiential: signs and wonders (semeia kai terata) that God performed among the Gentiles confirm divine

approval of the uncircumcised mission.

13. James the brother of Jesus speaks last and gives the decisive judgment. His position of authority in the Jerusalem church is evident — he presides over the Council and renders the final decision. The sequence — Peter's theological argument, Paul and Barnabas's experiential testimony, James's scriptural judgment — represents a complete case.
14. James uses Peter's Semitic name 'Simeon' (Symeon), the only instance in Acts. The phrase 'a people for his name' (laon to onomati autou) is theologically loaded — laos ('people') is the term reserved for Israel as God's covenant people. God is now creating a 'people' from among the Gentiles (ex ethnon), extending the covenant community beyond ethnic Israel.
15. James grounds the decision in Scripture — 'the words of the prophets agree' (symphonousin hoi logoi ton propheton). Experience and testimony have been presented; now comes the scriptural confirmation. The verb symphonousin ('agree, harmonize') suggests that multiple prophetic voices point in the same direction.
16. James quotes Amos 9:11-12 from the Septuagint. The 'tent of David' (ten skenen Daud) refers to David's dynasty and kingdom, which had 'fallen' with the exile and the end of the monarchy. God's restoration of David's tent is fulfilled in Jesus, the Davidic Messiah. The Septuagint text differs significantly from the Hebrew here, and James follows the Greek version.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Amos 9:11-12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The critical difference between the Septuagint and the Hebrew is that the Hebrew reads 'that they may possess the remnant of Edom' while the Septuagint reads 'that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord.' The Septuagint, likely reading 'adam (mankind) for 'edom and doresh (seek) for yarash (possess), provides James with a text that explicitly predicts Gentile inclusion in God's people.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Amos 9:11-12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. This brief phrase — 'known from of old' (gnosta ap aionos) — asserts that Gentile inclusion is not an innovation but something God planned from the beginning. What seems new is actually ancient divine purpose now being revealed.
19. The verb krino ('I judge, I decide') shows James rendering an authoritative decision, not merely offering an opinion. The word parenochein ('trouble, make difficulties for, harass') characterizes the circumcision requirement as an unnecessary burden. Gentile conversion is described as 'turning to God' (epistrephousin epi ton theon) — they are already turning; circumcision is not needed for this turning to be valid.
20. The four prohibitions are: (1) alisgematon ton eidolon ('pollutions of idols' — food offered to idols), (2) porneia ('sexual immorality' — broadly defined), (3) pnikton ('what has been strangled' — meat from animals not properly slaughtered), and (4) haima ('blood' — either consuming blood or possibly bloodshed/murder). These likely correspond to the laws in Leviticus 17-18 that applied to 'resident aliens' (gerim) living among Israelites.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 17-18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. This enigmatic verse may mean: (1) Jewish sensibilities must be respected since Moses is preached everywhere, so the four prohibitions preserve table fellowship with Jewish believers; or (2) Gentiles can learn the rest of Moses's teaching from the synagogue readings as they grow. The former interpretation is more commonly held.
22. The decision involves the whole church (syn hole te ekklesia), not just the leaders. Judas Barsabbas and Silas are sent as independent witnesses to confirm the letter's authenticity and to represent Jerusalem's goodwill. Silas (Silvanus) will become Paul's companion on the second missionary journey.
23. The letter follows standard Hellenistic epistolary form: sender, recipient, greeting (chairein). The addressees are specifically 'brothers from the Gentiles' (adelphois tois ex ethnon) in the three regions affected. The use of 'brothers' (adelphoi) for the Gentile believers is itself a theological statement — they are family.
24. The letter explicitly disowns the troublemakers: 'we gave them no instructions' (hois ou diesteilametha). The verbs etaraxan ('troubled') and anaskeuazontes ('unsettling, dismantling') describe the damage done. Some manuscripts add 'saying you must be circumcised and keep the law,' but the SBLGNT omits this addition.
25. The phrase 'having come to one accord' (genomenois homothumadon) emphasizes unanimity. Barnabas and Paul are described as 'our beloved' (tois agapetois hemon), a public endorsement countering any suggestion that they are unauthorized agents.
26. The phrase paradedokosi tas psychas ('having given over their lives, having risked their souls') may allude to Paul's stoning at Lystra (14:19) and other dangers. It is a ringing endorsement of their courage and commitment.
27. Judas and Silas serve as living confirmations of the letter — they can answer questions and provide context that a written document cannot. The phrase 'the same things' (ta auta) ensures consistency between the written and oral messages.
28. The remarkable phrase 'the Holy Spirit and us' (to pneumatō kai hēmin) claims divine authority for the decision — the Council's deliberation was guided by the Spirit. The word 'burden' (baros) echoes Peter's 'yoke' language in verse 10. Only the 'necessary things' (ton epanankes) are required, and even these are minimal.

29. The four prohibitions are restated in slightly different order and terminology: eidolothyton ('idol-sacrificed food') replaces the broader 'pollutions of idols' from verse 20. The closing 'farewell' (erroshe) is the standard Hellenistic letter closing, meaning 'be strong, be well.'
30. The delegation goes directly to Antioch and presents the letter to the assembled church. The verb epedokan ('delivered, handed over') indicates a formal presentation.
31. The congregation's response is joy (echarasan) at the paraklesis ('encouragement, consolation'). The letter is received as good news — the Gentile believers are free from the circumcision requirement. The word paraklesis connects to the role of the Holy Spirit as Parakletos.
32. Judas and Silas are identified as prophets (prophetai), giving their encouragement additional spiritual authority. Their ministry goes beyond delivering the letter to active pastoral care — 'many words' (dia logou pollou) of encouragement and strengthening.
33. The phrase 'sent off in peace' (apeluthesan met eirenes) is a formal dismissal with blessing — the Antioch church releases them to return to Jerusalem with goodwill and harmony restored.
34. Verse 34 is absent from the SBLGNT and other critical Greek texts. It appears in some later manuscripts and the KJV tradition ('Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still'), likely added by scribes to explain how Silas was available in Antioch when Paul chose him in verse 40. We follow the SBLGNT in omitting it.
35. The Antioch church has a rich leadership — 'many others' (heteron pollon) are involved in teaching and preaching alongside Paul and Barnabas. The two verbs 'teaching' (didaskontes) and 'preaching the good news' (euangelizomenoi) describe both internal instruction and outward evangelism.
36. Paul's concern is pastoral — he wants to check on the new churches' welfare (pos echousin, 'how they are'). This impulse to revisit and strengthen existing churches, not merely plant new ones, characterizes Paul's missionary strategy throughout Acts and his letters.
37. Barnabas's desire to include his cousin John Mark (cf. Colossians 4:10) reflects his character as 'son of encouragement' (4:36) — he is willing to give the young man a second chance after his earlier departure in 13:13.
38. Paul views Mark's departure in Pamphylia as a disqualifying failure. The verb apostanta ('having withdrawn, having deserted') carries negative connotations. The phrase 'not gone with them to the work' (me synelthonta autois eis to ergon) implies that the mission's demands require reliable companions.
39. The word paroxysmos ('sharp disagreement, irritation, provocation') — from which English derives 'paroxysm' — indicates an intense emotional conflict. Luke does not assign blame to either party. The separation doubles the mission: Barnabas and Mark go to Cyprus (Barnabas's homeland), while Paul takes a new partner. Later, Paul and Mark are reconciled (Colossians 4:10, 2 Timothy 4:11, Philemon 24).
40. Paul receives the church's commendation (paradotheis te chariti, 'commended to the grace'), while Barnabas's departure receives no such mention — a possible indication that the church sided with Paul's assessment. Silas, as a Jerusalem prophet and Roman citizen (16:37), is an ideal partner for the mission ahead.
41. Paul's route takes him overland through Syria (where Antioch lies) and into Cilicia (his home province, where Tarsus is located). The verb episterizon ('strengthening, establishing') is the same word used in 14:22 — a key element of Paul's pastoral strategy. The second missionary journey has begun.

16

Summary: *Acts 16 narrates the second missionary journey's expansion into Europe. Paul circumcises Timothy at Lystra and recruits him as a companion. The Holy Spirit twice redirects their itinerary — forbidding them from preaching in Asia and Bithynia — until Paul receives the Macedonian vision at Troas: 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' They sail to Philippi, a Roman colony, where Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, becomes the first European convert. Paul casts out a spirit of divination from a slave girl, provoking her owners to drag Paul and Silas before the magistrates. They are beaten and imprisoned. At midnight, Paul and Silas sing hymns; an earthquake shakes the prison open, but no one escapes. The terrified jailer asks, 'What must I do to be saved?' Paul responds, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household.' The jailer and his household are baptized. The next morning, Paul reveals his Roman citizenship, forcing the magistrates to publicly apologize.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Timothy's circumcision (v. 3) seems to contradict the Jerusalem Council's ruling — but Paul circumcises Timothy not as a soteriological requirement but as a strategic concession, since Timothy's Jewish mother made him Jewish by halakhic standards. The Spirit's double prohibition (vv. 6-7) and the Macedonian vision represent one of the most dramatic instances of divine guidance in Acts, redirecting the mission from Asia to Europe. The Philippian jailer episode contains perhaps the most concentrated salvation narrative in Acts: terror, the question of salvation, faith, baptism, joy — all within a single night.*

Translation Friction: The 'we' passages begin in verse 10 (the first in Acts), suggesting the author Luke joined the team at Troas. The 'spirit of Python' (pneuma pythona, v. 16) refers to the prophetic spirit associated with the oracle at Delphi, where the Pythia (priestess) supposedly channeled Apollo's messages. Paul's use of Roman citizenship (vv. 37-39) raises questions about why he did not invoke it before the beating — possibly because the mob action prevented orderly legal procedure.

¹Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. ²He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. ³Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴As they went through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. ⁵So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in number daily. ⁶They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. ⁷When they came to the border of Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. ⁸So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. ⁹And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the good news to them. ¹¹So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, ¹²From there we went to Philippi, the leading city in that district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We stayed in that city for several days. ¹³On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a dealer in purple cloth, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵After she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us. ¹⁶As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much profit by fortune-telling. ¹⁷She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." ¹⁸She kept doing this for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. ¹⁹But when her owners saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. ²⁰And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews and they are disturbing our city. ²¹They are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice." ²²The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore their garments off them and ordered them to be beaten with rods. ²³And when they had inflicted many blows on them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to guard them securely. ²⁴Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. ²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. Immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. ²⁷When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul cried out in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" ²⁹The jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." ³²And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³And he took them that same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. ³⁴Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God. ³⁵When it was day, the magistrates sent the lictors, saying, "Release those men." ³⁶The jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to release you. So come out now and go in peace." ³⁷But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly without a trial, men who are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to send us away secretly? Certainly not! Let them come themselves and escort us out." ³⁸The lictors reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid

when they heard that they were Roman citizens. ³⁹So they came and apologized to them, and they brought them out and asked them to leave the city. ⁴⁰So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. When they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Timothy's mixed parentage — Jewish mother, Greek father — places him in a complicated identity position. By rabbinic standards (which determined Jewish status through the mother), Timothy was Jewish. His mother Eunice and grandmother Lois are named in 2 Timothy 1:5. Timothy will become Paul's most trusted associate.
2. Timothy's good reputation (emartureito, 'was testified about') spans two cities, indicating wide recognition of his character and gifting.
3. Paul circumcises Timothy not because it is necessary for salvation (the Jerusalem Council just decided otherwise) but for strategic reasons: an uncircumcised person of Jewish descent would be a stumbling block in synagogue ministry. This contrasts with Paul's refusal to circumcise Titus, a full Gentile (Galatians 2:3). The distinction is between accommodation and capitulation.
4. The dogmata ('decisions, decrees') are the Jerusalem Council's rulings from chapter 15. Paul distributes them to the churches as authoritative guidelines, showing that he recognized the Council's authority despite his own apostolic independence.
5. This is one of Luke's progress reports. The dual growth — qualitative ('strengthened in the faith') and quantitative ('increased in number daily') — shows healthy church development.
6. The Holy Spirit's prohibition (koluthentes, 'having been forbidden') is stated without explaining how it was communicated — through prophecy, inner conviction, or circumstantial closure. 'Asia' here means the Roman province of Asia (western Asia Minor, including Ephesus), not the continent. The Spirit is actively directing the mission by closing doors.
7. The unusual phrase 'Spirit of Jesus' (to pneuma Iesou) rather than 'Holy Spirit' occurs only here in Acts. It may emphasize the risen Christ's personal direction of the mission. The double redirection — forbidden from Asia, blocked from Bithynia — funnels them toward the coast and the crossing to Europe.
8. Troas (Alexandria Troas) was a major port city on the Aegean coast, across from the European mainland. It is the launching point for the crossing to Macedonia — the gospel's entry into Europe.
9. How Paul identified the man as Macedonian is not stated — perhaps by dress, accent in the vision, or direct knowledge. The plea 'help us' (boetheson hemin) is both urgent and communal — it represents an entire region's need. This vision provides the positive direction after the two negative prohibitions.
10. The shift from 'they' to 'we' (ezetesamen, 'we sought') marks the first of the 'we' passages in Acts, indicating that the author Luke has joined the missionary team at Troas. The verb symbibazontes ('concluding, putting together') suggests communal discernment — the team collectively interprets the vision as God's call.
11. The nautical detail euthudromesamen ('we ran a straight course') indicates favorable winds — the same crossing took five days in the opposite direction (20:6). Samothrace is an island midway across the northern Aegean. Neapolis (modern Kavala) was the port city serving Philippi, about ten miles inland.
12. Philippi was named after Philip II of Macedon (father of Alexander the Great). Its status as a kolonia ('colony') meant it operated under Roman law with rights equivalent to Italian cities. Luke describes it as 'a leading city of the district' (prote tes meridos poleis) — the precise administrative terminology has been debated but reflects Luke's careful attention to local designations.
13. The absence of a synagogue in Philippi (a quorum of ten Jewish men was traditionally required) meant that the small Jewish community met informally by the river for prayer. The gathering consists entirely of women — Lydia, mentioned next, is among them. That Paul begins his European mission by speaking to women at a riverside prayer meeting is a humble and unexpected beginning.
14. Lydia is identified by her trade — porphyropolis ('dealer in purple goods') — indicating she was a businesswoman of means, since purple dye was expensive. Thyatira (in the province of Asia) was famous for its purple dyeing industry. She is a 'worshiper of God' (sebomene ton theon), a God-fearer. The decisive theological note is 'the Lord opened her heart' (ho kyrios dienoixen ten kardian) — her faith is God's work before it is her response.
15. Lydia's household baptism (ho oikos autes) includes servants and dependents — the household conversion pattern of Acts (cf. 10:48, 16:33, 18:8). Her invitation to stay is confident and assertive — parebiastao ('she prevailed upon us, she insisted forcefully') shows a strong personality. Her house becomes the base of the Philippian church (v. 40).
16. The Greek pneuma pythona ('spirit of Python') refers to the prophetic spirit associated with the oracle at Delphi, where the Pythia served as Apollo's mouthpiece. The girl is doubly enslaved — to a demonic spirit and to human owners who exploit her condition for profit. The word ergasian ('profit, gain') reveals the commercial dimension of her bondage.
17. The girl's declaration is technically accurate — they are servants of the Most High God proclaiming salvation. But the title 'Most High God' (tou theou tou hypsistou) was used in pagan contexts for Zeus or a supreme deity, potentially confusing the gospel message with syncretistic religion. Demonic

testimony, even when factually correct, distorts by association.

18. Paul tolerates the disruption for 'many days' (epi pollas hemeras) before acting. The verb diaponetheis ('greatly annoyed, deeply troubled') combines frustration with spiritual grief. The exorcism is performed 'in the name of Jesus Christ' — the authority behind the command. The spirit's departure is immediate (aute te hora, 'that very hour').
19. The phrase 'their hope of profit was gone' (exelthen he elpis tes ergasias auton) uses the same verb as the exorcism — the spirit 'went out' and so did their profit. Their grievance is economic, not religious, but they will frame their charges in political terms. The agora ('marketplace') was the civic center where legal proceedings took place.
20. The strategoi ('magistrates') are the duumviri, the two chief officials of a Roman colony. The charge plays on anti-Jewish sentiment: 'These men are Jews' (Ioudaioi hyparchontes) is stated as if it were itself an accusation. The verb ektarassousin ('are disturbing, are throwing into confusion') frames the missionaries as public threats.
21. The charge is deliberately vague — 'customs' (ethe) could mean anything. The real issue is the loss of income from the slave girl, but the accusation is framed as a matter of Roman identity ('us as Romans,' Romaiois ousin) versus foreign Jewish practices. Philippi's pride in its Roman colonial status makes this charge effective.
22. The magistrates tear Paul and Silas's clothing off (perirexantes auton ta himatia) to expose them for beating. The rhabdizein ('beating with rods') was administered by lictors, the magistrates' official attendants who carried fasces (bundles of rods). Paul references being beaten with rods three times in 2 Corinthians 11:25.
23. The 'many blows' (pollas plegas) indicates a severe beating. The adverb asphalos ('securely, safely') places the jailer under strict orders — failure to hold the prisoners could cost him his life.
24. The 'inner prison' (ten esoteran phylaken) was the most secure cell, furthest from any exit. The stocks (xylon, literally 'wood') immobilized the prisoners' legs, often in a painfully spread position. The security emphasis — inner cell plus stocks — sets the stage for the dramatic liberation to come.
25. The combination of praying and singing (prosuchomenoi hymnoun ton theon) at midnight, after severe beating and in stocks, is extraordinary. The verb epeokroonto ('were listening attentively') indicates the other prisoners were captured by what they heard — worship from the depths of suffering.
26. The earthquake is comprehensive: foundations shaken, all doors opened, all chains unfastened (panton ta desma anethe). This affects not just Paul and Silas but every prisoner. The supernatural character of the event is evident — earthquakes do not typically unfasten chains and open locked doors simultaneously.
27. Roman law held jailers personally responsible for escaped prisoners (cf. Acts 12:19 where guards are executed). The jailer's suicide attempt is a rational response within the Roman honor system — death by his own hand would be more honorable than execution for dereliction of duty.
28. Paul's shout saves the jailer's life. The fact that all prisoners remain (hapantes gar esmen enthade, 'for we are all here') — despite open doors and unfastened chains — adds to the supernatural character of the event. Paul's concern for the jailer's life demonstrates grace in action.
29. The jailer's progression — calling for lights, rushing in (eisepedesn), trembling (entromos), falling down (prosepesen) — vividly narrates his transition from despair to awe. He recognizes that something beyond natural explanation has occurred.
30. The jailer's question — ti me dei poein hina sotho ('what must I do to be saved?') — is one of the most famous questions in the New Testament. The word sotho ('be saved') may carry both physical and spiritual meaning: saved from the earthquake's implications and saved in the deeper sense that the slave girl's spirit had proclaimed (v. 17). The address kyrioi ('sirs, lords') reflects deep respect.
31. The response is the gospel in its simplest form: believe in the Lord Jesus. The promise extends to 'your household' (ho oikos sou), not that the jailer's faith automatically saves his family, but that the same promise of salvation is available to all in his household who believe (as the next verse clarifies). The SBLGNT reads 'Lord Jesus' without 'Christ.'
32. The gospel is shared with the entire household (pasin tois en te oikia auton) — faith comes through hearing the message. This ensures that the household's subsequent baptism is an informed response, not merely participation in the head of household's decision.
33. The sequence is powerful: the jailer washes Paul's wounds, then is himself washed in baptism. The physical washing of wounds and the spiritual washing of baptism mirror each other. Everything happens 'that same hour of the night' (en ekeine te hora tes nyktos) — the urgency of faith matches the urgency of compassion. The household (hoi autou hapantes, 'all his') is baptized together.
34. The chapter's emotional arc — from beating and imprisonment to washing wounds, baptism, shared meals, and rejoicing — captures the transformative power of the gospel in a single night. The word panoikei ('with the whole household') and the verb egalliasato ('rejoiced greatly, exulted') describe household-wide celebration of newfound faith.
35. The rhabdouchous ('lictors, rod-bearers') were the magistrates' official attendants who had administered the beating. Their return with the release order shows the magistrates considered the matter closed. Why they decided to release Paul and Silas is not stated — perhaps they felt the punishment sufficient, or the earthquake had unsettled them.

36. The jailer — now a fellow believer — delivers the good news. The phrase 'go in peace' (poreuesthe en eirene) is a standard Semitic farewell, here spoken by a Roman jailer who has just become a member of the new community.
37. Paul now reveals what the magistrates should have ascertained before the beating: he and Silas are Roman citizens (anthropous Romaious). The Lex Porcia and Lex Valeria prohibited beating a Roman citizen without trial. The violation is threefold: public beating (demosio), without trial (akatakritous), of Roman citizens. Paul demands a public escort to clear their names and protect the fledgling church from further persecution.
38. The magistrates' fear (ephobethesan) is well-founded — beating Roman citizens without trial was a serious offense that could result in their removal from office and legal penalties. The tables have turned completely.
39. The verb parekalesan ('appealed to, apologized to, entreated') indicates the magistrates come in a conciliatory posture. The request to leave the city is a face-saving measure — they cannot admit full wrongdoing publicly, but they acknowledge the error by personally escorting the prisoners out.
40. Before leaving Philippi, Paul and Silas visit Lydia's house — the church's meeting place — and encourage the new believers. The 'we' narration pauses here (resuming in 20:5), suggesting Luke may have remained in Philippi to nurture the church. Paul and Silas depart, but the Philippian church will become one of Paul's most beloved communities (Philippians 1:3-8).

17

Summary: *Acts 17 follows Paul through Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens. In Thessalonica, Paul reasons from the Scriptures in the synagogue for three Sabbaths, and some Jews and many God-fearing Greeks believe. Jealous opponents incite a mob and drag Jason (Paul's host) before the city authorities, accusing the missionaries of 'turning the world upside down' and proclaiming 'another king, Jesus.' Paul is sent to Berea, where the Jews are described as 'more noble' because they examined the Scriptures daily. But Thessalonian opponents pursue Paul there too, and he is sent to Athens. Alone in Athens, Paul is provoked by the city's idols and engages Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. He is brought to the Areopagus (Mars Hill), where he delivers his famous speech: beginning with the altar 'To an Unknown God,' he proclaims the Creator who does not live in temples, who gives all life, who made all nations from one man, and who now commands repentance because he has appointed a day of judgment through a man he raised from the dead. The response is mixed: some mock, some believe.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's Areopagus speech is the theological and literary centerpiece of Acts — a model of contextual proclamation to a pagan intellectual audience. Paul does not quote Scripture (his audience would not recognize it) but argues from creation, divine providence, and even pagan poets (Epimenides and Aratus). He does not begin with sin but with worship, taking the Athenians' religious impulse seriously while redirecting it. The charge at Thessalonica — 'these men have turned the world upside down' (17:6) — is one of the most striking descriptions of early Christianity's revolutionary impact. The Berean model of examining Scripture has become paradigmatic for responsible biblical study.*

Translation Friction: *The altar 'To an Unknown God' (Agnosto Theo) is attested by ancient sources (Pausanias, Diogenes Laertius), though the exact inscription Paul references has not been archaeologically discovered. Paul quotes from pagan poets — 'in him we live and move and have our being' is attributed to Epimenides of Crete, and 'for we are indeed his offspring' comes from Aratus's Phaenomena (and possibly Cleanthes's Hymn to Zeus). Paul's willingness to find truth in pagan literature while rejecting idolatry demonstrates sophisticated engagement with Greco-Roman culture. The 'politarchs' (politarchas) of Thessalonica (v. 6) — a title once thought to be a Lukan error — have been confirmed by multiple inscriptions.*

Connections: *Paul's synagogue method of reasoning from Scripture (vv. 2-3) continues the pattern of chapters 13-14. The charge of 'another king' (v. 7) echoes the charges against Jesus before Pilate (Luke 23:2). The Areopagus speech develops the natural theology introduced at Lystra (14:15-17). Paul's appeal to God as Creator connects to Genesis 1-2 and Isaiah 40-45. The resurrection as the basis for judgment connects to the apostolic kerygma throughout Acts.*

¹After Paul and Silas had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ²And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³He explained and demonstrated that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead, and then declared, "This Jesus I am telling you about is the Messiah." ⁴Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the

devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. ⁵But the Jews became jealous, and taking some wicked men from the marketplace rabble, they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. They attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring Paul and Silas out to the crowd. ⁶When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, ⁷Indeed, whom Jason has received — and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar and stated that there is another king, one Jesus. ⁸The people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. ⁹And when they had taken a bond from Jason and the rest, they released them. ¹⁰The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. ¹²Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. ¹³But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds. ¹⁴Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. ¹⁵Those who escorted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving instructions for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed. ¹⁶Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. ¹⁸Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. Some said, "What does this babblers wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities" — because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. ¹⁹And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean." ²¹(Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.) ²²So Paul, standing in the middle of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. ²³For 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 you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by human hands, ²⁵And not is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he gives to all life, and breath, and all matters;. ²⁶And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷Indeed, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel following him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:. ²⁸Because in him we live, and move, and have our being. As certain also of your own poets have stated, since we are also his offspring. ²⁹Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. ³⁰The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, ³¹Because he has appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained. Whereof he has given assurance to all men, in that he has raised him from the dead. ³²Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this." ³³So Paul went out from their midst. ³⁴But some men joined him and believed, among whom were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Amphipolis and Apollonia were stations along the Via Egnatia, the major Roman road connecting the Adriatic to the east. Thessalonica (modern Thessaloniki) was the capital and largest city of Macedonia. The presence of a synagogue (singular, unlike the plural at Salamis) indicates a Jewish community sufficient for one congregation.
2. The phrase *kata to eiothos* ('as was his custom') establishes Paul's consistent practice of beginning in the synagogue. The verb *dielexato* ('reasoned, discussed, argued') implies dialogue, not just monologue — Paul engaged in back-and-forth discussion. Three Sabbaths indicates at least a three-week ministry, though Paul's total stay may have been longer (cf. Philippians 4:16).
3. Paul's argument has two steps: (1) the Scriptures require a suffering and rising Messiah (*ton Christon edei pathein kai anastenai*), and (2) Jesus fulfills this pattern. The verb *dianoigon* ('opening, explaining') is the same word used of Jesus opening the Scriptures to the Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:32). The verb *paratithemenos* ('setting before, presenting evidence') is a legal term for presenting a case.

4. The response is stratified: 'some' Jews believed, but a 'great many' (plethos poly) God-fearing Greeks and 'not a few' (ouk oligai) prominent women. The larger Gentile response becomes the pattern throughout Paul's mission. The 'leading women' (gynaikon ton proton) occupied significant social positions in Macedonian society, where women had more public roles than in many other parts of the empire.
5. The jealous Jews recruit agoraion ('marketplace loafers, idlers') — men who hung around the agora without employment — to form a mob. The verb ochlopoiesantes ('having made a crowd, having formed a mob') is used only here in the New Testament. Jason is Paul's host, likely a Jewish believer (the name is the Greek form of Joshua/Jesus).
6. Unable to find Paul and Silas, the mob seizes Jason as a proxy. The politarchas ('city authorities, politarchs') was the correct title for Thessalonica's magistrates — confirmed by inscriptions found in the city. The famous accusation 'turned the world upside down' (ten oikoumenen anastatosantes) is intended as an indictment but reads as an inadvertent tribute to the gospel's power.
7. The charge is politically framed: 'acting against Caesar's decrees' (apenanti ton dogmaton Kaisaros) and proclaiming 'another king' (basilea heteron). This echoes the charges against Jesus before Pilate (Luke 23:2). Hosting the missionaries makes Jason legally liable. The claim of 'another king' transforms the theological title 'Christ/Messiah' into a political threat within the Roman system.
8. The charge of sedition against Caesar effectively disturbs (etaraxan) both the common people and the officials. In the Roman system, any perceived challenge to imperial authority required a response.
9. The 'bond' (to hikanon, literally 'the sufficient thing') was a financial guarantee — Jason and the others posted bail ensuring that the missionaries would not cause further disturbance. This bond likely explains why Paul could not return to Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 2:18) — doing so would have put Jason at legal and financial risk.
10. The nighttime departure (dia nyktos) is for safety. Berea (modern Veria) lay about 45 miles southwest of Thessalonica. Despite the recent violence, Paul's first action in a new city remains the same: he goes to the synagogue.
11. The Bereans are called eugenestroi ('more noble, more fair-minded, of better character'). Their nobility consists of two things: receptivity ('received the word with all eagerness,' meta pases prothymias) and critical examination ('examining the Scriptures daily,' to kath hemeran anakrinontes tas graphas). They model the ideal response: open hearts combined with rigorous study.
12. The result of the Berean method is widespread belief: 'many' (polloi) Jews believed, plus prominent Greek women and men. The pattern is similar to Thessalonica but more extensively positive.
13. The Thessalonian opponents travel 45 miles to Berea specifically to disrupt Paul's ministry — their opposition is relentless. The same pattern of external agitation disrupts what had been a positive reception.
14. Paul is the primary target; Silas and Timothy can remain safely. The phrase 'to the sea' (heos epi ten thalassan) indicates Paul traveled to the coast, from where he likely sailed to Athens. Timothy reappears here — he was last mentioned in 16:1-3 and has been with the team throughout.
15. Paul arrives in Athens escorted by Berean believers, who carry back his urgent request for Silas and Timothy to join him. Paul's time in Athens begins alone — an unusual circumstance that shapes his experience there.
16. The verb paroxyneto ('was provoked, was deeply stirred') is the same root as the paroxysmos of 15:39 — it denotes intense emotion, here righteous anger and grief. The word kateidolon ('full of idols, overwhelmed with idols') appears only here in the New Testament. Ancient sources confirm that Athens was saturated with religious images and temples.
17. Paul operates in two settings simultaneously: the synagogue (with Jews and God-fearers) and the agora (with whoever is present). Engaging in philosophical discussion in the Athenian agora placed Paul in the tradition of Socrates, who had done the same centuries earlier.
18. The Epicureans (followers of Epicurus, 341-270 BC) emphasized pleasure, withdrawal from public life, and denial of divine providence. The Stoics (from the Stoa Poikile in Athens) taught rational virtue, divine providence through logos, and living according to nature. These represent the two dominant philosophical schools. The term spermologos ('babbler,' literally 'seed-picker' — a bird that picks up scraps) was a derisive term for an intellectual scavenger who picks up bits of ideas without systematic understanding.
19. The Areopagus (Areios Pagos, 'hill of Ares/Mars') served both as a geographic location (the rocky hill northwest of the Acropolis) and as the name of the council that met there. The council had oversight of education and religious matters in Athens. Being brought before it was not necessarily hostile — they want to evaluate this 'new teaching' (kaine didache).
20. The word xenizonta ('strange, surprising, foreign') characterizes Paul's message as novel and unfamiliar. The Athenian appetite for novelty (described in the next verse) makes them curious rather than hostile.
21. Luke's parenthetical observation about Athenian culture — their insatiable appetite for novelty (ti kainoteron, 'something newer') — is confirmed by ancient writers including Thucydides and Demosthenes. This cultural trait provides Paul's opportunity to be heard but also explains the superficial response of some listeners.
22. The word deisidaimonesterous can mean either 'very religious' (positive/neutral) or 'very superstitious' (negative). As a skilled rhetorician, Paul likely uses it with deliberate ambiguity — the audience would hear a compliment, while the deeper meaning carries critique. We render it positively, following the rhetorical convention of beginning with praise.

23. The altar Agnosto Theo ('To an Unknown God') provides Paul's rhetorical point of contact. Ancient sources attest altars to unknown gods in Athens. Paul does not condemn their worship impulse but redirects it: what you worship without knowing, I can identify. The neuter pronoun *ho* ('what') rather than the masculine *hon* ('whom') may be deliberate — Paul begins with their conceptual framework before introducing the personal God.
24. Paul begins with creation — a starting point that both Jews and philosophically minded pagans could engage. The claim that God does not live in temples (*ouk en cheiropoiotois naois katoikei*) echoes Isaiah 66:1-2 and Stephen's speech (Acts 7:48), but would also resonate with Stoic critiques of popular religion. This is said within sight of the Parthenon.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 66:1-2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. God is not dependent on human service (*oude hypo cheiron anthroponon therapeutetai*) — a rejection of the temple-cult system that assumed gods needed human provision. Instead, God is the source of 'life and breath and everything' (*zoen kai pnoen kai ta panta*). This echoes both Genesis 2:7 and Stoic ideas about divine self-sufficiency.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 2:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The phrase 'from one man' (*ex henos*) — some manuscripts add 'blood' (*haimatos*) — asserts the unity of the human race from a single ancestor (Adam). This directly challenges Greek ethnic pride, particularly Athenian claims of autochthony (being 'born from the earth' of Attica, not descended from outsiders). God sovereignly determines both the times (*kairous*) and boundaries (*horothusias*) of nations.
27. The verb *pselaphesaien* ('feel, grope, touch') suggests searching in darkness or uncertainty — humanity reaches for God imperfectly. The optative mood (a rare grammatical form) expresses hope mixed with uncertainty. But the resolution is encouraging: God is 'not far' (*ou makran*) from any person. The gap between divine transcendence and human accessibility is bridged by God's proximity.
28. Paul quotes two pagan poets. 'In him we live and move and have our being' is attributed to Epimenides of Crete (6th century BC). 'For we are indeed his offspring' (*tou gar kai genos esmen*) comes from the Cilician poet Aratus (*Phaenomena* 5) and possibly also from Cleanthes's Hymn to Zeus. Paul appropriates pagan insight to build a bridge to biblical truth — these poets spoke more truly than they knew.
29. Paul draws a logical conclusion from the poets: if we are God's offspring, then God cannot be less than human — he cannot be mere metal or stone, no matter how artfully crafted. The word *charagmati* ('image, engraving, mark') denotes something produced by *technē* ('craft, art') and *enthymeseos* ('thought, imagination'). The argument moves from the poets' premise to an anti-idolatry conclusion.
30. Paul echoes the principle of 14:16 — God 'overlooked' (*hyperidon*) past ignorance — but adds a decisive 'but now' (*ta nun*). The age of tolerated ignorance is over. The command to repent (*metanoein*) is universal: 'all people everywhere' (*tous anthropous pantas pantachou*). The scope is absolute — no nation, class, or philosophical school is exempt.
31. Paul reaches the gospel's core: judgment, a specific appointed man, and resurrection. He does not name Jesus explicitly (the audience would not know the name) but identifies him through the resurrection. The word *pistin* ('assurance, proof, guarantee') is related to *pistis* ('faith') — God has given grounds for faith by raising this man from the dead. The resurrection is both proof of Jesus's appointment and the basis for universal accountability.
32. The response divides into three groups: mockers, the curious, and believers (v. 34). The bodily resurrection was the stumbling block for Greek thought, which generally held the body in low regard and could not conceive of its restoration. Epicureans denied any afterlife; Stoics held to a dissolution of the individual into the cosmic *logos*. Physical resurrection was offensive to both.
33. Paul departs without being expelled — a contrast with the violent rejections in other cities. The Areopagus encounter ends not with persecution but with a mixture of intellectual dismissal and genuine interest.
34. The converts include Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus council itself — a significant social and intellectual conversion. Damaris is named specifically, suggesting she was well known to the early church. The phrase 'others with them' (*heteroi syn autois*) indicates a small but genuine community of believers. Athens produced a quieter response than other cities, but it produced real faith.

18

Summary: Acts 18 records Paul's eighteen-month ministry in Corinth, the commercial capital of the province of Achaia. Paul meets Aquila and Priscilla, Jewish tentmakers expelled from Rome by Emperor Claudius's edict, and works alongside them at their trade. He reasons in the synagogue each Sabbath. When Silas and Timothy arrive from Macedonia, Paul intensifies his preaching, declaring Jesus to be the Christ. Jewish opposition leads Paul to declare, 'Your blood is on your own heads; from now on I will go to the Gentiles.' He moves next door to the house of Titius Justus, and Crispus, the synagogue ruler, believes. The Lord encourages Paul in a night vision: 'Do not be afraid; keep speaking, for I have many people in this city.' Paul remains a year and a half. Jewish opponents bring Paul before the proconsul Gallio, who dismisses the case as a Jewish internal matter. The chapter ends with Paul's departure through Cenchreae, a brief stop in Ephesus, and his return to Antioch, before Apollos is introduced in Ephesus.

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Gallio episode is one of the most historically significant passages in Acts. An inscription found at Delphi dates Gallio's proconsulship to approximately AD 51-52, providing the single most important fixed point for Pauline chronology. Gallio's refusal to adjudicate religious disputes effectively establishes a Roman legal precedent that Christianity is a legitimate religio licita within Judaism. The Lord's night vision to Paul (vv. 9-10) contains the remarkable promise 'I have many people in this city' (laos moi polys en te polei taute) — God claims a people in Corinth before they have yet believed.*

Translation Friction: *Claudius's expulsion of Jews from Rome (v. 2) is independently attested by Suetonius (Claudius 25.4), who mentions disturbances 'at the instigation of Chrestus' — likely a garbled reference to disputes about Christ within the Roman Jewish community. The dating is typically placed around AD 49. Paul's vow at Cenchreae (v. 18) — shaving his head — is likely a Nazirite vow (Numbers 6), showing that Paul continued to practice Jewish customs voluntarily. The introduction of Apollos (vv. 24-28) raises questions about the diversity of early Christian teaching — he knew only 'the baptism of John' until Priscilla and Aquila instructed him.*

Connections: *Paul's Corinthian ministry produces the congregation to which he later writes 1 and 2 Corinthians. Aquila and Priscilla reappear in Romans 16:3-5, 1 Corinthians 16:19, and 2 Timothy 4:19. Apollos becomes a significant figure in the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 1:12, 3:4-6). The tentmaking detail connects to Paul's principle of financial self-support (1 Thessalonians 2:9, 1 Corinthians 9:1-18). Gallio's legal ruling anticipates the broader question of Christianity's status under Roman law.*

¹After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ²And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, ³On account of the fact that he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought — for by their occupation they were tentmakers. ⁴He reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks. ⁵When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. ⁶And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." ⁷He left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing Paul, believed and were baptized. ⁹And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, ¹⁰For I am with you, and no man will set on you to hurt you — for I have many those present in this city. ¹¹And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. ¹²But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, ¹³Indeed, declaring, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. ¹⁴But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. ¹⁵But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things." ¹⁶And he drove them from the tribunal. ¹⁷And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this. ¹⁸After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow. ¹⁹They arrived at Ephesus, and he left them there. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined, ²¹However, bade them farewell and stated, I must by all means keep this feast that comes in Jerusalem — but I will return again to you, if God will. Then he sailed from Ephesus. ²²When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch. ²³After spending some time there, he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. ²⁴Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, arrived in Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. ²⁵He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. ²⁶He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the way of God to him more accurately. ²⁷When he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome

him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, ²⁸Since he powerfully demonstrated to the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Corinth, about 50 miles west of Athens, was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia and a major commercial center situated on the narrow isthmus connecting the Peloponnese to mainland Greece. Its two harbors (Cenchreae on the east, Lechaenum on the west) made it a crossroads of Mediterranean trade.
2. Aquila was originally from Pontus (a region on the southern coast of the Black Sea). The expulsion under Claudius (dia to diatetachenai Klaudion) is dated to approximately AD 49. Suetonius reports that Claudius expelled Jews from Rome because of disturbances 'impulsore Chresto' ('at the instigation of Chrestus'), likely garbling 'Christus' — suggesting that disputes about Jesus within the Roman synagogues led to public disorder.
3. The word skenopoiōi ('tentmakers') may refer specifically to making tents from leather or cilicium (a cloth from Cilicia, Paul's home province), or more broadly to leather-working. Paul's manual labor was both practical necessity and theological principle — he worked to avoid being a burden on the communities he served (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:9, 2 Thessalonians 3:8).
4. The imperfect tense epeithen ('was persuading, tried to persuade') suggests an ongoing process rather than immediate results. Paul's weekly Sabbath teaching addresses the usual mixed audience of Jews and Greek God-fearers.
5. The arrival of Silas and Timothy (likely bringing financial support from the Philippians, cf. 2 Corinthians 11:9, Philippians 4:15) freed Paul from tentmaking to devote himself fully to preaching. The phrase syneicheto to logo ('was occupied with the word, was gripped by the word') suggests an intensification of his preaching ministry.
6. Shaking out garments (ektinaxamenos ta himatia) is a variant of shaking off dust — a prophetic gesture of renunciation. The phrase 'your blood on your own heads' (to haima hymon epi ten kephalen hymon) echoes Ezekiel 33:1-6, where the watchman who warns is absolved of responsibility. 'I am innocent' (katharos ego, literally 'I am clean') declares Paul has fulfilled his obligation. This is the second declaration of turning to the Gentiles (cf. 13:46).
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 33:1-6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The move next door (synomorousa, 'sharing a wall with, adjacent to') to the synagogue is both provocative and strategic — Paul remains visible and accessible to synagogue attendees who might be interested. Titus Justus is a God-fearing Gentile whose Roman name (tria nomina) suggests Roman citizenship.
8. The conversion of the synagogue ruler himself (archisynagogos) is a dramatic loss for the Jewish opposition. Paul personally baptized Crispus (1 Corinthians 1:14). The imperfect tenses episteuon kai ebaptizonto ('were believing and being baptized') describe an ongoing stream of conversions.
9. The Lord's night vision to Paul implies that Paul was experiencing fear — understandable given the pattern of persecution in every previous city. The triple command — 'do not be afraid' (me phobou), 'go on speaking' (lalei), 'do not be silent' (me siopeses) — addresses both emotional fear and the temptation to retreat from proclamation.
10. The promise 'I am with you' (ego eimi meta sou) echoes God's assurances to patriarchs and prophets (Genesis 26:24, Jeremiah 1:8). The promise 'I have many people in this city' (laos moi polys en te polei taute) is theologically striking — God claims a 'people' (laos, the covenant term) in Corinth who have not yet come to faith. Their future conversion is so certain that God speaks of them as already his.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 26:24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 1:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. Eighteen months is one of the longest stays recorded in Acts (comparable to his three years in Ephesus, 20:31). This extended ministry allowed the Corinthian church to develop roots. It was during this period that Paul likely wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians.
12. Gallio (Lucius Junius Gallio Annaeanus) was the brother of the philosopher Seneca. An inscription at Delphi dates his proconsulship to approximately AD 51-52, making this the most important chronological anchor for Pauline studies. The bema ('tribunal, judgment seat') in Corinth has been archaeologically identified — a large raised platform in the agora.
13. The charge is ambiguous: 'contrary to the law' (para ton nomon) could mean contrary to Jewish law or contrary to Roman law. The accusers likely intend both — Paul's teaching violates Jewish interpretation and promotes an unauthorized religio. The vagueness of the charge proves to be its undoing.
14. Gallio interrupts before Paul can even speak — he needs no defense because the case has no merit. Gallio distinguishes between adikema ('wrongdoing,' a civil or criminal offense) and rhaidiourgema poneron ('vicious crime, wicked fraud') — matters a Roman magistrate would adjudicate.

15. Gallio classifies the dispute as an internal Jewish matter involving 'words and names and your own law' (peri logou kai onomaton kai nomou tou kath hymas). This is a landmark ruling: a Roman proconsul formally declares that the debate about Jesus is a Jewish theological question, not a Roman legal matter. The decision effectively protects Christian missionaries from prosecution on religious grounds.
16. The verb *apelasen* ('drove away, expelled') indicates a forceful dismissal — Gallio has no patience for what he views as a trivial religious squabble wasting his court's time.
17. Sosthenes, who succeeded Crispus as synagogue ruler, becomes the victim of the crowd's frustration. Whether 'they all' (*pantes*) refers to Greeks expressing anti-Jewish sentiment or to Jews punishing Sosthenes for failing to prosecute successfully is debated. The same Sosthenes may later have become a believer (1 Corinthians 1:1). Gallio's indifference (*ouden touton* to Gallioni *emelen*) demonstrates the Roman attitude toward Jewish disputes.
18. Cenchreae was Corinth's eastern port on the Saronic Gulf. Paul's vow (*euchen*) that involved cutting his hair is almost certainly a Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:1-21), demonstrating that Paul continued to observe Jewish practices voluntarily while teaching that they were not required for salvation. Priscilla is named before Aquila here and in several other passages, possibly indicating her prominence in the partnership.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 6:1-21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. Paul leaves Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus — they will prepare the ground for his later extended ministry there (19:1-41). His brief synagogue visit is a preliminary contact. Ephesus, the largest city in the Roman province of Asia, will become Paul's longest single base of operations.
20. The Ephesian Jews' positive response — asking Paul to stay — contrasts with the opposition in most other cities. Paul declines but will return (19:1).
21. The conditional 'if God wills' (*tou theou thelontos*) expresses Paul's submission to divine direction. Some manuscripts add 'I must by all means keep the coming feast in Jerusalem,' but the SBLGNT omits this addition. Paul's promise to return is fulfilled in 19:1.
22. The phrase 'went up' (*anabas*) without naming Jerusalem almost certainly means Paul visited the Jerusalem church — one always 'goes up' to Jerusalem. 'Went down' (*katebe*) to Antioch completes the second missionary journey's circuit, returning to the sending church. Luke compresses the entire conclusion of the journey into a single verse.
23. This verse marks the beginning of the third missionary journey. The familiar pattern of strengthening (*episterizon*) existing churches continues. The Galatian and Phrygian churches are those founded during the first and second journeys.
24. Apollos is introduced with impressive credentials: Alexandrian origin (Alexandria was the intellectual capital of the Hellenistic world, home to the great library and to Philo), *logos* ('eloquent, learned'), and *dynatos en tais graphais* ('powerful in the Scriptures'). He becomes an important figure in the early church (1 Corinthians 1:12, 3:4-6, Titus 3:13).
25. Apollos's knowledge was genuine but incomplete — he knew about Jesus but only within the framework of John's baptism, which pointed to the coming Messiah without knowledge of Pentecost and the Spirit. The phrase *zeon to pneumati* ('fervent in spirit') may refer to the Holy Spirit or to his own zealous disposition. His teaching was *akribos* ('accurately') as far as it went.
26. Priscilla is named first — again suggesting her leadership role in the instruction. They do not correct Apollos publicly but take him aside privately (*proselabonto auton*, 'took him to themselves'), showing both tact and love. They explain God's way *akribesterion* ('more accurately, more precisely') — completing what was incomplete in his understanding.
27. The Ephesian church provides Apollos with a letter of recommendation for the Corinthian church — an early example of inter-church communication and credentials. The phrase 'through grace' (*dia tes charitos*) can modify either 'those who had believed through grace' or 'he helped through grace those who had believed.' Both readings are theologically valid.
28. The adverb *eutonos* ('powerfully, vigorously') and the verb *diakatelencheto* ('refuted thoroughly, argued down') describe Apollos's formidable debating ability. His strength was in public (*demosia*) scriptural demonstration — proving from the Old Testament that Jesus is the Messiah. His Alexandrian education and scriptural mastery made him an exceptionally effective advocate for the gospel.

19

Summary: Acts 19 records Paul's extended ministry in Ephesus, the major city of Roman Asia. Paul encounters about twelve disciples who knew only John's baptism; he baptizes them in the name of Jesus, lays hands on them, and the Holy Spirit comes with tongues and prophecy. Paul teaches for two years in the hall of Tyrannus, until 'all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord.' Extraordinary miracles occur through Paul — even handkerchiefs and aprons from his body heal the sick. Jewish exorcists attempt to use Jesus's name as a magic formula and are overpowered by an evil spirit. This produces a widespread fear of God, and many practitioners of magic publicly burn their scrolls, valued at fifty thousand pieces of silver. The chapter climaxes with the riot of the silversmiths: Demetrius, whose trade depends on making silver shrines of Artemis, incites the craftsmen against Paul, and the city erupts in

two hours of chanting 'Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!' The city clerk eventually calms the crowd and dismisses the assembly.

What Makes This Remarkable: Luke devotes more space to Ephesus than any other city except Jerusalem, reflecting its strategic importance. The three-year ministry there (20:31) produced churches throughout the province of Asia (Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis — cf. Colossians 4:13). The burning of magic scrolls worth fifty thousand silver coins (roughly 137 years of daily wages) demonstrates the radical economic implications of conversion. The Artemis riot reveals the intersection of religion, economics, and civic identity — the goddess was not just a religious figure but the foundation of Ephesus's identity, tourism, and economy. The temple of Artemis was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

Translation Friction: The 'disciples' in verse 1 who knew only John's baptism raise questions about the boundaries of early Christian identity — were they Christians with incomplete understanding or followers of John who had not yet encountered the Christian message? Luke treats them as the latter. The 'handkerchiefs and aprons' (soudaria kai simikinthia) in verse 12 are medical and artisanal terms — cloths used for wiping sweat and leather aprons worn during manual labor. The sons of Sceva are called 'a Jewish high priest' (v. 14), but no high priest named Sceva is known; the title may be an exaggeration or a claim to priestly lineage.

Connections: The re-baptism of John's disciples connects to Apollos's similar situation (18:25) and raises the question of baptism's sufficiency. Paul's extended teaching ministry parallels Jesus's pattern of sustained instruction. The burning of magic scrolls echoes the Deuteronomic prohibition of sorcery (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). The Artemis riot anticipates the charges Paul will face in Jerusalem. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians during this Ephesian ministry (1 Corinthians 16:8) and likely Galatians and Philippians as well.

1It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. 2And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." 4And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." 5On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. 7There were about twelve men in all. 8He entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. 9But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. 10This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. 11And God was doing extraordinary miracles through the hands of Paul, 12So that from his physical body were brought to the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases went away from them, and the evil spirits traveled out of them. 13Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." 14Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. 15But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" 16And the man in whom the evil spirit lived leaped on them, mastered all of them, and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17This became known to all residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was exalted. 18Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. 19And a number of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily. 21After these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." 22And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. 23About that time there arose no small disturbance concerning the Way. 24For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. 25These he gathered together, along with the workers in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our prosperity. 26And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has

persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. ²⁷And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence — she whom all Asia and the world worship." ²⁸When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ²⁹Confusion swept through the whole city. The crowd grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed together into the theater. ³⁰But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not let him. ³¹Even some of the provincial officials of Asia, who were friends of Paul, sent him a message urging him not to risk going into the theater. ³²Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. ³³Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the crowd. ³⁴But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" ³⁵And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? ³⁶Since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be calm and do nothing rash. ³⁷For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess. ³⁸If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls — let them bring charges against one another. ³⁹But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. ⁴⁰For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." ⁴¹And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The 'interior regions' (ta anoterika mere) likely refers to the inland route through the Phrygian highlands rather than the main coastal road. Paul fulfills his promise to return to Ephesus (18:21). The 'disciples' (mathetas) he finds will prove to have an incomplete understanding of the faith.
2. Paul's diagnostic question reveals the gap: these disciples have no knowledge of the Holy Spirit's outpouring at Pentecost. Their response — 'we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit' (oud' ei pneuma hagion estin ekousamen) — does not mean they were unaware of the Spirit's existence (the Old Testament speaks of God's Spirit) but that they had not heard of the Spirit's new-covenant activity.
3. The connection Paul draws between the Spirit and baptism leads to his diagnostic question about their baptism. Their answer — 'John's baptism' — explains their incomplete understanding. They stand at the threshold between the old and new covenants.
4. Paul distinguishes John's baptism from Christian baptism: John's was preparatory, pointing forward to 'the one coming after him.' John's baptism expressed repentance; Christian baptism expresses faith in Jesus as the one John announced. The baptism of repentance is fulfilled and superseded by baptism into Jesus's name.
5. This is the only clear instance of re-baptism in the New Testament. The distinction between John's baptism and baptism 'in the name of the Lord Jesus' (eis to onoma tou kyriou Iesou) is significant enough to warrant a new baptism rather than supplementing the old one.
6. The laying on of hands (epithontos cheiras) precedes the Spirit's coming, connecting apostolic mediation to the Spirit's gift. The manifestations — tongues and prophecy — echo Pentecost (Acts 2) and the Cornelius episode (Acts 10:46), establishing continuity between Jewish, Gentile, and now incomplete believers' experiences of the Spirit.
7. The number twelve (dodeka) may be coincidental or may carry symbolic weight — twelve men forming a new community, echoing the twelve apostles and the twelve tribes. The qualifier 'about' (hosei) suggests Luke's approximation.
8. Three months of synagogue ministry is the longest such period recorded in Acts. Paul's message is summarized as 'the kingdom of God' (tes basileias tou theou) — the comprehensive term for God's redemptive reign inaugurated through Jesus.
9. The term 'the Way' (ten hodon) is the early church's self-designation (cf. 9:2, 22:4, 24:14, 24:22). The scholē Tyrannou ('hall/school of Tyrannus') was likely a lecture hall or teaching space rented from a man named Tyrannus. Some manuscripts add 'from the fifth to the tenth hour' (approximately 11 AM to 4 PM), suggesting Paul taught during the afternoon siesta when the hall was available.
10. Two years of daily teaching from a single urban center produces province-wide impact — 'all the residents of Asia' (pantas tous katoikountas ten Asian) is hyperbolic but indicates extraordinarily wide dissemination. The churches of Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis (Colossians 4:13) were likely founded during this period by Paul's associates, not by Paul himself.
11. The litotes ou tas tuchousas ('not the ordinary kind') means 'extraordinary, uncommon.' Luke carefully attributes the miracles to God (ho theos epoiei) working 'through Paul's hands' — Paul is the instrument, not the source.

12. The soudarion ('handkerchief, sweat cloth') and simikinthion ('apron, work cloth') are items from Paul's tentmaking labor. This parallels the healing through Peter's shadow (5:15) and the woman healed by touching Jesus's garment (Mark 5:27-30). Luke reports the phenomenon without endorsing it as normative — the extraordinary nature of these events is emphasized by the unusual vocabulary.
13. Jewish exorcism was a recognized practice in the ancient world (cf. Josephus, *Antiquities* 8.46-49). These itinerant exorcists attempt to use Jesus's name as a magical formula — a tool of power rather than an expression of faith. The phrase 'the Jesus whom Paul proclaims' (ton Iesoun hon Paulos keraussei) reveals their secondhand relationship to both Jesus and Paul.
14. No Jewish high priest named Sceva is known from any source. The title archieros ('high priest') may be a self-claimed designation to enhance their exorcistic authority, or it may indicate membership in a high-priestly family. Seven sons practicing exorcism together suggests a family business.
15. The evil spirit's response uses two different verbs: ginosko ('I know' — deep knowledge) for Jesus and epistamai ('I recognize, I am acquainted with') for Paul. The dismissive 'but who are you?' (hymeis de tines este) exposes the exorcists as unauthorized — they have no relationship with Jesus and no spiritual authority. The spirit's recognition of Jesus and Paul contrasts sharply with its contempt for the pretenders.
16. The demonized man's supernatural strength overpowers the exorcists completely. The word amphoteron ('both/all') suggests two or more of the seven were present. They flee gymnous ('naked, stripped') and tetraumatismenous ('wounded, injured') — a humiliating defeat that demonstrates the danger of treating Jesus's name as a magic charm.
17. The failed exorcism paradoxically magnifies Jesus's name — it demonstrates that his name carries real power that cannot be casually manipulated. The 'fear' (phobos) that falls on the city is reverent awe before genuine spiritual authority, contrasting with the fraudulent use of that authority.
18. The confession comes from believers (ton pepisteukotōn) — those who had already professed faith but were still secretly involved in magic. The dual verbs exomologoumenoi ('confessing') and anagellontes ('divulging, making known') indicate both acknowledgment of wrong and public disclosure of specific practices.
19. The ta perierga ('magic arts, curious practices') refers specifically to the magical papyri and spell books for which Ephesus was famous — 'Ephesian letters' (Ephesia grammata) was a technical term for magical formulas. The public burning (katekaion enopion panton) demonstrates radical repentance. Fifty thousand pieces of silver (arguriou myriadas pente) — approximately 50,000 days' wages — represents an enormous financial sacrifice, demonstrating the depth of conversion.
20. Another of Luke's progress reports: 'mightily' (kata kratos, 'according to power') describes the gospel's advance. The word both 'increases' (euxanen) in extent and 'prevails' (ischuen) in power — quantitative and qualitative growth.
21. Paul's itinerary — Macedonia, Achaia, Jerusalem, then Rome — maps the trajectory of Acts' final chapters. The phrase en to pneumatī ('in the Spirit') may refer to the Holy Spirit's direction or Paul's own determined spirit. The word dei ('I must') suggests divine necessity — Rome is not merely a destination but a destiny (cf. 23:11, 27:24).
22. Timothy and Erastus are sent ahead to prepare the Macedonian churches for Paul's visit. Erastus may be the city treasurer of Corinth mentioned in Romans 16:23 — an inscription found in Corinth names an Erastus who paved a street at his own expense. Paul remains in Asia to complete his Ephesian work.
23. Luke's characteristic litotes — 'no small disturbance' (tarachos ouk oligos) — introduces the Artemis riot, one of the most dramatic episodes in Acts. The cause is 'the Way' (tes hodou), the early church's self-designation.
24. Demetrius is an argyropokos ('silversmith, silver-worker') who makes naous argorous ('silver shrines') — miniature replicas of the temple of Artemis or statuettes of the goddess. The temple of Artemis at Ephesus was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The souvenir trade was a major industry, and Paul's preaching against idols threatened their livelihood.
25. Demetrius assembles not just his own workers but all craftsmen in related trades — a guild meeting. His first argument is economic: 'from this business we have our prosperity' (ek tautes tes ergasias he euporia hemin estin). Religion and economics are inseparable in his appeal.
26. Demetrius inadvertently confirms the success of Paul's mission — his preaching has impacted 'almost all of Asia' (schedon pases tes Asias). Paul's message is summarized as 'gods made with hands are not gods' (ouk eisin theoi hoi dia cheiron ginomenoi) — an echo of Isaiah's anti-idol polemic (Isaiah 44:9-20) and Paul's Areopagus speech.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 44:9-20. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. Demetrius escalates from economics to religion and civic identity: the temple's reputation, the goddess's dignity, and the city's worldwide fame are all at stake. The title 'the great goddess Artemis' (tes megales theas Artemidos) and the claim of worldwide worship (hole he Asia kai he oikoumene sebetai) are not exaggerations — the Artemis cult was one of the most widespread in the ancient world.
28. The crowd's chant — Megale he Artemis Ephesion ('Great is Artemis of the Ephesians') — is a liturgical acclamation that has been found in inscriptions from Ephesus. It combines religious devotion with civic pride. The repetition of this cry (cf. v. 34) creates a mob atmosphere.
29. The theater of Ephesus, seating approximately 25,000, was the largest in Asia Minor and served as a venue for public assemblies. Gaius and Aristarchus are seized as proxies for Paul. Aristarchus reappears in 20:4, 27:2, Colossians 4:10, and Philemon 24, indicating he remained a faithful companion despite this traumatic experience.

30. Paul's courage — he wants to enter the mob-filled theater — is matched by the disciples' wisdom in restraining him. His willingness to face danger personally is consistent with his character throughout Acts.
31. The Asiarchai ('Asiarchs') were prominent citizens who served as patrons of the provincial cult of Rome and the emperor — the highest social rank in the province. That some were Paul's friends (ontes auto philoi) reveals the breadth of his social connections in Ephesus. Their warning adds to the picture of danger.
32. Luke captures the chaos of mob psychology with dry precision: most people in the theater do not even know why they are there (hoi pleious ouk edeisan tinos heneka syneleluthiesan). The word ekklesia ('assembly') is used here in its secular sense of a civic gathering, though it is the same word used for the church.
33. The Jews push Alexander forward, apparently to distance themselves from the Christians and avoid being caught up in the anti-Paul sentiment. Alexander attempts to address the crowd — likely to explain that mainstream Jews are distinct from the followers of the Way — but is shouted down.
34. The crowd's recognition that Alexander is Jewish only inflames them further — they associate all Jews with opposition to their goddess. Two hours (hos epi horas duo) of continuous chanting demonstrates the frenzy of religiously motivated mob violence. The scene is chaotic, dangerous, and profoundly irrational.
35. The grammateus ('city clerk, town secretary') was the chief executive officer of Ephesus, responsible for public order. The title neokoros ('temple keeper, temple warden') was an official civic honor attested in Ephesian inscriptions. The diopetes ('that which fell from Zeus/the sky') likely refers to a meteorite or ancient image believed to have fallen from heaven and housed in the Artemis temple.
36. The clerk's argument is pragmatic: Ephesus's status as temple keeper is undeniable, so there is nothing to be agitated about. The word propetes ('rash, reckless, hasty') characterizes the mob's behavior as undignified and unnecessary.
37. The clerk makes a legal observation: Gaius and Aristarchus have committed no crime — they are not hierosulous ('temple robbers, sacrilegious') and have not blasphemed Artemis. This suggests Paul's preaching, while opposing idols in principle, was conducted without directly attacking the Artemis cult.
38. The clerk directs legitimate grievances to the proper legal channels: agoraioi ('court days, assizes') are held regularly, and anthypatoi ('proconsuls') are available for jurisdiction. The plural 'proconsuls' may be a general reference to the office or may reflect the specific historical moment when two proconsuls briefly served after the assassination of M. Junius Silanus.
39. The ennomo ekklesia ('lawful assembly, regular assembly') was the formal citizens' assembly that met three times a month in Ephesus. The clerk implicitly contrasts this unlawful gathering with the legitimate civic process.
40. The clerk's strongest argument is the threat of Roman intervention: unauthorized assemblies could result in the city losing its privileged status. The word staseos ('riot, sedition, insurrection') was a serious charge under Roman law. The phrase 'no cause' (medenos aitiou) means they cannot justify the gathering to Roman authorities. Roman suppression of civil disorder was swift and severe.
41. The clerk's authority is sufficient to end the two-hour disturbance. The verb apelusen ('dismissed, released') is the technical term for closing a formal assembly. Luke again uses ekklesia in its secular sense. The crisis is resolved through civic procedure rather than violence — a pattern Luke highlights to show that Christianity does not inherently threaten public order.

20

Summary: Acts 20 narrates Paul's journey through Macedonia and Greece back toward Jerusalem, including a memorable scene in Troas where the young man Eutychus falls from a window during Paul's midnight sermon and is restored to life. The chapter concludes with Paul's farewell address to the elders of the Ephesian church at Miletus — a deeply emotional speech in which he warns of future threats to the community and commends them to God's grace. This is the only speech in Acts addressed to a Christian audience by Paul, making it a unique window into his pastoral theology.

What Makes This Remarkable: The 'we' narrative resumes at verse 5, indicating the author's presence as a traveling companion. Paul's Miletus speech (vv. 18-35) is structured like a Greco-Roman farewell discourse: it reviews past conduct, warns of future dangers, and entrusts the audience to a higher authority. The quotation of Jesus in verse 35 — 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' — appears nowhere in the Gospels, representing an otherwise unrecorded saying of Jesus (an agraphon). The speech's emphasis on 'the whole counsel of God' (v. 27) and elders as 'overseers' (episkopoi, v. 28) became foundational for later church governance theology.

Translation Friction: The Eutychus episode (vv. 7-12) uses language that parallels Elijah's raising of the widow's son (1 Kings 17:21). Whether Eutychus actually died or was merely thought dead is debated — Paul's statement 'his life is in him' (v. 10) could indicate either resurrection or reassurance. We render the Greek as given without resolving the ambiguity. The terms 'elders' (presbyteroi, v. 17) and 'overseers' (episkopoi, v. 28) are used interchangeably here, though later church tradition distinguished them as separate offices.

Connections: Paul's determination to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost (v. 16) echoes the pilgrimage theology of the Old Testament festivals. The farewell speech connects to Moses' farewell in Deuteronomy 31-33, Samuel's farewell in 1 Samuel 12, and Jesus' farewell discourse in John 13-17. The 'wolves' imagery (v. 29) echoes Jesus' warnings in Matthew 7:15 and John 10:12. Paul's self-description as 'serving the Lord with all humility' (v. 19) connects to his portrait in the Epistles (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:23-29).

¹After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them and saying farewell, he left to travel to Macedonia. ²After traveling through those regions and giving them much encouragement, he came to Greece. ³He stayed there three months, and when a plot was formed against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. ⁴He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia. ⁵These men went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas. ⁶We sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we joined them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days. ⁷On the first day of the week, when we had gathered to break bread, Paul began speaking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight. ⁸There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. ⁹A young man named Eutychus was sitting on the windowsill and was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. Overcome by sleep, he fell from the third story and was picked up dead. ¹⁰But Paul went down, threw himself on the young man, and embracing him said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." ¹¹Then Paul went back upstairs, broke bread and ate, and after conversing with them until dawn, he departed. ¹²They took the young man away alive and were greatly comforted. ¹³We went on ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, where we intended to pick up Paul, for he had arranged it this way, planning to go there on foot. ¹⁴When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went to Mitylene. ¹⁵Sailing from there, the next day we arrived opposite Chios. The following day we crossed over to Samos, and the day after that we came to Miletus. ¹⁶For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus so that he would not have to spend time in Asia, since he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost. ¹⁷From Miletus he sent word to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. ¹⁸When they came to him, he said to them: "You yourselves know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day I set foot in Asia, ¹⁹I served the Lord with complete humility and with tears, enduring the trials that came through the plots of the Jewish opponents. ²⁰You know that I held nothing back that would be helpful to you. I taught you publicly and went from house to house, ²¹urging both Jews and Greeks to turn to God in repentance and to place their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. ²²And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³Indeed, save that the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city and stated that bonds and afflictions abide me. ²⁴But I do not consider my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus — to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. ²⁵And now I know that none of you among whom I went about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. ²⁶Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, ²⁷For I have not shunned to declare to you every one of the counsel of God. ²⁸Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he obtained through his own blood. ²⁹I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock, ³⁰Also of your own selves will men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away followers following them. ³¹Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one of you with tears. ³²And to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified, now, brothers and sisters, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up. ³³I coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴You yourselves know that these hands served my own needs and the needs of those who were with me. ³⁵In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, 'It is more

blessed to give than to receive." ³⁶When he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. ³⁷And there was much weeping among them all, and they embraced Paul and kissed him, ³⁸What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The 'uproar' (thorybos) refers to the riot of the silversmiths in Ephesus described in chapter 19. Paul's departure is not flight but an orderly transition. The verb parakalesas covers both encouragement and exhortation.
2. The Greek Hellas ('Greece') appears only here in the New Testament. Luke typically uses the Roman provincial name 'Achaia'; the use of 'Greece' may reflect the perspective of a traveling companion.
3. The plot (epiboule) likely aimed to ambush Paul on a pilgrim ship crowded with Jewish travelers heading to Jerusalem for Passover. His decision to travel overland through Macedonia was a practical security measure.
4. This delegation likely represents churches contributing to the collection for Jerusalem (cf. Romans 15:25-26, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4). Each person represents a different region, suggesting an organized multi-church effort. The SBLGNT includes 'son of Pyrrhus,' absent from some manuscripts.
5. The first-person plural 'us' (hemas) marks the resumption of a 'we' section, indicating the author's presence as a traveling companion. The 'we' narrative was last active at 16:17 (Philippi). The author apparently remained in Philippi during the intervening period and now rejoins Paul.
6. The 'we' narration continues, confirming the author's firsthand presence. The reference to the days of Unleavened Bread (the festival following Passover) provides a chronological anchor and shows that Paul continued to observe the Jewish liturgical calendar. The five-day crossing from Philippi to Troas contrasts with the two-day crossing in 16:11, suggesting unfavorable winds.
7. The phrase 'the first day of the week' (te mia ton sabbaton, literally 'the first of the sabbaths') is one of the earliest references to Christian worship on Sunday. 'Breaking bread' (klasai arton) likely refers to the Lord's Supper combined with a communal meal. The gathering appears to be in the evening, following Jewish reckoning where the day begins at sunset.
8. The detail about lamps (lampades) is characteristically vivid eyewitness reporting. The many lamps in a closed upper room would have produced heat and smoke, contributing to drowsiness. The 'upper room' (hyperoon) recalls the upper room of Acts 1:13.
9. The name Eutychos means 'fortunate' or 'lucky' — an ironic detail given his fall, though the name proves apt by the end of the episode. The Greek erthe nekros ('was picked up dead') states plainly that he was dead, not merely unconscious. Luke, who as a physician would be attentive to such distinctions, uses unambiguous language here.
10. Paul's action of throwing himself on Eutychus (epepesen auto) deliberately echoes Elijah's stretching himself over the widow's son (1 Kings 17:21) and Elisha's similar action (2 Kings 4:34). The phrase 'his life is in him' (he psyche autou en auto estin) may announce the restoration of life rather than deny that death occurred.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Kings 17:21 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Kings 4:34 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The breaking of bread here completes the meal that was the original purpose of the gathering (v. 7). Paul's continued conversation until dawn (achri auges) — even after the dramatic interruption — underscores the urgency of his message on this final visit.
12. The litotes 'not a little' (ou metrios) is characteristically Lukan — an understatement meaning 'immensely.' The word paida ('boy, young man') may suggest Eutychus was younger than the neanias ('young man') of verse 9 implies, or it may be a stylistic variation.
13. The 'we' narration continues. Paul's choice to walk the roughly 20-mile road from Troas to Assos while his companions sailed may reflect a desire for solitary reflection, or practical reasons. Assos was a coastal city in Mysia with a direct road from Troas.
14. Mitylene was the chief city of the island of Lesbos, a natural stopping point on the coastal route south along Asia Minor.
15. The SBLGNT does not include the reference to Trogyllium found in the KJV (from the Western text tradition). The itinerary shows island-hopping along the Aegean coast — Chios and Samos are major islands off the coast of Asia Minor.
16. Paul's urgency to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost (pentekoste, 'fiftieth' — fifty days after Passover) reflects both practical scheduling and theological significance. Pentecost was one of the three pilgrimage festivals, and Acts 2 records the founding event of the church at Pentecost. Paul's return at this festival creates a narrative symmetry.
17. Miletus was about 30 miles south of Ephesus. Summoning the elders there avoided the delay of visiting Ephesus itself. The term presbyterous ('elders') denotes the recognized leaders of the local congregation — the same group called episkopous ('overseers') in verse 28.
18. Paul's farewell speech begins with an appeal to the elders' personal knowledge of his conduct — a standard rhetorical move in Greco-Roman farewell discourses. The phrase 'the entire time' (ton panta chronon) covers roughly three years of ministry in Ephesus (cf. v. 31).
19. The word tapeinophrosynes ('humility') was not a virtue in Greco-Roman culture, where it often connoted servility. Paul redefines it as a mark of authentic service to the Lord. The 'plots' (epiboulais) refer to opposition Paul faced during his Ephesian ministry, some of which is described in 19:23-41 and alluded to in 1 Corinthians 15:32.

20. The verb *hyposteilamen* ('shrink back, hold back') implies courage in the face of opposition. Paul's teaching operated in two settings: public (*demasia*, in synagogues and lecture halls) and private (*kat' oikous*, in homes), reflecting the dual structure of early Christian community life.
21. Paul summarizes his message in two complementary terms: repentance (*metanoia*, a turning of the mind toward God) and faith (*pistis*, trust directed toward Jesus as Lord). This dual formulation encompasses both the Jewish and Greek audiences of his ministry.
22. The phrase *dedemenos to pneumati* ('bound in/by the spirit') is ambiguous — it could mean Paul's own spirit (his inner resolve) or the Holy Spirit's compulsion. The rendering 'compelled by the Spirit' follows the interpretation that this is divine leading, consistent with the Spirit's role throughout Acts in directing Paul's movements.
23. The Holy Spirit's warnings come 'city by city' (*kata polin*), suggesting prophetic utterances at multiple stops along the journey (cf. 21:4, 11). The word *desma* ('bonds, chains') specifically foreshadows Paul's imprisonment, while *thlipseis* ('afflictions, pressures') is broader.
24. The athletic metaphor 'finish my course' (*teleiosai ton dromon mou*) pictures life as a race to be completed (cf. 2 Timothy 4:7). The phrase 'the gospel of the grace of God' (*to euangelion tes charitos tou theou*) is unique in the New Testament and encapsulates Paul's message: divine favor freely given.
25. This solemn declaration gives the speech its farewell character. The phrase 'proclaiming the kingdom' (*kerisson ten basileian*) — with 'of God' implied — connects Paul's message to Jesus' own proclamation in the Gospels. Whether Paul in fact never returned to Ephesus is debated; the Pastoral Epistles suggest he may have (cf. 1 Timothy 1:3).
26. The declaration 'innocent of the blood' (*katharos apo tou haimatos*) echoes the watchman imagery of Ezekiel 33:1-9, where a watchman who faithfully warns bears no guilt for those who reject the warning. Paul claims to have fulfilled his prophetic responsibility as a watchman over the Ephesian community.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 33:1-9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The phrase 'the whole counsel of God' (*pasan ten boulen tou theou*) implies a comprehensive body of teaching — God's full plan and purpose, not merely select doctrines. The verb *hyposteilamen* ('shrink back') repeats from verse 20, framing this section.
28. This verse is theologically dense. The same leaders called 'elders' (*presbyteroi*) in verse 17 are here called 'overseers' (*episkopoi*), demonstrating that these were interchangeable terms at this stage. The phrase 'through his own blood' (*dia tou haimatos tou idiou*) is textually and theologically complex — 'his own' (*tou idiou*) could refer to God's own blood (a startlingly high Christological claim) or to 'his own one' (a term of endearment for Christ). The SBLGNT reads 'church of God' (*ekklesian tou theou*).
29. The wolf-and-flock metaphor continues from verse 28. 'Fierce wolves' (*lykoi bareis*) echoes Jesus' warning about false prophets in Matthew 7:15 and the threat to the shepherd's flock in John 10:12. The threat comes from outside the community ('come in among you').
30. The second threat is internal — from within the leadership itself. The word *diestrammena* ('twisted, distorted, perverted') indicates not outright falsehood but distortion of truth. Paul's letters to Timothy, who later served in Ephesus, confirm that such internal threats materialized (cf. 1 Timothy 1:3-7, 2 Timothy 2:17-18).
31. The 'three years' (*trietian*) provides the length of Paul's Ephesian ministry. 'Night and day' indicates the relentlessness of his pastoral care. The tears (*dakryon*) are a recurring motif in this speech (cf. v. 19), presenting Paul as emotionally invested rather than merely professionally dutiful.
32. The speech transitions from warning to commendation. Paul entrusts the elders not to a human successor but to God and 'the word of his grace.' The language of 'inheritance' (*kleronimian*) among 'those who are sanctified' (*hegiasmenois*) echoes the Old Testament promise of the land reinterpreted as the people of God's shared inheritance.
33. Paul's denial of material greed echoes Samuel's farewell speech in 1 Samuel 12:3-5, where the departing leader calls on witnesses to confirm his financial integrity. The triad 'silver, gold, clothing' represents comprehensive material wealth.
33. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Samuel 12:3-5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
34. Paul gestures to his own hands — a vivid detail suggesting this speech is based on eyewitness memory. He worked as a tentmaker (cf. 18:3) to avoid burdening the community, a practice he also mentions in 1 Corinthians 4:12 and 1 Thessalonians 2:9.
35. This saying of Jesus is not found in any of the four Gospels, making it an *agraphon* — an unwritten saying preserved in oral tradition. Its attribution to Jesus ('he himself said') by Paul demonstrates that early Christians transmitted sayings of Jesus outside the written Gospel tradition. The word *makarion* ('blessed, happy, fortunate') is the same term used in the Beatitudes.
36. Kneeling for prayer (*theis ta gonata*) was not the standard Jewish posture (which was standing); it indicates special intensity or solemnity. The communal prayer following the speech seals the farewell.
37. The emotional scene — weeping, embracing, kissing — is among the most personal in Acts. The verb *katephiloun* ('kissed repeatedly, kissed affectionately') is intensive, indicating deep affection rather than a formal greeting.

38. The Greek *odynomenoi* ('grieving, being in anguish') is a strong word for emotional pain. The final image — the elders escorting Paul to the ship — mirrors ancient farewell scenes and closes the Ephesian chapter of Paul's ministry with profound pathos.

21

Summary: *Acts 21 chronicles Paul's final journey to Jerusalem against repeated prophetic warnings. The 'we' narrative provides a detailed travel itinerary from Miletus through Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Tyre, Ptolemais, and Caesarea. At Caesarea, the prophet Agabus dramatically predicts Paul's arrest. Upon arriving in Jerusalem, Paul follows James's advice to demonstrate his Torah observance by sponsoring four men under a Nazirite vow. Despite this conciliatory gesture, Jews from Asia recognize Paul in the temple, incite a mob, and Paul is rescued by Roman soldiers — beginning the chain of custody that will eventually carry him to Rome.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The chapter contains one of the most vivid 'we' sections in Acts, with detailed nautical and geographical information that reflects firsthand travel experience. Agabus's symbolic prophecy — binding his own hands and feet with Paul's belt (v. 11) — imitates the enacted prophecies of the Old Testament prophets (cf. Isaiah 20, Jeremiah 13, Ezekiel 4). The community's response, 'The Lord's will be done' (v. 14), echoes Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane (Luke 22:42). Paul's arrest at the temple creates a narrative parallel with Jesus' arrest in Jerusalem — both are seized in a holy space, both face Jewish and Roman authorities, both endure a series of trials.*

Translation Friction: *The advice of James to Paul (vv. 23-24) raises questions about the relationship between Pauline theology and Torah observance. Paul's willingness to sponsor a Nazirite vow and undergo purification rites has been viewed as either genuine piety, pastoral accommodation, or diplomatic compromise. We render the text without resolving this tension. The accusation that Paul brought a Gentile (Trophimus) into the temple (v. 29) was false, as Luke explicitly states, but it reflects real anxieties about boundary violations in Second Temple Judaism.*

Connections: *Paul's journey to Jerusalem deliberately parallels Jesus' journey to Jerusalem in Luke's Gospel. The repeated warnings about suffering (vv. 4, 11) echo Jesus' passion predictions (Luke 9:22, 44; 18:31-33). The Nazirite vow (Numbers 6) connects to the OT purity system. The 'middle wall of partition' in the temple (implied in v. 28) is the barrier Paul describes metaphorically in Ephesians 2:14 as destroyed by Christ.*

¹After we had torn ourselves away from them and set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos, the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. ²Finding a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. ³When we came in sight of Cyprus, we passed it on our left and sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for the ship was to unload its cargo there. ⁴After finding the disciples, we stayed there seven days. Through the Spirit they kept telling Paul not to go to Jerusalem. ⁵When our days there were ended, we left and went on our way, with all of them — including wives and children — accompanying us until we were outside the city. And kneeling on the beach, we prayed. ⁶Then we said farewell to one another, and we went aboard the ship while they returned to their homes. ⁷When we had completed the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. ⁸The next day we left and came to Caesarea, and we went to the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. ⁹He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. ¹⁰While we were staying there for several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹He came to us, took Paul's belt, bound his own feet and hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'" ¹²When we heard this, both we and the local residents urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." ¹⁴Since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent and said, "The Lord's will be done." ¹⁵After these days we made our preparations and went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁶Some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought us to the home of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to stay. ¹⁷When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly. ¹⁸The next day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. ¹⁹After greeting them, he reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. ²⁰When they heard it, they glorified God. Then they said to him, "You see, brother, how many

thousands there are among the Jews who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law. ²¹They have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to abandon Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs. ²²What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. ²³Therefore do what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow. ²⁴Take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Then everyone will know that there is nothing to what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law. ²⁵But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our decision that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality." ²⁶Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice of when the days of purification would be completed and the offering presented for each one of them. ²⁷When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, ²⁸Crying out, Men of Israel, help — This is the man, that teaches all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and has polluted this holy place. ²⁹For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple. ³⁰The whole city was stirred up, and the people rushed together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. ³¹While they were trying to kill him, word reached the commander of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. ³²He immediately took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. When they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. ³³Then the commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done. ³⁴Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. Since the commander could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered Paul to be brought into the barracks. ³⁵When Paul reached the steps, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, ³⁶For the crowd of the people followed after, crying, Away with him. ³⁷As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the commander, "May I say something to you?" The commander replied, "Do you know Greek? ³⁸Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?" ³⁹Paul replied, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city. I beg you, allow me to speak to the people." ⁴⁰When the commander had given him permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned with his hand to the people. When there was a great silence, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The 'we' narration continues from chapter 20. The verb *apospasthentas* ('having been torn away') conveys the emotional difficulty of leaving the Ephesian elders. The nautical term *euthydromesantes* ('running a straight course') indicates favorable winds for the island-hopping route along the southwestern coast of Asia Minor.
2. At Patara, Paul's group transfers from a coastal vessel to a larger merchant ship capable of the open-sea crossing to Phoenicia — a voyage of about 400 miles. This kind of detail reflects the eyewitness narrator's travel experience.
3. The nautical detail of passing Cyprus on the port side ('left,' *euonymon*) indicates a course south of the island. Tyre, the ancient Phoenician port city, was a major commercial hub where cargo ships regularly docked.
4. The imperfect tense *elegon* ('they kept saying') suggests repeated urging. The tension between the Spirit's warning and Paul's Spirit-led determination to go (20:22) is not resolved by Luke. The warnings may reveal what will happen rather than commanding Paul to avoid it — prophetic information about danger rather than a prohibition.
5. The scene of an entire community — men, women, and children — escorting Paul to the shore and kneeling to pray on the beach is among the most tender images in Acts. It parallels the farewell at Miletus (20:36-38) and demonstrates that early Christian communities included whole families.
6. The simple narrative — farewell, boarding, returning — closes the Tyre episode with quiet dignity. The phrase *eis ta idia* ('to their own [places]') echoes the same phrase used in John 1:11 and 19:27.
7. Ptolemais (modern Akko/Acre) was about 25 miles south of Tyre. The brief one-day visit contrasts with the seven days at Tyre, reflecting Paul's haste to reach Jerusalem. The existence of a Christian community here shows the spread of the faith along the Phoenician coast.
8. Philip 'the evangelist' is identified as 'one of the seven' — the group appointed in Acts 6:5 to serve the Hellenistic Jewish widows. His last appearance was in 8:40, settling in Caesarea after his encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch. The title 'evangelist' (*euangelistou*) appears only here and in Ephesians 4:11 and 2 Timothy 4:5.

9. The mention of Philip's four prophesying daughters is significant for understanding women's roles in the early church. The Greek parthenoi ('virgins, unmarried women') combined with propheteuousai ('prophesying') indicates an ongoing prophetic ministry. This fulfills Joel 2:28-29, quoted by Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2:17-18): 'your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.'
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joel 2:28-29. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Agabus previously appeared in Acts 11:28, where he predicted a famine. His arrival from Judea — 'came down,' the standard expression for traveling from the elevated region of Jerusalem — introduces the final and most dramatic warning about Paul's fate.
11. Agabus's enacted prophecy follows the pattern of Old Testament prophetic sign-acts (Isaiah 20:2-4, Jeremiah 13:1-11, Ezekiel 4:1-3). The introductory formula 'This is what the Holy Spirit says' (tade legei to pneuma to hagion) mirrors the prophetic 'Thus says the LORD' (ko amar YHWH). The prediction that Jews will 'hand him over to the Gentiles' (paradosousin eis cheiras ethnon) directly parallels Jesus' passion predictions (Luke 18:32).
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 20:2-4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 13:1-11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 4:1-3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The 'we' narrator includes himself among those pleading with Paul — a rare moment of personal involvement by the author. The verb parekalouemen ('we were urging') is imperfect tense, indicating persistent entreaty.
13. Paul's response reveals both his emotional vulnerability (they are 'breaking' his heart — synthryptontes, literally 'crushing together') and his resolute commitment. His readiness to die 'for the name of the Lord Jesus' (hyper tou onomatou tou kyriou Iesou) uses the same preposition (hyper, 'for, on behalf of') that characterizes sacrificial language throughout the New Testament.
14. The community's final words — 'The Lord's will be done' (tou kyriou to thelema ginestho) — directly echo Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane (Luke 22:42: 'not my will, but yours be done'). This verbal parallel reinforces the Lukan theme of Paul's journey to Jerusalem as a parallel passion narrative.
15. The verb episkeuasamenoi ('having prepared, having packed up') replaces the KJV's archaic 'took up our carriages' (which meant 'packed our baggage' in 17th-century English). The verb 'went up' (anebainomen) reflects the geographical and theological ascent to Jerusalem.
16. Mnason is described as an 'early disciple' (archaio mathete) — possibly meaning he was a believer from the earliest days, perhaps even from Pentecost. As a Cypriot, he may have been associated with the Hellenistic Jewish believers of Acts 11:19-20. His willingness to host Paul's mixed Jewish-Gentile group in or near Jerusalem was significant.
17. The warm reception (asmenos, 'gladly, with pleasure') contrasts with the tensions that follow. The 'we' narration confirms the author's presence in Jerusalem. This is the culmination of Paul's long journey from Acts 20:1.
18. James is the brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church (cf. 12:17, 15:13). The meeting is with James and the elders — not with the apostles, suggesting they may have been absent from Jerusalem by this point. The 'we' narrator is present at this meeting.
19. Paul attributes the work to God rather than to himself — 'what God had done' (hon epoiesen ho theos). The phrase kath' hen hekaston ('one by one, in detail') suggests a thorough report. This likely included the delivery of the collection from the Gentile churches, though Luke surprisingly does not mention it explicitly.
20. The word myriades ('tens of thousands') may be hyperbolic, but it indicates a substantial Jewish-Christian community in Jerusalem. The critical point is that these Jewish believers remain 'zealous for the law' (zelotai tou nomou) — they continue to observe Torah. This sets up the tension with Paul's reputation.
21. The charge is specific: Paul supposedly teaches Jewish believers in the diaspora to abandon circumcision and Jewish customs. This is a distortion of Paul's actual position — he taught that Gentiles need not be circumcised (Galatians 5:2-6) but did not forbid Jewish believers from maintaining their practices (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:18). The word apostasian ('apostasy, rebellion') is charged language.
22. The SBLGNT text is shorter than the Textus Receptus behind the KJV, omitting the reference to the multitude assembling. The rhetorical question acknowledges the practical problem: Paul's arrival will become known and the rumors must be addressed.
23. James proposes a plan to demonstrate Paul's Torah loyalty. The 'vow' (euchen) is almost certainly a Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:1-21), which involved abstaining from wine, not cutting one's hair, and avoiding corpse impurity for a specified period.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 6:1-21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. Sponsoring the expenses of a Nazirite vow's completion was considered a pious act in Judaism (cf. Josephus, Antiquities 19.294). The shaving of heads marked the vow's completion (Numbers 6:18). Paul's willingness to do this aligns with his principle of becoming 'all things to all people' (1 Corinthians 9:22).

24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 6:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. James reaffirms the Jerusalem Council's decision from Acts 15:20, 29. The four requirements for Gentile believers remain unchanged. This verse clarifies that Paul's Torah observance for Jewish believers does not contradict the lighter requirements for Gentile believers — the two are not in tension but address different communities.
26. Paul enters the temple to notify the priests of the completion date for the Nazirite vow, at which point the prescribed offerings would be made (Numbers 6:13-17: a male lamb, a female lamb, a ram, grain offerings, and drink offerings). This was a significant financial commitment.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 6:13-17:. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The plan fails at the last moment. The 'Jews from Asia' — likely from Ephesus, who would recognize both Paul and Trophimus (v. 29) — initiate the violence. The irony is sharp: Paul is in the temple demonstrating his Torah loyalty when he is accused of violating the temple.
28. The three-fold accusation — against the people, the law, and the temple — parallels the charges against Stephen (6:13) and against Jesus (Mark 14:58, Luke 23:2). The charge of bringing Greeks into the temple was a capital offense; inscriptions in Greek and Latin on the barrier (the *soreg*) warned Gentiles that entry beyond the Court of the Gentiles meant death.
29. Luke explicitly states the charge was based on an assumption (*enomizon*, 'they supposed, assumed'), not on fact. Trophimus was a Gentile from Ephesus (cf. 20:4) whom the Asian Jews recognized. The false inference — seeing them together in the city and assuming they entered the temple together — was enough to ignite the mob.
30. Paul is dragged out of the temple rather than killed inside it — the mob avoids defiling the sacred space with bloodshed. The closing of the doors by the temple police (Levitical guards) was both a security measure and a symbolic act: the temple shuts Paul out. The detail 'immediately the doors were shut' has narrative and theological weight.
31. The *chiliarchos* ('commander of a thousand,' *tribune*) was the commanding officer of the Roman cohort stationed in the Antonia Fortress, which overlooked the temple from the northwest corner. The fortress's strategic position allowed rapid response to disturbances in the temple courts.
32. The plural 'centurions' (*hekatontarchas*) indicates at least two centurions, meaning the commander brought at least 200 soldiers — a substantial force. The stairway from the Antonia Fortress led directly down into the temple courts, enabling the rapid intervention described here.
33. The two chains (*halysessin dysi*) likely means Paul was chained between two soldiers, a common Roman security measure. This fulfills Agabus's prophecy from verse 11. The commander's arrest is protective as well as custodial — it removes Paul from the mob.
34. The 'barracks' (*parembolen*) is the Antonia Fortress, the Roman military headquarters in Jerusalem. The confused shouting of the crowd prevents any coherent investigation at the scene, a detail that parallels the Ephesian riot (19:32).
35. The steps (*anabathmous*) connected the temple courts to the Antonia Fortress. The crowd's violence was so intense that the soldiers had to physically carry Paul up the stairs — a graphic detail suggesting a near-lynching in progress.
36. The cry 'Away with him!' (*Aire auton*) echoes the crowd's cry against Jesus before Pilate in Luke 23:18 (*Aire touton*, 'Away with this man!'). Luke draws a deliberate verbal parallel between Paul's and Jesus' experiences before hostile crowds in Jerusalem.
37. Paul's ability to speak Greek surprises the commander, who had made a different assumption about his identity (v. 38). The question *Hellenisti ginoskeis* ('Do you know Greek?') implies the commander expected Paul to be an uneducated agitator, not a cultured, multilingual figure.
38. Josephus records an Egyptian false prophet who led a large following to the Mount of Olives, promising that Jerusalem's walls would collapse at his command (*Jewish War* 2.261-263; *Antiquities* 20.169-172). Josephus gives the number as 30,000; Luke's 4,000 may be more accurate. The *sicarioi* ('dagger-men, Assassins') were Jewish militants who carried concealed daggers and assassinated Roman collaborators in crowds.
39. Paul identifies himself by ethnicity (Jewish), origin (Tarsus), and civic status (citizen of a notable city). Tarsus was a major intellectual and commercial center — the phrase 'no insignificant city' (*ouk asemou poleos*) employs *litotes* (understatement) for rhetorical effect. Paul does not yet mention his Roman citizenship, saving that for a more strategic moment (22:25-28).
40. Paul's choice to speak in 'the Hebrew language' (*te Hebraidi dialekto*) — almost certainly Aramaic, the common spoken language of Palestinian Jews — immediately establishes rapport with a crowd that had just been trying to kill him. The 'great silence' that falls over the mob is a dramatic narrative moment, setting the stage for the defense speech in chapter 22.

22

Summary: *Acts 22 contains Paul's defense speech to the Jerusalem crowd from the steps of the Antonia Fortress. Speaking in Aramaic, he recounts his Jewish credentials, his persecution of the Way, his encounter with the risen Jesus on the Damascus road, and his commission to preach to the Gentiles. The crowd listens until Paul mentions the Gentile mission, at which point they erupt again. As the Roman soldiers prepare to examine Paul by flogging, he reveals his Roman citizenship, which immediately halts the proceedings and creates a new legal situation. The commander, Claudius Lysias, arranges for Paul to appear before the Jewish council.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This is the second of three accounts of Paul's conversion in Acts (cf. 9:1-19, 26:9-18), each tailored to its audience. Before the Jewish crowd, Paul emphasizes his impeccable Jewish credentials: trained under Gamaliel, zealous for the law, persecuting the Way. The Aramaic speech momentarily silences the mob (v. 2). The turning point is verse 21 — the word 'Gentiles' (ethne) triggers explosive fury, suggesting that the inclusion of Gentiles, not Christology, was the primary offense. Paul's Roman citizenship (acquired by birth, not purchase like the commander's) introduces the legal framework that will shape the rest of Acts.*

Translation Friction: *The differences between this account and the Acts 9 version of Paul's conversion (e.g., what the companions saw and heard) are well-documented. These variations likely reflect rhetorical adaptation to different audiences rather than contradictions. Ananias is described here as 'devout according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews' (v. 12) — details absent from chapter 9 but strategically relevant for this audience. We render each account as given without harmonizing.*

Connections: *Paul's appeal to his training under Gamaliel connects to the Gamaliel of Acts 5:34-39. The Damascus road vision echoes Old Testament theophanies (Exodus 3, Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1). Paul's citation of his persecution of 'this Way' (v. 4) connects to the earliest designation for Christianity (cf. 9:2, 19:9, 23, 24:14, 22). Roman citizenship law (the lex Porcia and lex Julia) protected citizens from being bound or beaten without trial, which Paul invokes here as he did at Philippi (16:37).*

¹"Brothers and fathers, hear the defense I now make before you." ²When they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. Then he said: ³"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia but raised in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God just as all of you are today. ⁴I persecuted this Way to the point of death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, ⁵As also the high priest does bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders — from whom also I received letters to the brothers and sisters, and traveled to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound to Jerusalem, for to be punished. ⁶"As I was on my way and approaching Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly flashed around me. ⁷I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' ⁸I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' ⁹Those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. ¹⁰I said, 'What should I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told everything that has been appointed for you to do.' ¹¹Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus. ¹²A certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews living there, ¹³Arrived to me, and stood, and stated to me, Brother Saul, accept your sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. ¹⁴Then he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth, ¹⁵For you shalt be his witness to all men of what you have seen and listened to. ¹⁶And now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.' ¹⁷"When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance ¹⁸Noticed him declaring to me, Make haste, and get you quickly out of Jerusalem — since they will not receive your testimony concerning me. ¹⁹I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. ²⁰And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being poured out, I myself was standing by and approving and guarding the garments of those who killed him.' ²¹Then he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the

Gentiles." ²²They listened to him up to this word. Then they raised their voices and said, "Away with such a man from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live!" ²³As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and tossing dust into the air, ²⁴The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging. That he might know for this reason they cried so opposed to him. ²⁵But when they had stretched him out for the lashing, Paul said to the centurion standing by, "Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and has not been condemned?" ²⁶When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported, saying, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen." ²⁷So the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" And he said, "Yes." ²⁸The commander answered, "I acquired this citizenship for a large sum of money." Paul said, "But I was born a citizen." ²⁹Immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him, and the commander himself was alarmed when he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him. ³⁰The next day, wanting to find out the real reason Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and the whole council to assemble. Then he brought Paul down and set him before them.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The address 'brothers and fathers' (andres adelphoi kai pateres) mirrors Stephen's speech (7:2), creating a literary parallel between two defendants before hostile Jewish audiences. The word apologia ('defense') is a formal legal term — Paul frames his speech as a courtroom defense.
2. The use of Aramaic (called 'the Hebrew language,' te Hebraidi dialekto) achieves its intended effect: the crowd gives Paul a deeper hearing. The comparative mallon ('more, even more') indicates that the silence deepened when they recognized the language — Paul is identifying himself as one of them.
3. Paul's self-introduction is carefully structured: birth (Tarsus), upbringing (Jerusalem), education (under Gamaliel), and character (zealous). Gamaliel was the most prominent Pharisaic teacher of the first century and grandson of Hillel. The phrase 'at the feet of' (para tous podas) describes the posture of a disciple before a rabbi. Paul's claim to be 'zealous for God' (zelotes tou theou) uses language associated with Phinehas (Numbers 25:13) and the Maccabees — the highest praise for Jewish piety.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 25:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The capitalized 'Way' (hodon) is the earliest self-designation of the Christian movement (cf. 9:2, 19:9, 23, 24:14, 22). Paul's persecution extended to death sentences (achri thanatou) — Stephen's execution being the most notable example (7:58-8:1). The inclusion of 'both men and women' emphasizes the thoroughness of his persecution.
5. Paul appeals to living witnesses — the high priest and the Sanhedrin — who can verify his former anti-Christian activity. The letters of authorization from the Sanhedrin to the Damascus synagogues (cf. 9:2) gave Paul quasi-official standing to extradite believers.
6. This account adds 'about noon' (peri mesembrian), absent from the chapter 9 narrative — the detail intensifies the miracle, since a light that outshines the midday sun must be extraordinary indeed (cf. 26:13). The light 'from heaven' (ek tou ouranou) marks this as a theophany.
7. The double vocative 'Saul, Saul' (Saoul Saoul) uses the Hebrew/Aramaic form of Paul's name and echoes divine addresses in the Old Testament (Genesis 22:11, 'Abraham, Abraham'; Exodus 3:4, 'Moses, Moses'). The question 'Why are you persecuting me?' identifies Christ with his persecuted church.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 22:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 3:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. This account specifies 'of Nazareth' (ho Nazoraiois), absent from 9:5. Before a Jewish audience, the Nazarene identification is significant — it anchors the risen Lord to the historical Jesus of Nazareth whom Paul's audience would know by reputation. The emphatic 'whom you are persecuting' (hon sy diokeis) reiterates the identification of Christ with his followers.
9. In Acts 9:7, Paul's companions 'heard the voice but saw no one.' The apparent discrepancy is best understood through the Greek verb akouo, which can mean either 'hear' (perceive sound) or 'understand' (comprehend meaning). In 9:7 they heard the sound; here they did not understand the words. The distinction parallels the crowd at Jesus' baptism in John 12:28-29.
10. Paul's question 'What should I do?' (ti poieso) portrays him as immediately submissive to the risen Lord's authority. The passive 'has been appointed' (tetaktai) implies divine foreordination — Paul's mission was predetermined.
11. The word doxa ('glory, brightness') adds theological depth — Paul's blindness resulted from the 'glory' of the light, the same word used for God's manifest presence (the Shekinah) in the Septuagint. Being led by the hand portrays the once-powerful persecutor as helpless.

12. This description of Ananias is unique to this account and tailored for the audience. In Acts 9, Ananias is simply called 'a disciple.' Here, before a Jewish crowd, Paul emphasizes that Ananias was 'devout according to the law' (eulabes kata ton nomon) and respected by the Jewish community — a Torah-observant Jew, not a lawless renegade.
13. The verb *anablepson* has a double meaning: 'look up' and 'receive sight.' The healing is immediate — 'at that very moment' (*aute te hora*) — emphasizing divine power working through Ananias. The address 'Brother Saul' (*Saoul adelphe*) indicates Ananias's acceptance of the former persecutor.
14. Ananias frames Paul's commission using thoroughly Jewish language: 'the God of our fathers' (*ho theos ton pateron hemon*) connects to the patriarchal promises. 'The Righteous One' (*ton dikaion*) is a messianic title rooted in Isaiah 53:11 and used for Jesus in Acts 3:14 and 7:52. The threefold commission — know, see, hear — echoes prophetic call narratives.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 53:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The word *martyrs* ('witness') carries its full weight here — Paul is commissioned as an eyewitness of the risen Christ. The phrase 'to all people' (*pros pantas anthropous*) already hints at the universal scope of Paul's mission, though the explosive word 'Gentiles' is not yet used.
16. The command to 'wash away your sins' (*apolousai tas hamartias sou*) connects baptism with cleansing — language that resonates with Jewish purification rituals. The middle voice of both *baptisai* and *apolousai* suggests Paul's active participation. 'Calling on his name' (*epikalesamenos to onoma autou*) echoes Joel 2:32, quoted by Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2:21).
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Joel 2:32. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. This temple vision is unique to this account — it does not appear in Acts 9 or 26. Paul strategically emphasizes that he received his Gentile commission while praying in the Jerusalem temple, demonstrating that his mission did not originate in opposition to the temple but within it. The word *ekstasis* ('trance, ecstasy') describes the same kind of visionary state Peter experienced in Acts 10:10.
18. The Lord's command to leave Jerusalem — 'hurry' (*speuson*) combined with 'quickly' (*en tachei*) — conveys urgency. The prediction that Jerusalem will reject Paul's testimony is both warning and explanation: Paul's Gentile mission was not Plan B but God's response to Israel's refusal.
19. Paul argues that his dramatic conversion — from violent persecutor to believer — should make him the most credible witness to his own people. The reasoning: anyone who would abandon his previous position so dramatically must have been compelled by overwhelming evidence.
20. The word *martyrs* here means 'witness' but is on its way to its later meaning of 'martyr' — Stephen's witness was sealed by his blood. Paul's admission of complicity in Stephen's death (cf. 7:58, 8:1) is the strongest possible evidence of his former anti-Christian commitment. The detail of 'guarding the garments' recalls the stoning procedure where witnesses removed outer garments to throw more effectively.
21. This single verse triggers the crowd's explosion. The word *ethne* ('nations, Gentiles') is the flashpoint. The Lord's commission to Paul — 'I will send you far away to the Gentiles' — uses the verb *exapostelo*, from which 'apostle' derives. Paul is being sent (*apostled*) to the nations. For the Jerusalem crowd, the claim that God commissioned a mission to include Gentiles as equals was intolerable.
22. The crowd's tolerance snaps at the word 'Gentiles.' Their fury — 'he should not be allowed to live' (*ou katheeken auton zen*) — reveals that the real offense was not theology about Jesus but the inclusion of Gentiles. The cry 'Away from the earth' (*Aire apo tes ges*) demands execution.
23. The three actions — shouting, throwing garments, tossing dust — express extreme outrage. Throwing dust may signify cursing (cf. 2 Samuel 16:13, where Shimei throws dust at David) or preparation for stoning. Removing garments echoes the stoning of Stephen (7:58), which Paul himself referenced moments earlier.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Samuel 16:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. The commander could not understand Paul's Aramaic speech and only witnessed the crowd's violent reaction. Roman 'examination by scourging' (*mastixin anetazesthai*) was a method of extracting information from non-citizens — a brutal interrogation technique using leather whips often embedded with bone or metal. It was distinct from the lesser punishment of beating with rods.
25. Paul times his revelation of Roman citizenship for maximum legal effect — when he is already being tied up for flogging. The question is rhetorical: it was emphatically illegal. The *lex Porcia* (c. 195 BC) and the *lex Julia* (c. 23 BC) prohibited binding, beating, or executing a Roman citizen without due process. The word *akarakriton* ('uncondemned, without trial') emphasizes the procedural violation.
26. The centurion's alarmed report — 'What are you about to do?' — reflects the serious legal consequences of violating a Roman citizen's rights. A commander who flogged a citizen without trial could face severe punishment, including loss of rank.
27. The commander personally verifies the claim. Falsely claiming Roman citizenship was a capital offense (Suetonius, Claudius 25), so the claim carried its own credibility. Paul's single-word answer — 'Yes' (*Nai*) — is quietly authoritative.
28. The exchange reveals a social hierarchy within citizenship. The commander (whose name, Claudius Lysias, per 23:26, suggests he obtained citizenship under Emperor Claudius, who was known for selling it) purchased his status. Paul inherited his — his family held citizenship, possibly granted for services to Rome in Tarsus. Birth citizenship outranked purchased citizenship in social prestige.

29. The immediate withdrawal (eutheos apestes) of the interrogators demonstrates the power of Roman citizenship rights. The commander's fear (ephobethee) is specifically about having already bound Paul (auton en dedekos) — the binding itself was a violation, even before any flogging occurred.
30. Unable to examine Paul by force (because of his citizenship) and unable to understand the charges (because the speech was in Aramaic), the commander convenes the Jewish council (synedrion, the Sanhedrin) to clarify the matter. This sets the stage for chapter 23. The Roman commander's authority to convene the Sanhedrin demonstrates the power dynamics of the occupation.

23

Summary: *Acts 23 opens with Paul before the Sanhedrin, where his claim of a clear conscience provokes the high priest Ananias to order him struck. Paul then strategically divides the council by declaring that he is on trial for the hope of the resurrection, splitting the Pharisees and Sadducees against each other. That night, the Lord appears to Paul and assures him he will testify in Rome. Meanwhile, more than forty Jews form a conspiracy to assassinate Paul, swearing an oath not to eat or drink until he is dead. Paul's nephew learns of the plot, warns the commander, and Claudius Lysias transfers Paul under heavy military escort to the governor Felix in Caesarea.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's appeal to the resurrection as the issue at stake (v. 6) is both theologically true and tactically brilliant — it exploits the well-known Pharisee-Sadducee divide on this doctrine. The Lord's nighttime appearance (v. 11) is the theological center of the chapter, confirming that Paul's journey to Rome is divinely ordained, not merely the result of political maneuvering. The assassination conspiracy and its foiling through Paul's nephew introduces the only family member of Paul mentioned in Acts. Claudius Lysias's letter (vv. 26-30) is a masterpiece of bureaucratic spin — he rewrites events to make himself look better.*

Translation Friction: *Paul's response to the high priest ('God will strike you, you whitewashed wall,' v. 3) and his subsequent claim not to have known Ananias was high priest (v. 5) have been debated endlessly. Possible explanations include poor eyesight, the high priest's lack of distinctive vestments in a hastily convened session, or ironic denial. We render the text without resolving the question. Claudius Lysias's letter significantly distorts the actual sequence of events — he claims to have rescued Paul because he learned he was a Roman citizen, when in fact he learned this only after ordering the flogging.*

Connections: *Paul's claim of a 'clear conscience' (v. 1) connects to his consistent self-defense throughout the epistles (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:12, 2 Timothy 1:3). The Pharisee-Sadducee split over resurrection connects to the Sadducees' challenge to Jesus in Luke 20:27-40. The Lord's assurance 'you must testify in Rome' (v. 11) parallels 19:21 and drives the narrative toward its conclusion. The military escort of 470 soldiers for one prisoner underscores the seriousness of the threat and the strategic importance Roman authorities placed on maintaining order.*

¹Paul looked intently at the council and said, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day."
²The high priest Ananias ordered those standing near him to strike him on the mouth. ³Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting there to judge me according to the law, and yet in violation of the law you order me to be struck?" ⁴Those standing nearby said, "Would you insult God's high priest?" ⁵Paul said, "I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest. For it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'" ⁶Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial!" ⁷When he said this, a dispute arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. ⁸For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. ⁹Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' party stood up and contended sharply, "We find nothing wrong with this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" — ¹⁰When the dispute became violent, the commander, fearing that Paul would be torn apart by them, ordered the soldiers to go down, take him by force from among them, and bring him into the barracks. ¹¹The following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome." ¹²When day came, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves by an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. ¹³There were more than forty who formed this conspiracy. ¹⁴They went to the

chief priests and elders and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. ¹⁵Now then, you and the council must notify the commander to bring him down to you, as though you were going to examine his case more carefully. And we are ready to kill him before he gets near." ¹⁶But the son of Paul's sister heard about the ambush, and he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. ¹⁷Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to report to him." ¹⁸So he took him and brought him to the commander and said, "The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to tell you." ¹⁹The commander took him by the hand, drew him aside privately, and asked, "What is it that you have to report to me?" ²⁰He said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more carefully about his case. ²¹But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, having bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent." ²²The commander dismissed the young man, ordering him, "Tell no one that you have reported these things to me." ²³Then he called two of the centurions and said, "Get two hundred soldiers ready to go to Caesarea, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen, by the third hour of the night. ²⁴Also provide mounts so that Paul may ride and be brought safely to Felix the governor." ²⁵He wrote a letter to this effect: ²⁶"Claudius Lysias, to His Excellency the governor Felix: Greetings. ²⁷This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. ²⁸Wanting to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. ²⁹I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but had no charge deserving death or imprisonment. ³⁰When I was informed of a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state their charges against him before you." ³¹So the soldiers, according to their orders, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. ³²The next day they let the horsemen go on with him and returned to the barracks. ³³When they came to Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and presented Paul before him. ³⁴After reading the letter, he asked what province Paul was from, and when he learned that he was from Cilicia, ³⁵I will hear you, stated he, when your accusers are also come. Then he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *atenisas* ('looked intently, gazed') suggests direct, unflinching eye contact. Paul's opening claim — a 'good conscience' (*syneideesei agathee*) before God — is a bold assertion of innocence. The word *pepoliteumai* ('I have lived as a citizen, conducted myself') implies both civic and religious faithfulness.
2. Ananias son of Nedebeaus was high priest from approximately AD 47 to 59. He was known for violence and corruption (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.199-207) and was eventually assassinated by Jewish revolutionaries at the outbreak of the revolt in AD 66. Striking a defendant on the mouth was intended to silence what was considered blasphemous or offensive speech.
3. The epithet 'whitewashed wall' (*toiche kekoniamene*) echoes Ezekiel 13:10-15, where whitewashed walls conceal structural corruption. Jesus used similar imagery for the Pharisees (Matthew 23:27, 'whitewashed tombs'). Paul's retort exposes the irony: the judge is the lawbreaker. Jewish law required that defendants be presumed innocent and not struck during proceedings.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 13:10-15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The bystanders' rebuke appeals to the sanctity of the high priestly office. The verb *loidoreis* ('revile, insult') was a serious charge — insulting the high priest could be construed as violating Exodus 22:28.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 22:28. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Paul quotes Exodus 22:28 from the Septuagint. His claim not to have recognized the high priest remains puzzling — proposed explanations include poor eyesight (cf. Galatians 4:15, 6:11), the informality of the session, the high priest not wearing vestments, or Paul speaking with irony (implying 'I could not have imagined that a man who acts this way is the high priest'). The text does not resolve the ambiguity.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 22:28 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Paul's declaration is both true and strategic. He genuinely believed in the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15), and the resurrection of Jesus was central to his message. But by framing the issue this way, he exploits the fundamental Pharisee-Sadducee doctrinal divide. The Sadducees denied resurrection, angels, and spirits; the Pharisees affirmed all three (v. 8).

7. The verb *eschisthe* ('was split, divided') is vivid — the council literally fractures along doctrinal lines. Paul has successfully redirected the debate from his alleged crimes to an internal Jewish theological controversy.
8. Luke provides this explanatory note for readers unfamiliar with Jewish sectarian differences. The Sadducees' denial of resurrection, angels, and spirits reflected their strict adherence to the written Torah alone, where these concepts are less developed. The Pharisees accepted the oral tradition and later prophetic writings that developed these doctrines.
9. The Pharisaic scribes now defend Paul — a dramatic reversal. Their argument ('What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?') inadvertently validates Paul's Damascus road experience. The SBLGNT text breaks off mid-sentence with a dash, leaving the conditional clause unfinished (aposiopesis) — the sentence is interrupted by the chaos. The KJV's addition 'let us not fight against God' (from the Textus Receptus) echoes Gamaliel's words in 5:39 but is not in the critical text.
10. The verb *diaspasthe* ('torn apart, pulled to pieces') is graphic — the commander fears Paul will be literally dismembered as the two factions pull him in opposite directions. This is the second time the Roman military has had to rescue Paul from a Jewish crowd (cf. 21:32-35). The pattern establishes Rome as Paul's unlikely protector.
11. This is the theological pivot of the entire narrative from Acts 21 onward. The divine *dei* ('it is necessary, you must') indicates that Paul's journey to Rome is not a contingent political outcome but a divinely ordained necessity. The word 'courage' (*tharsei*) is the same word Jesus used to calm the disciples on the sea (Matthew 14:27) and to assure the paralytic (Mark 2:5). Everything that follows — the conspiracy, the transfer to Caesarea, the trials, the appeal to Caesar, the shipwreck — serves this divine purpose.
12. The verb *anethematisan* ('bound themselves by a curse, placed themselves under a ban') means they invoked divine punishment on themselves if they failed. The Hebrew equivalent is *cherem* — a self-imposed ban of the most solemn kind. The oath not to eat or drink creates narrative urgency.
13. The number 'more than forty' (*pleious tesserakonta*) indicates a substantial, organized group — not a spontaneous mob but a premeditated assassination squad. The word *synomosian* ('conspiracy, joint oath') emphasizes the formal, sworn nature of their pact.
14. The conspirators approach the chief priests and elders (Sadducean leadership) — not the Pharisees who had just defended Paul. The Hebrew-style emphatic construction *anathemati anethematisamen* ('with a curse we have cursed ourselves') intensifies the solemnity of the oath.
15. The plan involves the Sanhedrin as decoy — requesting a second hearing while the assassins ambush Paul en route. The participation of the chief priests and elders in this conspiracy implicates the Jewish leadership in a murder plot, a serious narrative charge that Luke presents matter-of-factly.
16. This is the only mention of any of Paul's relatives in Acts. The nephew's access to both the conspiracy information and the Roman barracks suggests the family may have had social connections in Jerusalem. How a young man learned of a secret conspiracy of forty men is unexplained — perhaps the plotters were not as discreet as they imagined.
17. Paul's ability to summon a centurion and make requests indicates that his status as a Roman citizen afforded him certain privileges even in custody. He acts decisively, channeling the information through proper military channels.
18. Paul is now referred to as 'the prisoner' (*ho desmios*) — his new identity in the narrative. The centurion faithfully relays Paul's request, and the commander receives the young man personally, indicating that he took Paul's status seriously.
19. The commander's gesture of taking the young man by the hand (*epilabomenos tes cheiros autou*) suggests both kindness and discretion. He recognizes the sensitivity of the information and ensures privacy. The detail is characteristically Lukan in its attention to personal interaction.
20. The nephew relays the plan accurately, demonstrating good intelligence. The phrase 'as though' (*hos mellon*) reveals the deception — the request for a hearing is a pretext for the ambush.
21. The nephew provides specific, actionable intelligence: the number of conspirators (more than forty), the nature of their oath, and their current state of readiness. The phrase 'waiting for your consent' (*prosdechomenoi ten apo sou epangelian*) reveals that the plot depends on the commander's cooperation.
22. The commander's secrecy order protects both the nephew (from retaliation) and his own operational plans. He acts with professional military competence — receiving intelligence, maintaining security, and immediately formulating a response.
23. The escort totals 470 military personnel for one prisoner — an extraordinary force that reflects both the seriousness of the threat and the importance of protecting a Roman citizen. The 'third hour of the night' is approximately 9 PM, ensuring departure under cover of darkness. The *dexiolabous* ('spearmen' or 'light-armed troops') is a rare word whose exact meaning is debated.
24. Multiple mounts (*ktene*, 'animals, beasts') suggests provisions for changing horses to maintain speed. Felix (Marcus Antonius Felix) was procurator of Judea from approximately AD 52 to 59. Tacitus describes him as one who 'exercised the power of a king with the spirit of a slave' (Histories 5.9).
25. The phrase 'to this effect' (*echousan ton typon touton*) indicates Luke may be paraphrasing rather than quoting the letter verbatim. This is one of the few embedded letters in Acts (cf. 15:23-29) and provides insight into Roman administrative communication.
26. The letter follows standard Greco-Roman epistolary form: sender, recipient, greeting (*chairein*). The title *kratisto* ('most excellent, His Excellency') is the same used for Theophilus in Luke 1:3 and for Felix and Festus elsewhere in Acts (24:3, 26:25). The commander's full name — Claudius Lysias — appears only here. 'Claudius' was likely his adopted Roman nomen, taken when he purchased citizenship under Emperor Claudius.

27. Lysias's letter strategically rearranges the sequence of events. In reality, he rescued Paul first and only later discovered his citizenship (21:33-34 vs. 22:25-29). By writing 'having learned that he was a Roman citizen,' Lysias makes his intervention appear to be a deliberate act of protecting Roman rights rather than a routine crowd-control operation. This bureaucratic self-serving is a realistic touch.
28. Lysias presents the Sanhedrin hearing as his own initiative to determine charges — a reasonable summary of events that also emphasizes his procedural diligence before a superior.
29. Lysias's assessment — that the dispute concerns Jewish law and involves no Roman crime — is the same conclusion that Gallio reached in Corinth (18:14-15) and that Festus and Agrippa will later reach (25:25, 26:31). This repeated Roman verdict of innocence on matters of Roman law is a major theme in Acts.
30. Lysias transfers both the prisoner and the legal responsibility to Felix. By ordering the accusers to present their case before the governor, he ensures a proper trial while removing himself from a dangerous situation. The SBLGNT omits the closing 'Farewell' (erroso) found in the Textus Receptus.
31. Antipatris was located about 35 miles northwest of Jerusalem on the road to Caesarea — a hard night's march. The city was rebuilt by Herod the Great and named after his father Antipater. The overnight forced march would put Paul beyond the reach of the Jerusalem conspirators by dawn.
32. Once past the danger zone of the Judean hills, the infantry and spearmen were no longer needed — the horsemen alone could escort Paul through the coastal plain to Caesarea. The remaining journey was about 25 miles. This practical military detail reflects the author's familiarity with such operations.
33. The official handoff is complete: the letter explains the case, and the prisoner is formally transferred to the governor's jurisdiction. Caesarea Maritima was the Roman administrative capital of Judea, with the governor's residence in Herod's former palace (the praetorium).
34. Felix's first question — about Paul's province of origin — is a jurisdictional inquiry. Under Roman law, a governor could either try the case himself or remit it to the defendant's home province. Cilicia was at this time part of the combined province of Syria-Cilicia, but Felix decides to retain jurisdiction.
35. Felix agrees to hear the case but requires the accusers' presence — standard Roman legal procedure. 'Herod's praetorium' (to praitorio tou Herodou) was the palace built by Herod the Great in Caesarea, now serving as the governor's official residence and courthouse. Paul's detention there, rather than in a common prison, reflects his Roman citizenship and the nature of the charges.

24

Summary: *Acts 24 presents Paul's formal trial before the Roman governor Felix in Caesarea. The high priest Ananias and a professional orator named Tertullus bring charges against Paul, accusing him of sedition, being a ringleader of the Nazarene sect, and attempting to profane the temple. Paul delivers his own defense, denying the charges and reframing his faith as the fulfillment of Jewish hope in the resurrection. Felix, who has considerable knowledge of the Way, adjourns the case. He later summons Paul privately to hear about faith in Christ, but becomes frightened when Paul speaks of righteousness, self-control, and coming judgment. Felix keeps Paul in custody for two years, hoping for a bribe, until he is succeeded by Porcius Festus.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The trial follows proper Roman cognitio procedure: accusation by prosecution (vv. 2-8), defense by the accused (vv. 10-21), and adjudication by the governor. Tertullus's speech is a masterclass in forensic rhetoric — flattery of the judge, character assassination of the defendant, and specific legal charges. Paul's defense is equally skillful, systematically denying each charge. The private conversations between Felix and Paul (vv. 24-26) reveal a governor caught between intellectual curiosity, moral fear, and financial corruption. Felix's two-year delay (v. 27) becomes a pivotal factor in the narrative, eventually leading to Paul's appeal to Caesar.*

Translation Friction: *Felix's familiarity with 'the Way' (v. 22) is historically plausible — his wife Drusilla was Jewish (v. 24), and Caesarea had a significant Christian community. His trembling at Paul's preaching on judgment (v. 25) but refusal to release him reveals the complex interplay of conviction and corruption in Roman governance. Luke does not explain why Paul did not offer the bribe Felix wanted — this silence may itself be the point.*

Connections: *The charges against Paul — sedition, sectarianism, temple profanation — echo the charges against Jesus before Pilate (Luke 23:2, 5). Paul's affirmation that he worships 'the God of our fathers' (v. 14) and believes 'everything written in the Law and the Prophets' (v. 14) positions Christianity as the fulfillment of Judaism, not its contradiction. The two-year imprisonment (v. 27) parallels Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem and provides the setting for Paul's prison epistles if the traditional dating is accepted.*

¹Five days later the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they presented their case against Paul before the governor. ²When Paul had been summoned, Tertullus began the accusation, saying: "Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since reforms are being made for this nation by your foresight, ³We acknowledge this in every way and everywhere, most excellent Felix, with deep gratitude. ⁴But so that I may not detain you any further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. ⁵For we have found this man to be a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. ⁶He even tried to profane the temple, so we seized him. ⁸By examining him yourself you will be able to learn about all these things of which we accuse him." ⁹The Jews also joined in the attack, asserting that these things were so. ¹⁰When the governor motioned to him to speak, Paul replied: "Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense. ¹¹You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem, ¹²They and not discovered me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city. ¹³Nor can they prove to you the charges they are now bringing against me. ¹⁴But this I confess to you: according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down according to the Law and written in the Prophets, ¹⁵Possess confident expectation toward God, which they themselves also allow, that where there is a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. ¹⁶Because of this I also strive to maintain a clear conscience before both God and people at all times. ¹⁷After several years I came to bring charitable gifts to my nation and to present offerings. ¹⁸While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or disturbance. ¹⁹But there were some Jews from Asia — who ought to be here before you to make their accusation, if they have anything against me. ²⁰Or else let these men themselves state what crime they found when I stood before the council, ²¹Indeed, except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing in the midst of them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day. ²²But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, adjourned the proceedings, saying, "When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case." ²³Then he ordered the centurion to keep Paul in custody but to give him some freedom and not prevent any of his friends from attending to his needs. ²⁴Some days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁵And as Paul discussed righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became frightened and answered, "Go away for now. When I find a convenient time, I will summon you." ²⁶At the same time he was hoping that money would be given to him by Paul, so he sent for him more frequently and conversed with him. ²⁷After two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And wanting to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The delegation's five-day delay likely reflects travel time from Jerusalem to Caesarea plus preparation. The employment of a professional rhetor (Tertullus, a Latin name suggesting he may have been Roman or Romanized) indicates the seriousness of the prosecution. The verb *enephanisan* ('presented formally, laid charges') is a technical legal term.
2. Tertullus opens with a *captatio benevolentiae* — flattery designed to win the judge's favor. The claims of 'much peace' and wise 'reforms' under Felix are historically ironic; Josephus and Tacitus both describe Felix's administration as corrupt and violent. Tertullus tells Felix what Felix wants to hear.
3. The accumulation of universal terms — 'every way,' 'everywhere,' 'all gratitude' — is rhetorical excess typical of forensic flattery. The title 'most excellent' (*kratiste*) is the standard address for a Roman governor.
4. The conventional apology for taking the governor's time (*praeteritio*) is another rhetorical device. Tertullus transitions from flattery to the substance of the charges.
5. Tertullus levels three charges: (1) Paul is a 'plague' (*loimon*, literally a disease) — a personal character attack; (2) he incites sedition (*staseis*) among Jews worldwide — a political charge with Roman legal weight; (3) he leads 'the sect of the Nazarenes' (*ton Nazoraion haireseos*) — the only place in the New Testament where Christians are called 'Nazarenes,' a term derived from Jesus' hometown. The word *hairesis* ('sect, party') was not yet negative in itself — Josephus uses it for the Pharisees and Sadducees.
6. The third specific charge — attempted temple profanation (*bebelosai*) — is the most serious because it carried a death penalty even under Roman law. The SBLGNT text is shorter here than the Textus Receptus, omitting the reference to judging Paul by Jewish law and Lysias's intervention. We follow the critical text.
7. This verse is not present in the SBLGNT critical text. It appears only in later manuscripts behind the Textus Receptus/KJV. The SBLGNT moves directly from verse 6 to verse 8. We follow the critical text and note the verse's absence.

8. In the SBLGNT text, 'him' refers to Paul — Tertullus invites Felix to interrogate Paul directly. In the longer Textus Receptus text, 'him' refers to Lysias. The critical text makes better sense of the prosecution's strategy: they are confident the examination will confirm their charges.
9. The verb *synepethento* ('joined in the attack, supported the accusation') indicates that the Jewish delegation collectively endorsed Tertullus's charges. This is formal legal testimony, not mere agreement.
10. Paul's opening is notably restrained compared to Tertullus's extravagant flattery. He offers one factual observation — Felix's long tenure as judge — which is both complimentary and relevant (a long-serving judge would understand the issues). The word *euthymos* ('cheerfully, with good courage') contrasts with the anxiety one might expect from a defendant.
11. Paul appeals to verifiable facts. The twelve days can be roughly reconstructed from the narrative: arrival (21:17), meeting with James (21:18), purification in the temple (21:26), arrest (21:27), Sanhedrin hearing (22:30), transfer to Caesarea (23:23), five days until trial (24:1). His stated purpose for going to Jerusalem — 'to worship' (*proskyneseon*) — directly contradicts the charge of temple profanation.
12. Paul systematically denies the sedition charge across three venues: temple, synagogues, city. He was not debating (*dialogomenon*), not inciting crowds (*epistatsin poiounta ochlou*), and no witnesses can place him doing so. This is a point-by-point factual rebuttal.
13. Paul shifts the burden of proof to the accusers — a sound legal strategy. The verb *parastesai* ('prove, demonstrate, present evidence') is a legal technical term. Paul's point is devastating: the prosecution has no witnesses, no evidence, only assertions.
14. Paul's confession (*homologe*) is carefully worded. He admits to following 'the Way' (*ten hodon*) but reframes it: what they call a 'sect' (*haireisin*), he calls the authentic worship of Israel's God. He affirms belief in 'everything' in the Law and Prophets — the complete Jewish Scriptures. This positions Christianity not as an innovation but as faithful Judaism.
15. Paul identifies resurrection as common ground between himself and his accusers (the Pharisaic members of the Sanhedrin). The inclusion of 'both the righteous and the unrighteous' (*dikaion te kai adikon*) indicates a general resurrection leading to judgment — a belief shared with the Pharisees and rooted in Daniel 12:2.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 12:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. Paul returns to the conscience theme from 23:1. The verb *asko* ('I train, I strive, I discipline myself') implies continuous effort — maintaining a blameless conscience is not passive but requires active discipline. The dual orientation — 'before God and people' — covers both religious and civil responsibility.
17. This is Luke's only explicit reference to the collection for the Jerusalem poor that Paul organized across the Gentile churches (cf. Romans 15:25-28, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8-9). The word *eleemosynas* ('charitable gifts, alms') and *prosphoras* ('offerings') — one for the poor, one for the temple — demonstrate Paul's continued commitment to both the Jewish community and the temple.
18. Paul's factual summary directly contradicts the prosecution's narrative. He was in the temple — but purified (*hegnismenon*), not profaning it. He had no crowd (*ou meta ochlou*) — therefore no riot was his doing. He caused no disturbance (*oude meta thorybou*) — the disorder came from his accusers.
19. Paul makes a devastating procedural point: the actual eyewitnesses — the Jews from Asia who started the riot (21:27) — are absent. Under Roman law, accusers had to appear in person. Their absence fatally weakens the prosecution's case. The dash in the Greek indicates an *anacolouthon* — Paul's sentence breaks off, leaving the implication hanging.
20. Paul challenges his present accusers to name a specific crime from the Sanhedrin hearing. The word *adikema* ('crime, wrongdoing') is a legal term — Paul demands a specific charge, not vague accusations.
21. Paul's defense ends with ironic brilliance. The only 'crime' anyone can identify from the Sanhedrin hearing is his declaration about resurrection — a doctrine shared by the Pharisees on the council. This effectively reduces the prosecution's case to an internal Jewish theological dispute, which Roman law had no interest in adjudicating.
22. Felix's adjournment (*anebaletō*, 'put off, deferred') without a verdict is significant. His 'rather accurate knowledge of the Way' (*akribesteron eidos ta peri tes hodou*) suggests prior familiarity with Christianity, likely through his Jewish wife Drusilla. The reference to awaiting Lysias is a procedural excuse — there is no indication Lysias ever came.
23. The arrangement is *custodia militaris* — military custody with privileges. The 'freedom' (*anesin*, literally 'relaxation, loosening') means Paul was not in a dungeon but in supervised detention. Allowing friends to visit and provide for him was a privilege of his Roman citizenship and Felix's implicit recognition that Paul posed no real threat.
24. Drusilla was the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I (the Agrippa of Acts 12) and sister of Agrippa II (who appears in chapters 25-26). She had left her first husband to marry Felix — a scandalous union that makes the topics Paul addresses in the next verse particularly pointed.
25. Paul's three topics — righteousness (*dikaïosynes*), self-control (*enkrateias*), and coming judgment (*krimatos tou mellontos*) — are not random but directly relevant to Felix's life. Felix was notorious for injustice (Josephus), had stolen Drusilla from her husband (lacking self-control), and faced divine accountability (judgment). His fear (*emphobos genomenos*) is a genuine response to conviction — but he chooses delay over repentance.
26. Luke exposes Felix's true motive: bribery. The hope for 'money' (*chremata*) explains why Felix kept summoning Paul — not for spiritual conversation but for financial negotiation. Roman law technically prohibited governors from accepting bribes (the *lex Iulia repetundarum*), but the practice was

endemic. Paul's mention of bringing 'charitable gifts' (v. 17) may have suggested to Felix that Paul had access to significant funds.

27. The two-year imprisonment (dietias) without verdict is a miscarriage of justice by any standard. Felix's final act regarding Paul — leaving him imprisoned as a political favor to the Jews — reveals that the case was never about law but about politics. Porcius Festus took office around AD 59-60. The word dedemenon ('bound, imprisoned') recalls Agabus's prophecy (21:11) and the Lord's assurance that Paul must reach Rome (23:11).

25

Summary: *Acts 25 introduces the new governor Porcius Festus, who inherits Paul's unresolved case. The Jerusalem leaders immediately press Festus to transfer Paul to Jerusalem — concealing a plan to ambush him en route. Festus instead conducts a hearing in Caesarea, where the same unproven charges are repeated. When Festus suggests transferring the case to Jerusalem as a political gesture, Paul exercises his right as a Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar. Festus grants the appeal. Subsequently, King Agrippa II and his sister Bernice arrive for a state visit, and Festus consults Agrippa about the case, confessing that he finds no crime worthy of death and needs help formulating charges to send with the prisoner to Rome.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's appeal to Caesar (v. 11) is the decisive legal act that sends him to Rome, fulfilling the Lord's promise in 23:11. The appeal (provocatio) was a fundamental right of Roman citizens — once invoked, no lower authority could override it. Festus's candid admission to Agrippa that he has nothing substantive to write to the emperor (v. 26) is both politically embarrassing and theologically significant: the Roman governor cannot identify any crime because there is none. The chapter introduces Agrippa II and Bernice, the last of the Herodian dynasty to appear in the New Testament.*

Translation Friction: *Festus's suggestion to transfer the case to Jerusalem (v. 9) is ambiguous — was it a genuine attempt at jurisdictional fairness, or a political concession to the Jews? Luke says he wanted to 'do the Jews a favor' (v. 9), echoing Felix's motivation (24:27). Paul's appeal may have been partly strategic (to escape local politics) and partly providential (to reach Rome). We render the text without privileging one interpretation.*

Connections: *The repeated attempts to transfer Paul to Jerusalem (23:15, 25:3) echo the persistent plots against Jesus in the Gospels. Festus's declaration of Paul's innocence joins a growing chorus of Roman officials who find no fault in him (Gallio, 18:14-15; Lysias, 23:29; Festus here; Agrippa, 26:31-32). This cumulative pattern parallels Pilate's triple declaration of Jesus' innocence (Luke 23:4, 14, 22). King Agrippa II is the great-grandson of Herod the Great (Matthew 2) and son of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12).*

¹Three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. ²The chief priests and the leading men of the Jews presented their case against Paul to him and appealed to him, ³Indeed, desired favour opposed to him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him. ⁴Festus replied that Paul was being kept in custody at Caesarea and that he himself was about to go there shortly. ⁵"Therefore," he said, "let those among you who are in authority come down with me, and if there is anything wrong with the man, let them bring charges against him." ⁶After staying among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. The next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. ⁷When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges that they were not able to prove, ⁸While he answered for himself, Neither opposed to the law of the Jews, neither opposed to the temple, nor yet opposed to Caesar, have I offended any thing at all. ⁹But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and be tried there before me on these charges?" ¹⁰Paul said, "I am standing before Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. ¹¹If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything deserving death, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar." ¹²Then Festus, after conferring with his council, answered, "To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go." ¹³After some days had passed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to welcome Festus. ¹⁴As they were spending several days there, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a man left as a prisoner by Felix. ¹⁵When I was in

Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews presented their case against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation. ¹⁶I answered them that it is not the custom of Romans to hand over any person before the accused meets the accusers face to face and has an opportunity to make a defense against the charge. ¹⁷So when they came together here, I made no delay but took my seat on the tribunal the very next day and ordered the man to be brought in. ¹⁸When the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of the kind of crime I was expecting. ¹⁹Instead they had certain disputes with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus who had died, whom Paul claimed to be alive. ²⁰Since I was at a loss how to investigate these matters, I asked whether he wished to go to Jerusalem and be tried there regarding them. ²¹But when Paul appealed to be held for the decision of the Emperor, I ordered him to be kept in custody until I could send him to Caesar." ²²Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear the man myself." "Tomorrow," said Festus, "you shall hear him." ²³So the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience hall, along with the military commanders and the prominent men of the city. At Festus's command, Paul was brought in. ²⁴Festus said, "King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man about whom the whole Jewish community has petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. ²⁵But I found that he had done nothing deserving death. And since he himself appealed to the Emperor, I decided to send him. ²⁶But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after this examination I may have something to write. ²⁷For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner without also indicating the charges against him."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Festus moves quickly — within three days of assuming office he travels to Jerusalem, the religious capital, demonstrating political awareness. The verb *anebe* ('went up') reflects both geography and the conventional language of pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
2. The Jewish leaders waste no time — Paul's case is apparently their top priority with the new governor. The plural 'chief priests' (*archiereis*) includes the current high priest and former holders of the office who retained influence.
3. The assassination plot from 23:12-15 has been revived, or a new one formed. Two years have passed, but the determination to kill Paul persists. Luke reveals the hidden plot (*enedran poiountes*, 'setting an ambush') that the request to Festus conceals. The word *charin* ('as a favor') exposes the request as political rather than judicial.
4. Festus declines the transfer request — whether from good judgment, adherence to protocol, or simply because Caesarea was the proper judicial venue. His response thwarts the ambush plan without his being aware of it. Providence operates through bureaucratic procedure.
5. Festus invites the Jewish leaders to present their case in Caesarea — proper Roman procedure. The conditional 'if there is anything wrong' (*ei ti estin atopon*) is diplomatically neutral but subtly skeptical. The word *atopon* ('out of place, wrong, amiss') is mild legal language.
6. Festus acts with considerably more dispatch than Felix. The *bema* ('tribunal, judgment seat') was the elevated platform from which Roman governors rendered official judgments. The same word is used for Pilate's judgment seat in John 19:13 and Gallio's in Acts 18:12.
7. Luke's summary is devastating to the prosecution: 'many serious charges' (*polla kai barea aitiomata*) that they 'could not prove' (*ouk ischyon apodeixai*). The verb *apodeixai* ('prove, demonstrate') is the same standard of evidence Paul demanded in 24:13. Two years have produced no new evidence.
8. Paul's defense addresses three jurisdictions: Jewish law, the temple, and Roman authority. This tripartite denial covers every possible basis for charges. The addition of 'against Caesar' (*eis Kaisara*) is new — Paul now explicitly addresses the political dimension, denying any sedition against Rome.
9. Festus repeats Felix's pattern: political calculation overrides judicial integrity. The phrase 'wanting to do the Jews a favor' (*thelon tois Ioudaiois charin katathesthai*) echoes 24:27. Festus offers a compromise — trial in Jerusalem but with himself presiding — but Paul recognizes the danger.
10. Paul's response is legally precise. He asserts that he is already before the proper court ('Caesar's tribunal' — the governor's *bema* represents Caesar's authority). His statement 'you yourself know very well' (*su kallion epiginoskeis*) is a pointed challenge: Festus knows Paul is innocent but is considering a politically motivated transfer.
11. Paul's appeal to Caesar (*Kaisara epikaloumai*) is the legal climax of the narrative. The *provocatio ad Caesarem* was an irrevocable right of Roman citizens, transferring jurisdiction to the emperor's court in Rome. Paul's logic is airtight: if guilty, he accepts death; if innocent, no one has the right to sacrifice him to political expediency. The verb *charisasthai* ('hand over as a favor, grant as a gift') pointedly echoes the 'favor' (*charin*) Festus wanted to do for the Jews.
12. Festus consults his advisory council (*symbolion*) — a standard group of legal advisors who assisted Roman governors. The response has a formal, almost formulaic quality: 'To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.' Once the appeal is granted, the case passes beyond Festus's jurisdiction. The divine purpose declared in 23:11 ('you must testify in Rome') now has its legal mechanism.

13. Agrippa II (Marcus Julius Agrippa, AD 27-c. 100) was the last of the Herodian dynasty. He ruled territories northeast of Galilee and had been granted authority over the Jerusalem temple and the appointment of high priests. Bernice was his sister; their relationship was the subject of scandalous rumors in antiquity (Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.145). Their visit to welcome the new governor was a diplomatic courtesy.
14. Festus consults Agrippa because of Agrippa's expertise in Jewish religious matters. The phrase 'left as a prisoner by Felix' (kataleimmenos hypo Felikos desmios) implicitly criticizes Felix's failure to resolve the case.
15. Festus summarizes events for Agrippa. The Jewish leaders sought a katadiken ('condemnation, guilty verdict') — not merely a hearing but a predetermined outcome.
16. Festus articulates a foundational principle of Roman law: the right of the accused to confront accusers and present a defense. This principle — confrontation and defense — is one of Rome's lasting contributions to Western legal tradition. Festus presents himself favorably to Agrippa as a defender of proper procedure.
17. Festus emphasizes his own efficiency — 'no delay' (anabolen medemian) — in contrast to Felix's two-year procrastination. The detail is accurate (cf. v. 6) and presents Festus in the best possible light before a royal audience.
18. Festus's admission is revealing: he expected serious criminal charges (violent sedition, assassination plots) and found none. The word poneron ('evil, criminal') indicates he anticipated accusations of substantive wrongdoing under Roman law.
19. The word deisidaimonias can mean either 'religion' (neutral) or 'superstition' (pejorative). In a diplomatic context, Festus likely intends the neutral sense. His summary of the case — 'a certain Jesus who had died, whom Paul claimed to be alive' — is a remarkable outsider's reduction of the resurrection to its simplest terms. For Festus, it is a puzzling Jewish dispute; for the reader, it is the central claim of the entire book of Acts.
20. Festus reframes his suggestion about Jerusalem as stemming from genuine perplexity (aporoumenos, 'being at a loss') rather than political favoritism. His version omits the motivation Luke attributed to him in verse 9 ('wanting to do the Jews a favor'). This is diplomatic self-presentation before Agrippa.
21. The title Sebastos (Greek equivalent of Latin Augustus, 'the Revered One') refers to the reigning emperor, Nero (AD 54-68). At this point in his reign (c. AD 59-60), Nero's government was still relatively competent under the influence of Seneca and Burrus. The word diagnōsis ('decision, examination, hearing') is a legal term for the imperial court's review.
22. Agrippa's interest — 'I would like to hear the man myself' (eboulomen kai autos tou anthropou akousai) — sets up the hearing in chapter 26. The imperfect eboulomen ('I was wishing, I have been wanting') suggests Agrippa had already heard about Paul and been curious. Festus's immediate 'Tomorrow' shows eagerness to accommodate the king.
23. The scene is deliberately theatrical: royalty, military commanders, civic leaders — all assembled 'with great pomp' (meta polles phantasias). The Greek phantasia (from which 'fantasy' derives) means 'display, pageantry, spectacle.' Luke creates a vivid contrast: all the power of the world arrayed before one prisoner in chains, who turns out to be the most powerful person in the room.
24. Festus introduces the case to the assembled dignitaries. His description of the Jewish community's united demand — 'shouting that he ought not to live' — frames the intensity of the opposition while implicitly distancing himself from their demands.
25. Festus's declaration — 'nothing deserving death' (meden axion thanatou) — is another in the series of Roman acquittals that runs through Acts. He presents the appeal to Caesar as the reason for the transfer, though his own political maneuvering was a significant factor.
26. Festus's problem is bureaucratic but revealing: he must send Paul to Rome with a written summary of charges, but he has no charges to write. The title 'my lord' (to kyrio) for the emperor was becoming common under Nero, though earlier emperors like Augustus had rejected it (Suetonius, Augustus 53). Agrippa's expertise in Jewish affairs makes him the ideal consultant.
27. The word alogon ('unreasonable, absurd, illogical') is a striking admission. It would indeed be absurd to send a prisoner to the emperor without articulated charges. The irony is thick: Rome's judicial system has failed to produce a single substantive charge against Paul, yet he remains imprisoned and is being sent for imperial trial.

26

Summary: Acts 26 contains Paul's defense speech before King Agrippa II, Bernice, Festus, and the assembled dignitaries in Caesarea. This is the longest and most rhetorically polished of Paul's defense speeches in Acts, and it includes the third and most detailed account of his conversion on the Damascus road. Paul argues that his entire ministry is rooted in the hope of Israel — the promise God made to the twelve tribes — and that the resurrection of Jesus is the fulfillment of that hope. Festus interrupts, calling Paul mad; Paul respectfully disagrees and turns directly to Agrippa with a personal appeal. Agrippa's famous response — 'In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian' — is followed by the private verdict: Paul could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.

What Makes This Remarkable: *This third account of the Damascus road experience (cf. 9:1-19, 22:6-16) is the most theologically developed. Jesus speaks at greater length, commissioning Paul in language drawn from the servant songs of Isaiah and Jeremiah's call narrative. The phrase 'it is hard for you to kick against the goads' (v. 14) is a Greek proverb known from Euripides and Aeschylus, appropriate for the educated audience. Paul's speech builds to a direct evangelistic appeal to a king — an audacious rhetorical move. The verdict of innocence in verse 32 ('this man could have been set free') provides the final Roman declaration of Paul's legal innocence in Acts.*

Translation Friction: *Agrippa's response in verse 28 is notoriously difficult to translate. The Greek *en oligo me peitheis Christianon poiesai* can be read as sincere ('you almost persuade me'), dismissive ('in such a short time you think to make me a Christian?'), or ironic. We follow the rendering that captures Agrippa's deflection without resolving the ambiguity. The relationship between this conversion account and the earlier versions involves significant additions (vv. 16-18) not present in chapters 9 or 22.*

Connections: *Paul's commission in verses 16-18 draws on Isaiah 42:7, 16 (opening blind eyes), Jeremiah 1:7-8 (the prophetic call), and Isaiah 61:1 (liberty for captives) — the same passage Jesus read in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4:18-19). The phrase 'the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers' (v. 6) connects to the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12, 15, 17), the Davidic promise (2 Samuel 7), and the resurrection hope expressed throughout the Psalms and Prophets. Paul's appeal that Agrippa believes the prophets (v. 27) echoes Jesus' teaching in Luke 24:25-27, 44-47.*

¹Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense: ²"I consider myself fortunate, King Agrippa, that it is before you I am about to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, ³Especially because I know you to be expert in all customs and questions which are in the midst of the Jews — for this reason I beseech you to hear me patiently. ⁴All the Jews know my manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem. ⁵They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest party of our religion. ⁶And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, ⁷To which promise our the Twelve tribes, instantly serving God time and after dark, confident expectation to arrive. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. ⁸Why is it considered incredible among you that God raises the dead? ⁹I myself was once convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. ¹⁰And this I did in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. ¹¹I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to force them to blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities. ¹²"In this connection I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, ¹³Indeed, at midday, O king, I noticed in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round concerning me and them which journeyed with me. ¹⁴When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' ¹⁵I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶But get up and stand on your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose: to appoint you as a servant and witness of the things in which you have seen me and of the things in which I will appear to you, ¹⁷Delivering you from the people, and from the Gentiles, to whom now I send you,. ¹⁸To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the authority of Satan to God, that they may accept forgiveness of sins, and inheritance in the midst of them which are sanctified by way of faith that is in me. ¹⁹"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, ²⁰However, shewed first to them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout every one of the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should turn back and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. ²¹For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. ²²To this day I have had the help that comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: ²³that the Messiah would suffer, and that by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles. ²⁴As Paul was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "You are out of your mind, Paul! Your great learning is driving you insane!" ²⁵But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. ²⁶For the king knows about these things, and to him

I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, since this was not done in a corner. ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." ²⁸Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to become a Christian?" ²⁹Paul replied, "Whether in a short time or a long time, I would pray to God that not only you but also all who hear me today might become such as I am — except for these chains." ³⁰Then the king rose, and the governor, and Bernice, and those who were sitting with them. ³¹After they had withdrawn, they said to one another, "This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment." ³²Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Agrippa, not Festus, grants permission to speak — reflecting his superior rank in this setting. Paul's gesture of stretching out his hand (*ekteinas ten cheira*) is an orator's gesture, beginning a formal rhetorical address. This is Paul's most elaborate and carefully structured speech in Acts.
2. Paul's opening compliment to Agrippa is more substantive than Tertullus's flattery of Felix. The word *makarion* ('fortunate, blessed') is genuine — Agrippa's knowledge of Jewish affairs makes him an ideal judge for Paul's case.
3. Agrippa's expertise in Jewish affairs was well-known — he had authority over the Jerusalem temple and appointed high priests. The word *gnosten* ('expert, one who knows') is more than flattery; it establishes that Agrippa can evaluate the theological nuances of Paul's defense.
4. Paul appeals to public knowledge of his upbringing. The word *biosin* ('manner of life, way of living') encompasses his entire pre-conversion existence. His claim that 'all the Jews know' is a broad appeal to common knowledge.
5. Paul identifies Pharisaism as 'the strictest party' (*ten akribestaten haireisin*) of Judaism — a claim consistent with how both Josephus and the rabbis characterized the Pharisees. The conditional 'if they are willing' (*ean thelosi*) subtly implies that his accusers might not be forthcoming about facts that support his case.
6. Paul frames the entire case as being about 'the promise made by God to our fathers' (*tes eis tous pateras hemon epangelias*). This is the same theological move he made before the Sanhedrin (23:6) — centering the trial on Israel's hope rather than on alleged crimes.
7. The phrase 'our twelve tribes' (*to dodekaphylon hemon*) is remarkable — Paul speaks as if all twelve tribes still exist and worship together, despite the dispersion of the ten northern tribes. The word *ekteneia* ('earnestness, intense devotion') describes the persistent worship of the faithful remnant. Paul's rhetorical point is powerful: he is being accused by Jews for believing what all Jews hope for.
8. This rhetorical question cuts to the heart of the matter. Paul shifts from the specific resurrection of Jesus to the general principle: if God exists and is powerful, why should resurrection be considered impossible (*apiston*, 'unbelievable, incredible')? The question implicitly challenges the Sadducean and Greek skepticism about bodily resurrection.
9. Paul now narrates his pre-conversion hostility to Christianity, establishing that his transformation was not the result of prior sympathy but occurred against his own deeply held convictions. The phrase 'the name of Jesus of Nazareth' (*to onoma Iesou tou Nazoraion*) identifies the historical person whose followers Paul persecuted.
10. Paul uses the term 'the saints' (*ton hagion*) for believers — the only time in Acts this Pauline designation appears. The phrase 'cast my vote' (*katenegeka psephon*) has been debated: it could indicate Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin with voting authority, or it could be figurative for 'expressing approval.' The reference to multiple executions (plural) goes beyond Stephen's case, indicating broader persecution.
11. This is the most detailed description of Paul's persecution in any of the three accounts. The attempt to 'force them to blaspheme' (*enagkazon blasphemein*) — presumably to curse Jesus — reveals the systematic nature of the persecution. The phrase 'raging fury' (*perissos emmainomenos*) uses the language of madness, which Paul will later turn to ironic effect when Festus accuses him of madness (v. 24).
12. Paul emphasizes the official nature of his mission — 'authority and commission' (*exousias kai epitropes*) from the chief priests — to underscore that his conversion contradicted everything his former authorities wanted.
13. This account specifies the light was 'brighter than the sun' (*hyper ten lamproteta tou heliou*) — an intensification from the earlier accounts. At midday the sun is at full strength, making a light that surpasses it unmistakably supernatural. The detail that the light shone on 'those traveling with me' is unique to this account.
14. Two details are unique to this account: all the companions fell to the ground (earlier accounts differ), and the voice spoke 'in the Hebrew language' (*te Hebraidi dialekto*, i.e., Aramaic). The proverb about 'kicking against the goads' (*pros kentra laktizein*) is well-known in Greek literature (Euripides, *Bacchae* 795; Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 324) — a goad is a sharp stick used to drive oxen. The saying means resisting an irresistible force causes only self-harm. Its use in Aramaic before Paul but reported in Greek for Agrippa shows rhetorical sophistication.
15. The exchange is consistent across all three accounts. The identification 'I am Jesus' (*Ego eimi Iesous*) uses the emphatic *ego eimi* construction that echoes the divine self-revelation in the Old Testament (Exodus 3:14).
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 3:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

16. In this account, Jesus' commission is far more detailed than in chapters 9 or 22. The command 'Get up and stand on your feet' (anastethi kai stethi epi tous podas sou) echoes God's words to Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:1). The dual role — 'servant and witness' (hypereten kai martyra) — combines the language of Isaiah's servant and the apostolic witness theme of Acts.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 2:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The promise of rescue 'from the people and from the Gentiles' (ek tou laou kai ek ton ethnon) covers both Jewish and Gentile opposition — exactly what Paul has experienced. The verb apostello ('I am sending') is the root of 'apostle'; Jesus commissions Paul as his apostle to the nations. The language echoes Jeremiah 1:7-8.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 1:7-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. This verse is a compressed summary of Paul's entire theological mission, structured in three parallel movements: (1) opening eyes — from ignorance to knowledge; (2) turning from darkness to light and from Satan to God — from bondage to freedom; (3) receiving forgiveness and inheritance — from condemnation to inclusion. The language draws heavily on Isaiah 42:6-7, 16 (the servant opens blind eyes) and Isaiah 61:1 (liberty for captives). The phrase 'sanctified by faith in me' (pistei te eis eme) places faith in Jesus as the means of sanctification.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 42:6-7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 61:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. Paul addresses Agrippa directly, resuming the relationship established in verses 2-3. The phrase 'heavenly vision' (ourania optasia) characterizes the Damascus road experience in terms any educated Greco-Roman audience would understand. Paul's claim is simple: he was obedient to a divine revelation.
20. Paul summarizes his entire ministry geographically: Damascus, Jerusalem, Judea, then the Gentiles — an outward-expanding pattern that mirrors Acts' own structure (1:8). His message has two components: repentance (metanoein, inner change) and turning to God (epistrephain, outward reorientation), demonstrated by appropriate deeds (axia tes metanoias erga). This echoes John the Baptist's preaching (Luke 3:8).
21. Paul identifies the real cause of his persecution: his obedience to the heavenly vision, specifically his preaching to Gentiles. The verb diacheiristhai ('to lay hands on, to kill') is a strong word implying violent intent.
22. Paul attributes his survival to divine help (epikourias apo tou theou), not to Roman protection or personal resourcefulness. His claim to teach 'nothing beyond' (ouden ekτος) Moses and the prophets positions the gospel as the fulfillment of the Jewish Scriptures — not an innovation but a completion.
23. Paul's summary of the prophetic message has three elements: (1) the Christ must suffer (pathetos ho Christos) — a claim that scandalized Jews who expected a triumphant Messiah; (2) the Christ would be first to rise from the dead (protos ex anastaseos nekron) — not just raised, but 'first,' implying a sequence others will follow; (3) he would proclaim light to both Jews and Gentiles — universalizing the salvation. Each point can be traced to specific prophetic texts: suffering (Isaiah 53), resurrection (Psalm 16:10), and light to the nations (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6).
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 16:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 42:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. Festus interrupts — unable to contain himself at the talk of resurrection. His charge of madness (Maine, 'You are mad') echoes the ironic language Paul used of his own pre-conversion fury (emmainomenos, v. 11). The phrase 'great learning' (polla grammata) could mean 'much study of Scripture' or 'much education generally.' Festus attributes Paul's resurrection claims to intellectual excess rather than divine revelation.
25. Paul's response is calm, respectful, and pointed. He addresses Festus with full courtesy (kratiste, 'most excellent') while firmly denying the charge. The word sophrosynes ('soundness of mind, rationality, self-control') is the direct opposite of mania — Paul claims his words are not the product of frenzy but of clarity and truth.
26. Paul pivots from Festus to Agrippa, who as a Jewish king would understand the scriptural framework. The phrase 'not done in a corner' (ouk estin en gonia pepragmenon) is proverbial — the events of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection were public, not secret. This is both a historical claim and a rhetorical challenge.
27. Paul's direct question to the king is audacious. He answers his own question — 'I know that you believe' — placing Agrippa in a rhetorical trap. If Agrippa affirms belief in the prophets, Paul can argue that the prophets predicted exactly what he has described. If Agrippa denies it, he alienates his Jewish subjects.

- 28.** This famous verse is notoriously ambiguous. The Greek *en oligo me peitheis Christianon poiesai* can be read multiple ways: (1) 'In a short time you are persuading me to become a Christian' (KJV tradition — near-conversion); (2) 'With so little effort you think to make me a Christian?' (dismissive); (3) 'In short, you are trying to make me a Christian' (deflecting). The rendering captures the question as a deflection — Agrippa sidesteps Paul's trap by reframing the exchange. This is the second of only three uses of *Christianos* in the New Testament (cf. 11:26, 1 Peter 4:16).
- 29.** Paul's response is the emotional climax of the speech. He takes Agrippa's deflection and turns it into a genuine wish — not just for Agrippa but for everyone present. The final phrase 'except for these chains' (*parektos ton desmon touton*) is both poignant (he is in chains) and rhetorically powerful (he would share everything about his life except the imprisonment). The gesture implied — Paul likely raised his chained hands — would have been deeply affecting.
- 30.** The king's rising signals the end of the hearing. The order of names — king, governor, Bernice — reflects the protocol of rank. The hearing was consultative, not judicial; Agrippa had no authority to render a verdict on a case appealed to Caesar.
- 31.** The private deliberation produces a unanimous verdict of innocence — from a king, a governor, and the assembled dignitaries. This is the culminating Roman declaration of Paul's innocence in Acts, parallel to Pilate's declaration about Jesus (Luke 23:4, 14, 22).
- 32.** Agrippa's statement is the final word on Paul's legal status: he could have been released (*apolelysthai edynato*) — his innocence is beyond question. But the appeal to Caesar is irrevocable. The narrative irony is profound: the appeal that prevents Paul's release is the very mechanism that will bring him to Rome, fulfilling the Lord's promise (23:11). What appears to be a legal miscalculation is actually divine strategy.

27

Summary: *Acts 27 is one of the most vivid narrative passages in ancient literature, describing Paul's voyage to Rome and the catastrophic shipwreck on the island of Malta. The 'we' narrative resumes with detailed nautical terminology as Paul and other prisoners sail under the centurion Julius's custody. The voyage proceeds through unfavorable conditions — Paul's warning against continuing is overruled. A ferocious northeast storm called the Euraquilo catches the ship near Crete, driving it for fourteen days across the open Mediterranean. Paul receives a divine assurance that all 276 persons aboard will survive. After dramatic scenes of despair, a midnight approach to land, a failed escape attempt by the sailors, and Paul's eucharistic-like meal, the ship runs aground on Malta and breaks apart. All hands reach shore alive.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The nautical detail in this chapter is so precise that it has been used to reconstruct ancient sailing routes and seamanship practices. The 'we' narrator's firsthand account includes technical terms for sailing gear, wind conditions, navigational techniques, and ship construction that demonstrate genuine seafaring experience. Paul emerges as the de facto leader of the voyage — a prisoner who commands more authority than the captain or centurion because he speaks with divine backing. The divine promise that all 276 souls would be saved (v. 24) inverts the expected pattern: it is the prisoner who saves the ship, not the ship that carries the prisoner.*

Translation Friction: *The chapter presents Paul as having prophetic foreknowledge (vv. 10, 22-26) alongside practical leadership, which some interpreters find in tension. The 'we' sections present a narrator with genuine nautical knowledge — the level of technical detail exceeds what is typical in ancient fiction. We render the Greek maritime vocabulary with modern equivalents where possible. The number 276 (v. 37) is large for an ancient merchant vessel but not impossible for the grain ships of the Alexandria-Rome trade.*

Connections: *The storm narrative echoes Jonah 1 — another prophet on a ship in a storm, where the cargo is thrown overboard and divine intervention saves lives. Paul's breaking of bread (v. 35) echoes the Last Supper and the Emmaus road meal (Luke 24:30). The promise 'not a hair of your head will perish' (v. 34) repeats Jesus' words in Luke 21:18. The entire voyage narrative demonstrates the Lord's promise in 23:11 ('you must testify in Rome') being fulfilled through and despite natural catastrophe.*

¹When it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they handed Paul and some other prisoners over to a centurion named Julius, of the Augustan Cohort. ²We boarded a ship from Adramyttium that was about to sail to ports along the coast of Asia, and we put to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us. ³The next day we put in at Sidon, and Julius treated Paul kindly and allowed him to go to his friends and receive their care. ⁴From there we put to sea and sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. ⁵After sailing across the open sea along Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. ⁶There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us aboard it. ⁷We sailed slowly for

a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus. Since the wind did not allow us to go farther, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone. ⁸Coasting along with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea. ⁹Since much time had been lost and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast had already gone by, Paul advised them, ¹⁰Stated to them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and greatly damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives. ¹¹But the centurion was more persuaded by the pilot and the ship's owner than by what Paul said. ¹²Since the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority decided to put to sea from there, hoping somehow to reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there. ¹³When a gentle south wind began to blow, thinking they had achieved their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along the coast of Crete, close to shore. ¹⁴But before long a violent wind called the Euraquilo rushed down from the island. ¹⁵When the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. ¹⁶Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with difficulty to get the ship's boat under control. ¹⁷After hoisting it aboard, they used supports to undergird the ship. Then, fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and so were driven along. ¹⁸Since we were being violently battered by the storm, the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. ¹⁹On the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. ²⁰When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm continued to rage, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned. ²¹Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not set sail from Crete. Then you would have avoided this damage and loss. ²²But now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. ²³For this very night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood before me ²⁴Declaring, Fear not, Paul. You must be brought prior to Caesar — and, lo, God has given you all them that sail with you. ²⁵So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. ²⁶But we must run aground on some island." ²⁷When the fourteenth night had come, as we were drifting across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. ²⁸They took soundings and found twenty fathoms. A little farther on they took soundings again and found fifteen fathoms. ²⁹Fearing that we might run aground on rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. ³⁰When the sailors tried to escape from the ship and had lowered the boat into the sea, pretending that they were going to lay out anchors from the bow, ³¹Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." ³²Then the soldiers cut the ropes of the boat and let it drift away. ³³As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having eaten nothing. ³⁴Therefore I urge you to take some food, for this is for your preservation. For not a hair will perish from the head of any of you." ³⁵After saying this, he took bread, gave thanks to God in the presence of all, and after breaking it he began to eat. ³⁶Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. ³⁷We were in all 276 persons on the ship. ³⁸After they had eaten their fill, they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea. ³⁹When day came, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, and they planned to run the ship ashore there if they could. ⁴⁰So they cast off the anchors, leaving them in the sea. At the same time they untied the ropes that held the steering oars, hoisted the foresail to the wind, and made for the beach. ⁴¹But striking a sandbar where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground. The bow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the force of the waves. ⁴²The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none of them could swim away and escape. ⁴³But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for land, ⁴⁴Indeed, the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it happened that, that they escaped all safe to land.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The 'we' narrative resumes, indicating the author's presence on the voyage. The 'Augustan Cohort' (speires Sebastes) was likely a cohort honorifically named after Augustus, possibly the cohorts I Augusta attested in inscriptions from Syria. Julius's later courteous treatment of Paul (v. 3) suggests he recognized Paul's social status as a Roman citizen.
2. Adramyttium was a port city in Mysia (northwest Asia Minor). This was a coastal vessel, not the ship that would cross the open sea to Italy. Aristarchus was one of Paul's traveling companions (cf. 19:29, 20:4), here accompanying Paul voluntarily on his journey as a prisoner.

3. Julius's 'kind treatment' (philanthropos, literally 'with love of humanity') of Paul reflects the privileges due a Roman citizen even in custody. Allowing Paul to visit friends in Sidon shows considerable trust. The word epimeleias ('care, attention') suggests Paul received provisions or medical attention from the Christian community there.
4. Sailing 'under the lee of Cyprus' (hypepleusmen ten Kypron) means they passed north and east of the island, using it as a windbreak against the prevailing westerly winds. This is the opposite direction from the outbound route (21:3), demonstrating the author's awareness of seasonal wind patterns.
5. The route along the southern coast of Asia Minor, using the coastal countercurrent to make headway against westerly winds, is confirmed by ancient sailing manuals. Myra was a major port on the Lycian coast and a regular transfer point for the Egyptian grain fleet sailing to Rome.
6. The Alexandrian grain ship was part of the fleet that supplied Rome with Egyptian wheat — a critical supply line that the emperor monitored closely. These were the largest merchant vessels in the ancient Mediterranean, capable of carrying several hundred passengers plus cargo. The centurion had authority to requisition passage for his prisoner detail.
7. The slow progress and difficulty reflect the prevailing northwesterly winds of late summer in the Aegean. Cnidus is at the southwestern tip of Asia Minor. Unable to round it, the ship turned south to shelter behind Crete. Salmone (Cape Sidero) is the northeastern point of Crete.
8. Fair Havens (Kalous Limenas) is an identifiable bay on the south coast of Crete, still bearing the same name. It provided limited shelter but was not a suitable harbor for wintering. Lasea has been identified with ruins about five miles east of Fair Havens.
9. The 'Fast' (ten nesteian) is the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), which falls in September or October. After this date, Mediterranean sailing was considered hazardous; navigation typically ceased from November to March. The reference provides a chronological anchor: they are already in the danger period.
10. Paul's warning is presented as practical observation (theoro, 'I can see, I perceive') rather than explicit prophecy, though it will prove accurate. The word hybreos ('damage, injury, violence') refers to damage from the storm. Paul, as an experienced traveler who had been shipwrecked before (2 Corinthians 11:25), had practical grounds for his assessment.
11. The centurion makes the rational decision to trust the professional sailors — the kubernetes ('helmsman, pilot') and the naukleros ('ship owner, captain') — over a prisoner. The narrative creates dramatic irony: the professionals are wrong, and the prisoner speaks truth.
12. Phoenix (modern Loutro or possibly Phineka) was a better harbor on Crete's south coast, about 40 miles west of Fair Havens. The description of its orientation — 'facing southwest and northwest' (kata liba kai kata choron) — matches a harbor open to the west but sheltered from northerly storms. The decision was reasonable but fatally timed.
13. The gentle south wind (notou) seemed to confirm the decision to sail — it was exactly the wind needed to coast westward along Crete's south shore. The word doxantes ('thinking, supposing') signals that their confidence was premature.
14. The Euraquilo (Eurakulon in SBLGNT, a hybrid of Greek euros 'east wind' and Latin aquilo 'north wind') was a fierce northeaster — exactly the worst wind possible for a ship trying to coast westward along Crete's south shore. The word typhonikos ('typhoon-like, hurricane-force') indicates extreme violence. The storm hit suddenly, coming 'down from' the island — off the mountains of Crete.
15. The verb antophthalmein (literally 'to look against, to face into') is a vivid nautical metaphor — the ship could not 'look the wind in the eye.' The decision to 'give way' (epidontes, literally 'giving over') means they stopped trying to sail and let the storm drive them. This is the beginning of fourteen days of helpless drifting.
16. Cauda (modern Gavdos) is a small island about 23 miles south of Crete. Its brief windbreak gave the crew a chance to secure the ship's boat (skaphes) — the small dinghy towed behind or alongside. In rough seas, such boats became waterlogged and could damage the hull or capsize.
17. Undergirding (hypozyonnytes) involved passing ropes or cables under and around the hull to keep the planking from separating — a well-attested ancient emergency procedure called 'frapping.' The Syrtis was the feared sandbank region off the North African coast (modern Libya), a graveyard of ships. The lowered 'gear' (skeuos) was likely a sea anchor or drogue deployed to slow the drift.
18. Jettisoning cargo (ekbolen epoiounto) was a desperate measure that sacrificed valuable goods to reduce weight and raise the hull. For a grain ship, this meant dumping hundreds of tons of wheat — a significant financial loss and politically sensitive given the grain supply's importance to Rome. The parallel with Jonah 1:5 is striking.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jonah 1:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The 'ship's tackle' (ten skeuen tou ploiou) likely included spare rigging, heavy yards, and non-essential equipment. The phrase 'with their own hands' (autocheries) emphasizes the desperation — passengers and crew together were heaving equipment overboard, not just the professional sailors.
20. Without sun or stars, ancient navigation was impossible — they had no compass or instruments. The litotes 'no small storm' (cheimonos ouk oligou) is characteristic Lukan understatement for a catastrophic tempest. The loss of 'all hope' (elpis pasa) sets the stage for Paul's intervention — when human hope ends, divine assurance begins.
21. The 'long abstinence from food' (polles asitias) reflects both the difficulty of cooking in storm conditions and the seasickness and despair of the passengers. Paul's 'I told you so' (edei peitharchesantas moi) is not petulance but establishment of credibility for the prophetic message that follows.

22. Paul transitions from rebuke to encouragement. The promise is specific and extraordinary: every person will survive, though the ship will be lost. This corrects his earlier warning (v. 10), which predicted loss of life — divine revelation has updated the situation.
23. Paul identifies himself by his fundamental identity: he belongs to God and serves God. The angel's visit parallels the Lord's appearance to Paul in 23:11. Before a pagan crew, Paul speaks of 'the God' (tou theou) rather than using Jewish terminology — adapting his language to his audience while maintaining theological substance.
24. The divine dei ('you must') reaffirms the necessity established in 23:11. The phrase 'God has graciously given you' (kecharistai soi ho theos) uses the verb charizomai — Paul's fellow passengers are saved as a gift of grace on account of Paul's presence. The 276 people on the ship survive because of one prisoner's divine calling.
25. Paul's personal declaration — 'I have faith in God' (pisteuo gar to theo) — is the foundation of his confidence. His faith is not in favorable winds or skilled sailors but in the character of God who has spoken. The phrase 'exactly as I have been told' (katho hon tropon lelaetai moi) claims precise fulfillment.
26. Paul adds a specific prediction: the shipwreck will occur on an island. The divine dei ('we must') again indicates necessity. This prediction will prove accurate when they reach Malta (28:1).
27. Fourteen days of drifting places the ship approximately in the central Mediterranean. The 'Adriatic' (Adria) in ancient usage covered a much larger area than the modern Adriatic Sea — it included the waters between Crete, Italy, and North Africa. The sailors' detection of land — probably hearing breakers or noticing a change in wave patterns — demonstrates professional seamanship even in crisis.
28. Sounding (bolisantes, from bolis, 'a lead weight') involved dropping a weighted line to measure depth. Twenty fathoms (about 120 feet) decreasing to fifteen fathoms (about 90 feet) confirms they were approaching a shelving seabed — consistent with the approach to Malta from the east. This detail is so precise that it has been verified against modern charts of St. Paul's Bay, Malta.
29. Anchoring from the stern (ek prymnes) rather than the bow was a deliberate tactic — it kept the ship oriented toward the shore so they could beach it at dawn. Four anchors provided maximum holding power. The phrase 'prayed for daylight' (euchonto hemeran genesthai) captures the desperate waiting of that final night.
30. The sailors' attempt to abandon ship under a plausible pretext — laying bow anchors — is a realistic detail. Professional sailors knew their best chance of survival was in the small boat rather than on the disintegrating ship. But if the sailors escaped, the remaining passengers and soldiers would have no one capable of beaching the vessel.
31. Paul alerts the military, not the captain — recognizing where actual authority lies. His warning that survival requires the sailors' presence balances divine promise with human agency: God has promised to save everyone, but that promise works through the sailors' skill in beaching the ship.
32. The soldiers' drastic action — cutting away the only lifeboat — eliminates the escape route but also ensures the sailors must stay and help. It demonstrates the centurion's trust in Paul over the sailors. The loss of the boat means everyone's fate is bound together.
33. Paul takes practical leadership as dawn approaches. The 'fourteen days without food' likely means fourteen days of irregular, inadequate eating rather than absolute fasting — in extreme storm conditions, preparing and keeping down food would have been nearly impossible.
34. Paul's assurance that 'not a hair will perish from your head' (oudenos gar hymon thrix apo tes kephales apoleitai) quotes Jesus' words from Luke 21:18. The connection is deliberate — the same God who protects his people through tribulation in the end times protects them through a storm at sea. The word soterias ('preservation, salvation') functions on two levels: physical survival and deeper deliverance.
35. The sequence — taking bread, giving thanks, breaking it — echoes the eucharistic actions of Jesus at the Last Supper (Luke 22:19) and the Emmaus meal (Luke 24:30). Whether Paul intended a formal Eucharist or simply a Jewish meal blessing before a mixed pagan-Jewish audience is debated. Either way, Luke's language evokes eucharistic resonance for his readers. Paul thanks God publicly (enopion panton) before a crew that mostly worships other gods — a bold act of witness.
36. Paul's leadership has transformed the mood of the entire ship — from despair (v. 20) to courage (euthumoi, 'cheerful, encouraged'). The prisoner has become the moral authority.
37. The specific number — 276 (diakosiai hebdomekonta hex) — has the ring of an eyewitness detail. Large Alexandrian grain ships could carry several hundred passengers plus crew. Josephus reports traveling to Rome on a ship with 600 aboard (Life 15). The number also recalls the total who survived, fulfilling the angel's promise (v. 24).
38. The wheat (siton) — the primary cargo of the Alexandrian grain ship — is now dumped to lighten the vessel for beaching. This final jettisoning represents the total loss of the ship's commercial value. Having eaten, the passengers have strength for the ordeal ahead.
39. The sailors did not recognize the coast — indicating they were off normal shipping routes. The 'bay with a beach' (kolpon echonta aigialon) has been identified with St. Paul's Bay on Malta's northeast coast, which has a sandy beach within a bay, exactly matching this description.
40. The technical sequence is precise: (1) slip the anchor cables (faster than hauling them up); (2) free the steering oars (which had been lashed during the storm); (3) raise the foresail (artemon, a small sail at the bow) to provide steerage. Each action is the correct seamanship procedure for beaching a disabled vessel. The detail confirms the narrator's nautical competence.

41. A 'place where two seas met' (topon dithalassonon) describes a shoal or sandbar between two bodies of water — consistent with the small island (Salmonetta) in St. Paul's Bay where currents from two directions converge. The ship's bow wedged into the sand while the stern, exposed to the surf, began to disintegrate. The image is vivid and terrifying.
42. Under Roman military law, a soldier who lost a prisoner could face the prisoner's sentence, including death (cf. 12:19, 16:27). The soldiers' plan to execute the prisoners was a rational, self-preserving calculation — brutal but legally grounded. The prisoners' lives depended entirely on the centurion's next decision.
43. The centurion Julius's desire to save Paul (diasosai ton Paulon) overrides military protocol and saves all the prisoners' lives. Paul's influence has grown from that of a mere prisoner to a figure the centurion is willing to take career risks to protect. The evacuation is orderly: swimmers first, then the rest.
44. The final sentence — 'all were brought safely to land' (pantas diasothennai epi ten gen) — fulfills the angel's promise (v. 24) and Paul's assurance (v. 22). All 276 persons survive. The verb diasothennai ('were brought safely through') carries its full theological weight: God's deliverance is complete. The wreckage that kills the ship saves the passengers — a fitting image for the narrative theology of Acts, where destruction and preservation work together in the divine plan.

28

Summary: *Acts 28 is the final chapter of Luke's two-volume work, bringing Paul's journey to its destination: Rome. After the shipwreck, the survivors discover they have landed on Malta. Paul is bitten by a viper but suffers no harm, astonishing the locals. He heals the father of the island's chief official Publius and many other islanders. After three months, the company sails to Syracuse, Rhegium, and Puteoli, then travels overland to Rome, where Christians come out to meet Paul along the Appian Way. In Rome, Paul lives under house arrest for two years, freely receiving visitors and proclaiming the kingdom of God. His final recorded act is a meeting with Jewish leaders in which he quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 — the prophecy of hearing without understanding — and declares that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles. The book ends with Paul preaching 'without hindrance.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The viper episode (vv. 3-6) inverts the expected pattern: the Maltese first think Paul is a murderer receiving divine justice, then decide he is a god — both assessments are wrong, but Luke lets the scene speak for itself. The final scene in Rome (vv. 17-31) is the theological conclusion not just of Acts but of Luke's entire project. Paul's quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10 — the same passage Jesus quoted in Luke 8:10 and the same one used in all four Gospels — serves as the prophetic explanation for Israel's partial rejection of the gospel. The final word of Acts, akolutos ('without hindrance'), is programmatic: despite chains, trials, storms, and snakebite, nothing ultimately hinders the proclamation of the gospel.*

Translation Friction: *The ending of Acts has puzzled readers for centuries. Luke does not narrate the outcome of Paul's trial, his possible release, further travels, or death. Whether this indicates Luke wrote before the trial's conclusion, chose to end on a theological note rather than a biographical one, or had other reasons remains debated. We render the text as given without speculating about what follows. The Isaiah quotation (vv. 26-27) raises the perennial question of whether Israel's unbelief is divinely caused or divinely permitted — Paul's use of the passage emphasizes the prophetic pattern rather than resolving the theological tension.*

Connections: *The Malta events connect to Jesus' promise in Mark 16:18 (handling serpents and healing the sick). Paul's arrival in Rome fulfills the divine dei of 19:21, 23:11, and 27:24. The Isaiah 6 quotation creates an inclusio with Jesus' use of the same passage in Luke 8:10. The phrase 'the kingdom of God' in the final verse connects to the opening question of Acts 1:3, 6 — the book begins and ends with the kingdom. The declaration that salvation goes 'to the Gentiles' (v. 28) echoes the programmatic statement of 13:46-47 and fulfills the Isaianic servant's mission to be 'a light for the nations' (Isaiah 49:6, quoted in Acts 13:47).*

¹After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. ²The native people showed us extraordinary kindness. They kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and it was cold. ³When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand. ⁴When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he was saved from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." ⁵He, however, shook the creature off into

the fire and suffered no harm. ⁶They were expecting him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they waited a long time and saw nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. ⁷Now in the vicinity of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius. He welcomed us and hosted us hospitably for three days. ⁸It happened that the father of Publius was lying sick with fever and dysentery. Paul visited him, and after praying and laying his hands on him, he healed him. ⁹After this happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were healed. ¹⁰They also honored us with many gifts, and when we were ready to sail, they supplied us with everything we needed. ¹¹After three months we set sail in a ship of Alexandria that had wintered at the island, with the Twin Brothers as its figurehead. ¹²Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. ¹³From there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium. After one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. ¹⁴There we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. ¹⁵The brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage. ¹⁶When we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him. ¹⁷After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews. When they had gathered, he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. ¹⁸When they had examined me, they wanted to release me because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. ¹⁹But since the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar — not that I had any charge to bring against my nation. ²⁰For this reason, then, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain." ²¹They said to him, "We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken anything bad about you. ²²But we would like to hear from you what your views are, for regarding this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against." ²³When they had set a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning until evening he explained to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them about Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets. ²⁴Some were convinced by what he said, but others refused to believe. ²⁵Disagreeing among themselves, they began to leave. Paul made one final statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: ²⁶'Go to this people and say: You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive. ²⁷For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.' ²⁸Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen." ³⁰He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, ³¹Indeed, preaching God's reign, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The 'we' narration confirms the author's continued presence. The word diasothentes ('brought safely through') echoes 27:44, maintaining the salvation vocabulary. Malta (Melite) was a significant island with a Phoenician heritage and Roman administration. The identification with modern Malta (rather than the Adriatic island Mljet) is supported by the nautical details of chapter 27.
2. The word barbaroi ('barbarians, native people') does not imply savagery — it simply means non-Greek speakers. Malta's population spoke a Punic dialect. The litotes 'no ordinary kindness' (ou ten tuchousan philanthropian) means 'extraordinary, exceptional.' The practical hospitality — fire, shelter from rain and cold — for 276 strangers is remarkable.
3. Paul participates in the practical work alongside everyone else — gathering firewood is not beneath him. The echidna ('viper') emerged from the bundled sticks, driven out by the fire's heat. The verb kathepse ('fastened on, seized') indicates the snake attached itself to his hand, whether by biting or coiling. No venomous vipers are found on Malta today, but this may reflect habitat changes over two millennia.
4. The Maltese interpret the snakebite through the lens of divine retribution: a man who survived the sea must be a murderer whom Dike (the Greek goddess of Justice) is pursuing. This folk theology — that misfortune indicates guilt — is the same logic Job's friends used and that Jesus challenged in Luke 13:1-5 and John 9:2-3.
5. Paul's calm reaction — simply shaking the viper into the fire — contrasts with the bystanders' alarm. The statement 'suffered no harm' (epathen ouden kakon) is emphatic. This recalls Jesus' promise to his disciples about authority over serpents (Luke 10:19) and the longer ending of Mark (16:18).

6. The crowd swings from one extreme ('murderer') to the other ('a god') — the same pattern seen at Lystra (14:11-18). Luke records both reactions without correction, letting the irony stand. The expected symptoms — swelling (*pimprasthai*) or sudden death — are medically accurate for a viper bite. Paul is neither a murderer nor a god, but the scene demonstrates divine protection.
7. The title 'leading man' (proto, literally 'first man') of the island has been confirmed by inscriptions from Malta using the Latin equivalent *princeps*. Publius is a Roman praenomen, suggesting Roman administration. His hospitality of 'three days' for a large group would have been a significant expense.
8. The medical description — 'fever and dysentery' (*pyretois kai dysenterio*) — uses precise clinical terminology that reflects Luke's medical vocabulary (cf. Colossians 4:14). The plural 'fevers' (*pyretois*) may indicate recurrent bouts, consistent with brucellosis (Malta fever), which was endemic on the island. Paul heals through prayer and laying on of hands — the same method used by Jesus and the apostles.
9. The healing ministry extends beyond Publius's father to the broader island population. Luke uses two different verbs: *iasato* ('healed,' v. 8, often used for miraculous healing) and *etherapeuonto* ('were treated/healed,' here, which could also encompass medical care). The imperfect tense suggests ongoing ministry during their three-month stay.
10. The Maltese respond with gratitude — 'many honors' (*pollais timais*) likely included both monetary gifts and provisions. The phrase 'everything we needed' (*ta pros tas chreias*) covers supplies for the remaining voyage to Italy. The shipwrecked travelers, who arrived with nothing, leave fully provisioned.
11. The three months spent on Malta covered the winter sailing closure (roughly November to February). The new ship is another Alexandrian grain vessel, identified by its figurehead: the Dioskouroi (Castor and Pollux), the twin sons of Zeus who were patron gods of sailors. The detail about the figurehead is a characteristically precise eyewitness observation.
12. Syracuse was the chief city of Sicily and a major port on the route from the eastern Mediterranean to Italy. The three-day stop likely awaited favorable winds for the crossing of the Strait of Messina.
13. The verb *perielontes* ('making a circuit, tacking') suggests they had to sail indirectly due to wind conditions. Rhegium (modern Reggio di Calabria) is at the toe of Italy. The south wind carried them swiftly up the coast to Puteoli (modern Pozzuoli), near Naples — the main port for the Alexandrian grain fleet and the gateway to Rome.
14. The existence of a Christian community at Puteoli — one of Italy's most important ports — confirms the early spread of Christianity through trade routes. The centurion's willingness to allow a seven-day stay (another indication of Paul's privileged treatment) suggests Julius was in no hurry. The sentence 'And so we came to Rome' (*kai houtos eis ten Rhomen elthamen*) is quietly monumental — the journey promised in 19:21 and guaranteed in 23:11 is now accomplished.
15. Two groups of Roman Christians come out to meet Paul at different points along the Via Appia (Appian Way): the Forum of Appius (about 43 miles from Rome) and Three Taverns (about 33 miles from Rome). This reception — going out to meet an arriving dignitary — was a formal act of honor called an *apantesis*. Paul's response — thanksgiving and courage (*tharsos*, the same word the Lord used in 23:11) — shows his emotional state after years of imprisonment and a harrowing voyage.
16. Paul's arrangement — private quarters with a single guard (*custodia militaris*) — was the lightest form of Roman custody. The SBLGNT omits the reference to the centurion delivering prisoners to the captain of the guard (found in the Textus Receptus). Paul's ability to receive visitors (vv. 17, 23, 30) confirms this was house arrest, not imprisonment.
17. Paul follows his consistent pattern: he approaches the Jewish community first (cf. 13:5, 14, 17:1-2, 18:4). The three-day interval allowed him to settle in. His address to the Roman Jewish leaders summarizes his case, maintaining that he committed no offense against the Jewish people or ancestral customs — the same defense given throughout Acts 22-26.
18. Paul summarizes the Roman officials' repeated verdict of innocence (cf. 23:29, 25:25, 26:31-32). The phrase 'no reason for the death penalty' (*medemian aitian thanatou*) is the consistent Roman finding throughout Paul's trials.
19. Paul emphasizes that his appeal to Caesar was defensive, not offensive — he is not counter-suing the Jewish community. The phrase 'not that I had any charge against my nation' (*ouch hos tou ethnous mou echon ti kategorein*) is a diplomatic gesture toward the Roman Jewish community.
20. Paul's climactic statement identifies his imprisonment with 'the hope of Israel' (*tes elpidos tou Israel*) — the same phrase used in 26:6-7. The singular 'chain' (*halysin*) refers to the chain binding him to his guard. Paul's point is theological: he is in chains not despite being a faithful Jew but because of Israel's own hope — the resurrection of the dead and the coming of the Messiah.
21. The Roman Jewish leaders claim ignorance of Paul's case — no letters from Jerusalem, no visiting Jews with negative reports. Whether this is entirely accurate or diplomatically cautious is unclear. The winter sailing closure during which Paul traveled may have prevented advance communication.
22. The Jewish leaders' response is notable: they want to hear Paul's views directly. Their characterization of Christianity as a 'sect' (*haireseos*) that is 'everywhere spoken against' (*pantachou antilegetai*) reflects the mixed reception the early church received. The language is neutral to skeptical — they are open to hearing but aware of the controversy.
23. This extended session — 'from morning until evening' (*apo proi heos hesperas*) — demonstrates the depth and seriousness of the engagement. Paul's method is scriptural persuasion: he argues from the Law and the Prophets that Jesus is the fulfillment of Israel's hope. The combination of 'the

kingdom of God' and 'Jesus' summarizes the content of all apostolic preaching in Acts.

- 24.** The response is divided — exactly the pattern that has characterized Jewish responses to the gospel throughout Acts. Some are 'convinced' (epeithonto); others 'refused to believe' (epistoun). This divided response triggers Paul's final prophetic declaration.
- 25.** The word asymphonoi ('disagreeing, not in harmony') describes the divided state in which the group departs. Paul's 'one word' (hrema hen) is actually an extended quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10 — the prophetic passage most frequently cited in the New Testament to explain Israel's unbelief (cf. Matthew 13:14-15, Mark 4:12, Luke 8:10, John 12:40, Romans 11:8).
- 25.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 26.** Paul quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 from the Septuagint. The passage is from Isaiah's commissioning — God tells the prophet that his message will not be received. The Hebrew intensifying construction ('hearing you will hear') emphasizes the completeness of the failure to comprehend. Luke places this quotation at the very end of his two-volume work, giving it climactic theological significance.
- 26.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 6:9-10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 27.** The threefold diagnosis — dull heart, heavy ears, closed eyes — describes a progressive hardening against God's message. The sequence reverses in the potential cure: seeing, hearing, understanding, turning. The verb iasomi ('I would heal') holds out the possibility of restoration — the door is not absolutely shut. In Isaiah's original context, this was a temporary condition, not a permanent sentence.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 6:9-10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** Paul's declaration — 'this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles' (tois ethnesin apostale touto to soterion tou theou) — echoes his earlier turning points at Antioch (13:46) and Corinth (18:6). The phrase 'they will listen' (autoi kai akousontai) is both a prediction and a contrast with Israel's failure to hear (v. 27). This is the theological climax of Acts: the gospel, offered first to Israel, now goes freely to the nations.
- 29.** This verse is not present in the SBLGNT critical text. It appears in the Textus Receptus and thus in the KJV, but the earliest and best manuscripts lack it. We follow the critical text and note the verse's absence.
- 30.** The 'two whole years' (dietian holon) specifies Paul's house arrest. The phrase 'at his own expense' (en idio misthomati) indicates Paul rented his quarters — possibly funded by the churches or by his own work. The open-door policy — 'welcoming all who came' (apedecheto pantas) — shows unrestricted access despite his custody.
- 31.** The final verse of Acts is its theological summary. Paul's message has two components — 'the kingdom of God' and 'the Lord Jesus Christ' — encompassing the entire apostolic proclamation. The phrase 'with all boldness' (meta pases parresias) echoes the prayer of Acts 4:29. The final word, akolytos ('without hindrance, unhindered'), is the last word Luke writes. Despite imprisonment, opposition, storms, and snakebite, nothing stops the advance of the gospel. The word is adverbial, modifying everything — Paul preaches, teaches, and lives unhindered. It is a quietly triumphant ending: the prisoner is free, and the Word of God is unchained.

Romans

1

Summary: *Romans 1 opens with Paul's self-introduction as an apostle set apart for the gospel, expressing his longing to visit the Roman believers. He then states the letter's thesis: the gospel is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, because in it God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith (1:16-17). The chapter then turns to the universal human problem — God's wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, because what can be known about God is evident from creation, yet humanity suppressed this truth, exchanged God's glory for idols, and was given over to degrading passions and a debased mind.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verses 16-17 function as the thesis statement for the entire letter and arguably for Pauline theology as a whole. The phrase 'from faith to faith' (ek pisteos eis pistin) has generated centuries of interpretation. Paul's argument in 1:18-32 is not merely moral condemnation but a carefully structured case that all humanity stands under divine judgment — a setup for the surprising turn in chapter 2 where Paul indicts the moral judge as well. The vice list in verses 29-31 follows Greco-Roman rhetorical conventions but is grounded in the theological logic of idolatry producing moral disorder.*

Translation Friction: *The Greek dikaiosyne theou ('righteousness of God') in verse 17 is notoriously complex — it can mean God's own righteousness, the righteousness God gives, or the righteousness that comes from God. We render it as 'the righteousness of God' and note the ambiguity. Verses 26-27 address same-sex relations in language that has been intensely debated; we render the Greek as given without softening or amplifying. The phrase 'para physin' ('contrary to nature') reflects Paul's first-century understanding of the created order.*

Connections: *The Habakkuk 2:4 quotation in verse 17 ('the righteous shall live by faith') is foundational to Reformation theology and connects to Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38. The creation theology of 1:19-20 echoes Psalm 19 and Wisdom of Solomon 13. The pattern of 'God gave them over' (paredoken, vv. 24, 26, 28) structures the wrath section and will be contrasted with God 'giving over' his Son in 8:32.*

¹Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God — ²(Which he had promised afore by his God's spokespersons in the sacred scriptures.). ³Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was appointed of the seed of David in keeping with to the flesh;. ⁴Declared to be the Descendant of God with authority, according to the inner life of holiness, by the resurrection from the no longer alive:. ⁵By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to

the faith in the midst of all nations, for his name:.⁶ In the midst of whom are you also the called of Jesus Christ:.⁷ To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.⁸ First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world.⁹ For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I mention you.¹⁰ I constantly pray, asking that somehow, by God's will, I may finally succeed in coming to visit you.¹¹ For I long to see you, so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you —¹² What I mean is that we will encourage each other through the faith we share — both yours and mine.¹³ I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that I often planned to come to you — but have been prevented until now — so that I might have some fruit among you as well, just as among the rest of the nations.¹⁴ I am under obligation both to Greeks and to non-Greeks, both to the wise and to the foolish.¹⁵ So, for my part, I am eager to proclaim the gospel to you who are in Rome as well.¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes — to the Jew first and also to the Greek.¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written: "The righteous one will live by faith."¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people who suppress the truth by their unrighteousness,¹⁹ On account of the fact that that which may be known of God is manifest in them. For God has shewed it to them.²⁰ For his invisible attributes — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.²¹ For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give him thanks, but became futile in their thinking, and their senseless hearts were darkened.²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools,²³ Changed the splendor of the uncorruptible God into an image appointed like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping matters.²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the desires of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.²⁵ They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.²⁶ For this reason God gave them over to dishonorable passions. For their females exchanged natural sexual relations for those contrary to nature,²⁷ Indeed, likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another. Men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.²⁸ And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do what is not proper —²⁹ Being overflowing with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness. Full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity. Whisperers,.³⁰ Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil matters, rebellious to parents,.³¹ Without discernment, covenantbreakers, without normal affection, relentless, unmerciful:.³² Although they know God's righteous decree — that those who practice such things deserve death — they not only do them but also approve of those who practice them.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *doulos* means 'slave' or 'bondservant,' not merely 'servant.' It carries connotations of total ownership and devotion. We render 'servant' to maintain the dignity of the self-designation while noting the stronger Greek sense. The SBLGNT reads 'Christ Jesus' (*Christou Iesou*) rather than the KJV's 'Jesus Christ' — the order varies in manuscripts.
2. The verb *proepengeilato* ('promised beforehand') is a compound emphasizing prior commitment. Paul establishes from the outset that the gospel is not an innovation but the fulfillment of Israel's scriptural hope. The phrase 'holy Scriptures' (*graphais hagiáis*) refers to what Christians call the Old Testament.
3. The phrase *kata sarka* ('according to the flesh') limits the Davidic descent to the human, physical dimension — setting up the contrast with *kata pneuma* ('according to the Spirit') in verse 4. The Greek *genomenou* ('having become, born') from *ginomai* emphasizes the incarnation: the Son entered into human lineage.
4. The verb *horisthentos* ('declared, appointed, designated') does not mean Jesus became the Son at the resurrection but that the resurrection publicly demonstrated and vindicated his identity. The phrase *pneuma hagiosynes* ('Spirit of holiness') is unusual — it may be a Semitic idiom for the Holy Spirit or may refer to Christ's own spirit of holiness. We capitalize 'Spirit' as the most likely referent is the Holy Spirit's role in resurrection.

5. The phrase *hypakoēn pisteōs* ('obedience of faith') is programmatic for Romans and its meaning is debated — it could mean 'the obedience that is faith,' 'the obedience that comes from faith,' or 'obedience to the faith.' The genitive is likely epexegetical: faith itself is the obedience Paul calls for. The same phrase bookends the letter (cf. 16:26).
5. The word *ethnesin* ('nations') is the standard Greek term that can mean 'Gentiles' or 'nations.' Paul's apostolic commission is specifically to non-Jewish peoples.
6. The phrase *klētoi Iēsou Christou* ('called of Jesus Christ') can be parsed as 'called by Jesus Christ' (genitive of agent) or 'called to belong to Jesus Christ' (possessive genitive). We render the possessive sense, which fits the context of believers' identity. The Roman Christians are included among the nations to whom Paul has been sent.
7. Paul's greeting combines the standard Greek epistolary greeting (*charis*, 'grace') with the Hebrew *shalom* greeting (*eirēnē*, 'peace'). The word *hagiois* ('saints, holy ones') does not mean morally perfected people but those set apart by God's call — corresponding to the Hebrew *qadosh*. Paul places God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ on the same level as the joint source of grace and peace.
8. The verb *katangelletai* ('is proclaimed, announced') is stronger than the KJV's 'spoken of' — it implies active, deliberate proclamation. 'The whole world' (*holō tō kosmō*) is hyperbolic, referring to the Roman Empire and the network of early Christian communities, but it testifies to Rome's strategic importance.
9. Paul invokes God as witness — a solemn oath formula rooted in Old Testament covenant practice. The verb *latreuō* ('I serve, worship') is cultic language, used in the Septuagint for priestly and temple service. Paul redefines worship: his liturgical service is gospel proclamation.
10. The verb *euodōthēsomai* ('I may be prospered, succeed on my journey') contains the root *hodos* ('road, way'). Paul's desire to visit Rome has been repeatedly frustrated (cf. 15:22), and he subordinates his travel plans to God's will — a significant qualifier given that his actual arrival in Rome will come as a prisoner (Acts 28).
11. The word *charisma* ('gift of grace, spiritual gift') shares the root of *charis* ('grace'). Paul immediately qualifies this somewhat presumptuous statement in verse 12, showing pastoral sensitivity toward a church he did not found.
12. Paul corrects the potential impression of verse 11 that he would arrive as a superior dispensing gifts. The compound verb *symparaklēthēnai* ('to be encouraged together') emphasizes mutuality. Paul acknowledges that he, too, will benefit from the Roman believers' faith.
13. The formula *ou thelō hymas agnoein* ('I do not want you to be unaware') is a standard Pauline disclosure formula (cf. 11:25; 1 Corinthians 10:1; 12:1). We render *adelphoi* as 'brothers and sisters' since the Greek term functioned as an inclusive address for the whole community. Paul does not specify what prevented him — the passive *ekōlythēn* ('I was prevented') may imply divine hindrance or practical obstacles.
14. The Greek-barbarian distinction was the fundamental cultural divide of the ancient world: *Hellēnes* were Greek-speakers, *barbaroi* were everyone else (the term originated as onomatopoeia for incomprehensible speech — 'bar-bar'). We render *barbarois* as 'non-Greeks' to avoid the modern connotation of 'barbaric.' Paul's obligation crosses every cultural boundary.
15. The adjective *prothymon* ('eager, ready, willing') conveys personal enthusiasm. The verb *euangelisasthai* ('to proclaim good news') shares the root of *euangelion* ('gospel'). Paul's eagerness to preach in Rome — the imperial capital — reflects the universal scope of his commission.
16. The SBLGNT omits 'of Christ' (*tou Christou*) after 'gospel,' which appears in later manuscripts reflected in the KJV. We follow the critical text. The verb *epaischynomai* ('I am ashamed') carries social weight — in the honor-shame culture of Rome, the gospel of a crucified Jew would invite ridicule. Paul's 'not ashamed' is an understatement (*litotes*) meaning 'I am proud of.'
16. The phrase *Ioudaiō te prōton kai Hellēni* ('to the Jew first and also to the Greek') establishes the salvation-historical priority of Israel that Paul will defend in chapters 9–11, while insisting on the universality of the gospel.
17. The phrase *dikaiosynē theou* ('righteousness of God') is the theological center of Romans. The genitive *theou* can be subjective ('God's own righteousness'), objective ('the righteousness that comes from God'), or both simultaneously. Luther's breakthrough reading — that this is a righteousness God gives, not demands — launched the Reformation.
17. The quotation from Habakkuk 2:4 can be parsed two ways: 'the righteous-by-faith will live' or 'the righteous will live by faith.' Paul likely intends both senses. The Hebrew of Habakkuk reads 'by his faithfulness' (*be'emunato*), using *emunah*.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Habakkuk 2:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The parallel structure with verse 17 is deliberate: God's righteousness is 'revealed' (*apokalyptetai*) in the gospel (v. 17), and God's wrath is 'revealed' (*apokalyptetai*) against sin (v. 18). Both are present realities, not merely future events. The verb *katechontōn* means 'to hold down, suppress, restrain' — humanity actively suppresses truth, not merely ignores it. The word *adikian* ('unrighteousness') is the direct negation of *dikaiosynē* ('righteousness').
19. The phrase *gnōston tou theou* ('what is knowable of God') implies a limited, partial knowledge — not everything about God, but enough to leave humanity without excuse (v. 20). The repetition of *phaneron/ephanerōsen* ('plain/made plain') emphasizes that this knowledge is not hidden but actively disclosed by God.

- 20.** Paul employs a deliberate paradox: the 'invisible' (aorata) attributes are 'clearly seen' (kathoratai). The knowledge of God comes through rational reflection on creation (noumena, 'being understood by the mind'), not through mystical experience. The word *theiotēs* ('divine nature, divinity') differs from *theotēs* ('deity, godhead') used in Colossians 2:9 — *theiotēs* refers to divine qualities perceivable in creation, not the full essence of God. The result is that humanity is *anapologētos* ('without defense, without excuse').
- 21.** The verb *edoxasan* ('glorified, honored') connects to the glory exchange in verse 23. The failure is twofold: refusing to honor God and refusing to give thanks. The verb *emataiōthēsan* ('became futile, empty') echoes the Septuagint's description of idol worship (cf. Jeremiah 2:5; 2 Kings 17:15). The 'heart' (*kardia*) in biblical usage is the center of thought and will, not primarily emotion.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 2:5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Kings 17:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 22.** The verb *emōranthēsan* ('became foolish, were made foolish') is the root of the English 'moron.' The irony is sharp: the pursuit of wisdom apart from acknowledging God produces its opposite. This echoes the wisdom tradition of Proverbs 1:7 ('The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction').
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Proverbs 1:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** The verb *ēllaxan* ('exchanged') introduces the 'exchange' motif that structures 1:18-32: humanity exchanged God's glory (v. 23), exchanged the truth for a lie (v. 25), and exchanged natural relations (v. 26). The descending list — humans, birds, animals, reptiles — mirrors the creation order of Genesis 1 in reverse, depicting idolatry as de-creation. The language echoes Psalm 106:20 and Jeremiah 2:11 on Israel's own idol worship.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 106:20 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 2:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 24.** The verb *paredōken* ('gave over, handed over') is the first of three occurrences (vv. 24, 26, 28) that structure this section. God's wrath is expressed not by active punishment but by allowing human choices to reach their natural consequences — a judicial handing over to the trajectory already chosen. The same verb is used of Christ being 'handed over' to death (4:25; 8:32), creating a profound theological contrast.
- 25.** The second 'exchange' (*metēllaxan*): truth for falsehood. The Greek *para ton ktisanta* ('rather than the Creator') means 'instead of,' not merely 'more than' as the KJV suggests. This is replacement, not comparison. Paul breaks into a doxology ('who is blessed forever, Amen') — even in describing idolatry, he cannot mention the Creator without praising him.
- 26.** The second 'God gave them over' (*paredōken*). The third 'exchange' (*metēllaxan*) now applies to sexual practice. The phrase *para physin* ('contrary to nature') reflects Paul's understanding of the created order, drawing on both Jewish creation theology and Greco-Roman natural law concepts. The word *thēleiai* ('females') rather than *gynaikes* ('women') uses biological rather than social terminology, as does *arsenes* ('males') in verse 27.
- 27.** The verb *exekauthēsan* ('were inflamed, burned') denotes intense, consuming desire. The word *aschēmosynēn* ('shameless acts, indecency') is used in the Septuagint of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 for sexual prohibitions. The phrase *antimisthian* ('recompense, due penalty') suggests that the disordered desire is itself part of the judgment — the consequence is built into the act. Paul presents same-sex relations as symptomatic of the broader exchange of Creator for creature.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 18:22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** The third 'God gave them over' (*paredōken*). Paul employs a wordplay: they did not *edokimasan* ('approve, consider worthy') to acknowledge God, so God gave them over to an *adokimon* ('unapproved, debased, failing the test') mind. The same root (*dokimos*, 'tested, approved') appears in both, creating an ironic correspondence between human rejection and divine response.
- 29.** The vice list follows Greco-Roman rhetorical convention but is grounded in Paul's theological argument: the debased mind (v. 28) produces debased behavior. The Greek contains a wordplay between *phthonou* ('envy') and *phonou* ('murder') — the words differ by one letter, suggesting that envy and violence are closely linked. The SBLGNT does not include *porneia* ('fornication') which appears in some manuscripts reflected in the KJV.
- 30.** The word *theostygeis* ('God-haters') can also be rendered 'hateful to God' (passive rather than active), but the active sense fits Paul's argument better — those who refuse to acknowledge God develop active hostility toward him. The list moves from social vices to spiritual rebellion to family breakdown, suggesting that the corruption permeates every sphere.
- 31.** The four alpha-privative adjectives (a- prefix negating each quality) create a staccato rhetorical effect: *asynē-tous*, *asyn-the-tous*, *a-storgous*, *an-eleēmonas*. Each describes the absence of a basic human quality. *Asynthetous* ('faithless, covenant-breaking') is particularly significant in a letter about covenant faithfulness. *Astorgous* ('without natural affection') denotes the absence of *storge*, the instinctive family love.

32. The climax of the argument: the deepest level of depravity is not merely doing evil but celebrating it in others. The word *dikaiōma* ('righteous decree, just requirement') shows that even in their rebellion, people retain knowledge of God's moral standard. Paul uses two different verbs for 'do' — *prassō* (habitual practice) and *poieō* (performing acts) — though the distinction may be stylistic rather than semantic here.

2

Summary: *Romans 2 turns the argument against the moral judge — the one who condemns the vices listed in chapter 1 while practicing the same things. Paul argues that God's judgment is impartial and based on deeds, not ethnic identity or possession of the law. He addresses the Jewish interlocutor directly, arguing that circumcision and Torah possession without obedience are worthless, while uncircumcised Gentiles who keep the law's requirements will condemn those who have the written code but violate it.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's rhetorical strategy is devastating: having described Gentile sinfulness in chapter 1, he now springs a trap on the Jewish reader who nodded along. The diatribe style — addressing an imaginary interlocutor — was a standard Stoic philosophical technique that Paul adapts for theological argument. The distinction between 'hearers of the law' and 'doers of the law' (v. 13) anticipates James 1:22-25. Paul's concept of the law 'written on hearts' (v. 15) echoes Jeremiah 31:33.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between 2:6-11 (judgment by works) and 3:20-28 (justification by faith apart from works) is one of the most debated tensions in Pauline theology. We render both passages faithfully without harmonizing. The identity of the Gentiles who 'do by nature the things of the law' (v. 14) is disputed — they may be moral pagans, Gentile Christians, or a hypothetical case.*

Connections: *The 'day of wrath' (v. 5) connects to the Old Testament Day of the LORD tradition (Amos 5:18; Zephaniah 1:15). The law written on hearts (v. 15) echoes Jeremiah 31:33. Paul's argument about true circumcision (vv. 28-29) develops Deuteronomy 30:6 and Jeremiah 4:4. The impartiality of God (v. 11) reflects Deuteronomy 10:17.*

¹Therefore you have no excuse, every one of you who passes judgment. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you who judge practice the very same things. ²We know that God's judgment against those who practice such things is based on truth. ³Do you suppose, you who judge those who practice such things yet do them yourself, that you will escape God's judgment? ⁴Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? ⁵But because of your hard and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed, ⁶He will repay each person according to their works: ⁷To those who persist in doing good and seek glory, honor, and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸However, to them that are argumentative, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,. ⁹There will be affliction and distress for every human being who does evil — the Jew first and also the Greek, ¹⁰However, splendor, honour, and wholeness, to every person that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:. ¹¹For God shows no partiality. ¹²For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. ¹⁴For when Gentiles who do not have the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even defend them, ¹⁶In the day when God will pass judgment on the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. ¹⁷But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God, ¹⁸You know his will. Because you have been taught from the law, you can recognize what really matters. ¹⁹You are convinced that you are a guide for the blind and a light for those in darkness, ²⁰An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the what is genuine in the instruction of Moses. ²¹You as a result which teachest another, teachest you not thyself? you that preachest a man should not steal, dost you steal? ²²You who say not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? ²⁴For "the name of God is blasphemed among the nations because of you," as it is written. ²⁵Circumcision

has value if you practice the law, but if you are a law-breaker, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. ²⁶So if an uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? ²⁷Then the one who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. ²⁸For a person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision something outward in the flesh. ²⁹Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise comes not from people but from God.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word *anapologētos* ('without excuse, without defense') deliberately echoes 1:20, where it described pagan idolaters. Now the same verdict falls on the moral judge. Paul springs his rhetorical trap — the reader who agreed with chapter 1's condemnation now stands self-condemned. The shift to second person singular ('you') marks the transition to diatribe style.
2. The phrase *kata alētheian* ('according to truth') means God judges based on reality, not appearances — a principle that will undermine any claim to exemption based on external privilege. The first-person plural 'we know' (*oidamen*) appeals to common ground between Paul and his audience.
3. The verb *logizē* ('do you reckon, suppose, calculate') is a key Pauline term that will reappear throughout Romans in contexts of reckoning righteousness (4:3-6). Here it exposes faulty moral calculation — the judge imagines himself exempt from the standard he applies to others.
4. Three attributes of God are listed: *chrēstotēs* ('kindness, goodness'), *anochēs* ('restraint, forbearance, holding back'), and *makrothymias* ('patience, long-suffering'). Together they describe God's generous delay of judgment — which the self-righteous person mistakes for approval. The word *metanoian* ('repentance') corresponds to the Hebrew *teshuvah* — a turning back, a fundamental reorientation.
5. The verb *thēsaurizeis* ('you are storing up, treasuring') creates a bitter irony — instead of treasuring up goodness, the impenitent person stockpiles wrath. The compound *dikaiokrisia* ('righteous judgment') appears only here in the New Testament, combining *dikaioi* ('righteous') with *krisis* ('judgment'). The 'day of wrath' draws on the Old Testament yom YHWH tradition.
6. Paul quotes Psalm 62:12 (LXX 61:13) and Proverbs 24:12. The principle of judgment according to works appears throughout Scripture and is affirmed by Jesus (Matthew 16:27). This does not contradict justification by faith — Paul is establishing the standard of divine judgment to which all are accountable, preparing the ground for the gospel's solution in chapter 3.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 62:12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 24:12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The word *hypomonē* ('perseverance, patient endurance') denotes sustained, tested faithfulness rather than a single act. The triad of *doxa* ('glory'), *timē* ('honor'), and *aphtharsia* ('immortality, imperishability') describes the eschatological reward. The phrase *zōēn aiōnion* ('eternal life') corresponds to the Hebrew concept of *olam* — life of the age to come.
8. The word *eritheias* ('selfish ambition, self-seeking') originally referred to work done for hire and came to mean partisan, self-interested behavior. The contrast between obeying truth and obeying unrighteousness personifies both as competing masters demanding allegiance.
9. The word pair *thlipsis* ('affliction, tribulation') and *stenochōria* ('distress, anguish' — literally 'narrow space') describes the crushing consequences of judgment. The phrase 'the Jew first' now applies to judgment, not just salvation (cf. 1:16) — priority in receiving God's revelation means priority in accountability.
10. The triad now shifts: 'immortality' (v. 7) is replaced by *eirēnē* ('peace'), corresponding to the Hebrew *shalom* — wholeness, well-being, and restored relationship with God. The parallel structure of verses 9-10 reinforces the impartiality principle: the same standard applies to both Jew and Greek.
11. The word *prosōpolēmpsia* ('partiality' — literally 'receiving the face') is a Septuagint coinage translating the Hebrew *nasa panim* ('to lift the face'), which meant to show favoritism. This principle, grounded in Deuteronomy 10:17, is the theological foundation for Paul's argument: if God is impartial, then ethnic identity alone cannot secure acquittal.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 10:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. Paul distinguishes two groups: those *anomōs* ('without law' — Gentiles who lack Torah) and those *en nomō* ('in/under the law' — Jews who possess Torah). Neither group's relationship to Torah determines the outcome; both are judged by the same God. The verb *apolountai* ('will perish') describes eschatological destruction, while *krithēsontai* ('will be judged') implies a judicial process.
13. The distinction between *akroatai* ('hearers') and *poiētai* ('doers') anticipates James 1:22-25. In the synagogue, the Torah was read aloud, making 'hearing the law' a concrete weekly experience. Paul's point is that hearing without doing confers no advantage. The future tense *dikaiōthēsontai* ('will be justified') points to the final judgment.

14. The identity of these Gentiles is debated: they may be (1) moral pagans who instinctively follow some moral law, (2) Gentile Christians in whom the Spirit produces obedience, or (3) a hypothetical case illustrating a principle. The phrase *physei* ('by nature') complicates each reading differently. We render the Greek without resolving the ambiguity. The phrase 'a law to themselves' (*heautois eisin nomos*) does not mean 'lawless' but 'their own law' — they demonstrate the law's demands through their conduct.
15. The phrase 'the work of the law written on their hearts' echoes Jeremiah 31:33, though Paul uses *ergon* ('work,' singular) rather than *nomos* ('law'). This may mean the law's requirement or the deed the law demands. The word *syneidēsis* ('conscience') was a Stoic philosophical concept that Paul adopts — an internal witness that evaluates moral conduct. The imagery of internal accusation and defense anticipates the courtroom scene of the final judgment.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 31:33 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The phrase *ta krypta tōn anthrōpōn* ('the secrets of people') indicates that final judgment penetrates beyond external behavior to internal reality — the hidden thoughts and motives. The phrase *kata to euangelion mou* ('according to my gospel') is striking: Paul's gospel includes the message of coming judgment, not only the offer of grace. Christ is presented as the agent of divine judgment.
17. Paul now addresses the Jewish interlocutor directly. The SBLGNT reads *ei de* ('but if') rather than *ide* ('behold') found in some manuscripts and the KJV. The verb *epanapaue* ('rest upon, rely on') suggests confidence in Torah possession as a source of security. The verb *kauchaomai* ('boast') is key in Romans — Paul will argue that boasting is excluded by the gospel (3:27) and redirected toward God (5:2, 11).
18. The verb *dokimazeis* ('approve, test, discern') means to evaluate and recognize genuine value. The word *katēchoumenos* ('being instructed, catechized') gives us the English 'catechism.' Paul acknowledges real advantages of Torah education — knowledge of God's will and moral discernment — but these become liabilities when not matched by practice.
19. The self-descriptions in verses 19-20 draw on Israel's vocation as 'a light to the nations' (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6). The irony builds: each claim is legitimate as a calling but presumptuous as a boast when the claimant fails to live up to it.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 42:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The word *morphōsin* ('embodiment, outward form, formulation') can mean either 'the true form' or 'mere outward form.' In this context, Paul likely means the Torah genuinely embodies knowledge and truth — the problem is not with the law but with those who possess it without obeying it. The word *nēpiōn* ('infants, immature ones') describes Gentiles from the perspective of Jewish self-understanding.
21. The series of rhetorical questions (vv. 21-23) mirrors the style of Hellenistic moral philosophers who exposed hypocrisy. The shift from conditional clauses (vv. 17-20) to pointed questions increases the pressure on the interlocutor. Paul's charges may be general or may reflect specific accusations known to him about the Roman Jewish community.
22. The verb *hierosyleis* ('rob temples, commit sacrilege') is specific: it may refer to Jews profiting from the sale of confiscated pagan temple goods, or more broadly to any compromise with the idolatrous economic system. The charge of temple robbery appears in Acts 19:37. The irony is sharp — those who claim to abhor idolatry may still profit from idolatrous systems.
23. The verb *atimazeis* ('dishonor') reverses the intended effect of Torah observance. The law was meant to bring honor to God among the nations; its violation by those who claim it produces the opposite — the desecration of God's name, as the following quotation confirms.
24. Paul quotes Isaiah 52:5 (LXX), though the original context refers to the nations blaspheming God because of Israel's suffering in exile, not because of Israel's sin. Paul applies it to the present situation where Jewish moral failure gives Gentiles reason to disrespect the God of Israel — a different but related form of desecration of the divine name (*chilul hashem*).
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 52:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. Paul does not dismiss circumcision (he will affirm its value in 3:1-2) but relativizes it. The shocking claim is that covenant identity can be functionally reversed by disobedience: a circumcised law-breaker becomes, in God's reckoning, as if uncircumcised. This would be deeply provocative to any Jewish audience.
26. The verb *logisthēsetai* ('will be regarded, reckoned') is the same verb Paul will use for Abraham being 'reckoned righteous' (4:3). God's reckoning overrides external markers. The word *dikaiōmata* ('righteous requirements, ordinances') refers to the law's just demands.
27. The phrase *ek physeōs* ('by nature, physically') contrasts with the spiritual reality Paul will describe in verses 28-29. The word *grammatos* ('letter, written code') refers to the written Torah and introduces the letter-Spirit contrast Paul will develop further in 2 Corinthians 3:6 and Romans 7:6.
28. Paul redefines Jewish identity in terms of inner reality rather than external markers. The phrase *en tō phanerō* ('in the open, outwardly, visibly') contrasts with *en tō kryptō* ('in secret, inwardly') in verse 29. This is not a rejection of Jewish identity but a deepening of it — Paul argues for what authentic covenant membership means.
29. The phrase *peritomē kardias* ('circumcision of the heart') draws on Deuteronomy 10:16 and 30:6, where Moses calls Israel to circumcise their hearts. Paul identifies the Spirit (*pneumati*) as the agent of this inner transformation, contrasting it with *grammati* ('the written code'). The word *epainos* ('praise') contains a wordplay: the name 'Judah' (*Yehudah*) derives from the Hebrew root meaning 'praise' (Genesis 29:35). A true 'Judah' — a true praiser — receives praise from God, not from human recognition.

29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 10:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 29:35. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

3

Summary: *Romans 3 begins by addressing the implied objection: if inner reality matters more than external markers, what advantage does the Jew have? Paul affirms Israel's advantage — they were entrusted with God's oracles — but insists that Jewish unfaithfulness does not nullify God's faithfulness. He then marshals a chain of Old Testament quotations to prove that all people, Jew and Gentile alike, are under sin. The chapter climaxes in 3:21-26, where Paul declares that God's righteousness has now been revealed apart from the law — through faith in Jesus Christ, for all who believe. God put Christ forward as a propitiation, demonstrating his righteousness by passing over former sins, so that he is both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verses 21-26 are widely regarded as the theological center of Romans and one of the densest passages in the entire New Testament. Nearly every word carries heavy theological freight. The word hilastērion (v. 25) is the same word used in the Septuagint for the kapporet — the mercy seat atop the Ark of the Covenant where atonement was made on Yom Kippur. Paul presents Christ as the ultimate mercy seat, the place where God's wrath and mercy meet. The argument that 'all have sinned' (v. 23) is the universal premise that makes the universal offer of grace coherent.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase pistis Iēsou Christou (v. 22) can be translated as 'faith in Jesus Christ' (objective genitive) or 'the faithfulness of Jesus Christ' (subjective genitive). Both readings have strong scholarly support. We render the objective genitive ('faith in Jesus Christ') as the more traditional reading while noting the alternative. The word hilastērion (v. 25) is rendered 'propitiation' rather than 'expiation' — propitiation (turning away wrath) better captures the context, where God's wrath (1:18) demands resolution.*

Connections: *The Old Testament catena in vv. 10-18 draws from Psalms 14, 5, 140, 10, Isaiah 59, and Psalm 36. The hilastērion of v. 25 connects to Leviticus 16 (Day of Atonement), Exodus 25:17-22 (mercy seat), and Hebrews 9:5. The principle 'no one is righteous' (v. 10) echoes Ecclesiastes 7:20. Paul's argument about boasting (v. 27) will be developed through the Abraham narrative in chapter 4.*

¹Then what advantage does the Jew have? Or what is the value of circumcision? ²Much in every way. First of all, they were entrusted with the oracles of God. ³What then? If some were unfaithful, will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? ⁴Absolutely not! Let God be true and every person a liar, as it is written: "So that you may be justified in your words and prevail when you are judged." ⁵But if our unrighteousness serves to demonstrate God's righteousness, what should we say? That God is unjust in inflicting wrath? (I speak in human terms.) ⁶Absolutely not! For then how would God judge the world? ⁷But if God's truth is magnified through my falsehood to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? ⁸And why not say — as we are slanderously charged and as some claim we say — "Let us do evil so that good may come"? Their condemnation is deserved. ⁹What then? Are we any better off? Not at all. For we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin, ¹⁰As it is recorded, There is none upright, no, not one:. ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh following God. ¹²All have turned aside; together they have become worthless. There is no one who does good, not even one." ¹³"Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of vipers is under their lips." ¹⁴"Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." ¹⁵Indeed, their feet are swift to shed blood:. ¹⁶Indeed, destruction and misery are in their ways:. ¹⁷Indeed, the way of peace have they not known:. ¹⁸There is no fear of God prior to their eyes. ¹⁹No w we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. ²¹But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, as attested by the Law and the Prophets — ²²Even the righteousness of God which is by way of faith of Jesus Christ to all and upon all them that trust — for there is no difference:. ²³for everyone has sinned and fallen short of God's glory. ²⁴Being

justified freely by his grace by way of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. ²⁵God presented him as the atoning sacrifice through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his patience he had left earlier sins unpunished. ²⁶It was to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works of the law. ²⁹Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, ³⁰Seeing it is one God, which will justify the circumcision by way of faith, and uncircumcision by way of faith. ³¹Do we then overthrow the law through faith? Absolutely not! Rather, we uphold the law.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The diatribe continues with the interlocutor's implied objection: if circumcision can become uncircumcision (2:25), why be Jewish at all? Paul takes this objection seriously rather than dismissing it — his answer affirms real advantage while denying automatic immunity from judgment.
2. Paul says *prōton* ('first'), suggesting a list, but never returns to give a second or third point — he is sidetracked by the implications of his first point. The word *logia* ('oracles, sayings') refers to the Scriptures, particularly God's covenant promises to Israel. The passive *episteuthēsan* ('were entrusted') emphasizes both privilege and responsibility.
3. The wordplay on *pistis* is central: *ēpistēsan* ('were unfaithful/unbelieving'), *apistia* ('unfaithfulness'), and *pistin tou theou* ('faithfulness of God') all share the same root. 'Some' (tines) is an understatement — Paul is diplomatic. The verb *katargēsei* ('nullify, render ineffective') is a strong word Paul uses frequently for the cancellation of a power or reality.
4. The exclamation *mē genoito* ('may it never be!') is Paul's strongest negation, used ten times in Romans. We render it 'absolutely not' rather than the KJV's 'God forbid,' which imports God's name where the Greek does not. Paul quotes Psalm 51:4 (LXX 50:6), where David acknowledges God's righteousness in judging. The application is that God's faithfulness stands regardless of human failure — when the two are weighed, God is always vindicated.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 51:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The verb *synistēsēin* ('demonstrates, commends, establishes') suggests that human sin inadvertently showcases God's righteousness by contrast. The parenthetical *kata anthrōpon legō* ('I speak according to a human perspective') is Paul's disclaimer that this objection represents flawed human reasoning, not his own theology.
6. Paul's *reductio ad absurdum*: if God cannot punish sin that highlights his righteousness, then God cannot judge anyone, since all sin ultimately serves to display divine attributes. But God's role as world-judge is non-negotiable in Jewish theology (Genesis 18:25).
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 18:25. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The first-person singular shifts from the corporate 'our' (v. 5) to the individual 'my' — Paul voices the objection from the sinner's own perspective. The verb *eperisseusen* ('abounded, overflowed') anticipates the 'where sin increased, grace overflowed' language of 5:20.
8. Paul reveals that opponents have caricatured his gospel of grace as moral license — an accusation he takes up again in 6:1 and 6:15. The phrase *hōn to krima endikon estin* ('their condemnation is just') delivers a sharp verdict on those who distort the gospel into antinomianism. Paul does not argue the point here but dismisses it with a judicial pronouncement.
9. The verb *proechometha* is debated — it can mean 'are we better?' (middle) or 'are we at a disadvantage?' (passive). The context favors 'are we better?' with the answer 'not at all.' The phrase *hyph' hamartian* ('under sin') presents sin as a ruling power, not just a collection of misdeeds — a personification Paul develops in chapters 5-7. This is the thesis that the following Scripture chain will support.
10. Paul begins a *catena* (chain) of Old Testament quotations, primarily from the Psalms, to establish universal human sinfulness. This verse echoes Psalm 14:1-3 (LXX 13:1-3) and Ecclesiastes 7:20. The emphatic double negative (*ouk...oude heis*) leaves no exceptions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 14:1-3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ecclesiastes 7:20 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. Continuing from Psalm 14:2. The two deficiencies — understanding and seeking — correspond to the intellectual and volitional dimensions of the human failure described in 1:21-23. The claim is not that people never have religious impulses but that no one naturally and consistently pursues the true God.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 14:1-3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

- 12.** The conclusion of the Psalm 14 quotation. The verb *exeklinan* ('turned aside, deviated') uses a road metaphor — humanity has left the right path. The verb *ēchreōthēsan* ('became worthless, became useless') means to become sour or rancid, like spoiled milk — a vivid image of moral corruption.
- 12.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 14:1-3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 13.** Paul draws from Psalm 5:9 (LXX 5:10) and Psalm 140:3 (LXX 139:3). The anatomy of sin moves from throat to tongue to lips — speech organs become instruments of death. The 'open grave' metaphor suggests speech that brings death and corruption. The progression creates a portrait of verbal violence.
- 13.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 5:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 13.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 140:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 14.** From Psalm 10:7 (LXX 9:28). The word *aras* ('cursing') and *pikrias* ('bitterness') complete the anatomy of sinful speech — from the throat (v. 13a) through the tongue (v. 13b) and lips (v. 13c) to the mouth (v. 14).
- 14.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 10:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 15.** From Isaiah 59:7. The quotation shifts from organs of speech to feet — from verbal violence to physical violence. The adjective *oxeis* ('swift, quick, sharp') suggests eagerness for bloodshed.
- 15.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 59:7-8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 16.** Continuing Isaiah 59:7. The nouns *syntrimma* ('destruction, ruin, crushing') and *talaipōria* ('wretchedness, misery') describe the devastation that sinful humanity leaves in its wake.
- 16.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 59:7-8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 17.** From Isaiah 59:8. The word *eirēnēs* ('peace') corresponds to the Hebrew *shalom* — the wholeness and well-being that humanity was created for but has abandoned. The path they follow produces the opposite of *shalom*.
- 17.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 59:7-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 18.** From Psalm 36:1 (LXX 35:2). This final quotation names the root cause: the absence of reverent awe before God. In the wisdom tradition, 'the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom' (Proverbs 9:10). Without this fear, the moral collapse described in the preceding quotations is inevitable.
- 18.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 36:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 18.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Proverbs 9:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 19.** Paul draws a crucial inference: the Old Testament quotations (vv. 10-18) address Jews first ('those under the law'), so Jews cannot claim exemption from the universal indictment. The result is universal: 'every mouth silenced' — no defense can be offered. The adjective *hypodikos* ('accountable, liable to judgment') is a legal term meaning 'under judicial sentence.'
- 20.** Paul echoes Psalm 143:2 (LXX 142:2). The phrase *ex ergōn nomou* ('by works of the law') has been debated: does it mean 'by doing what the law commands' or 'by the identity markers (circumcision, food laws, Sabbath) that define the Jewish community'? Both dimensions are likely in view. The word *sarx* ('flesh') here means 'human being' — no mortal creature can achieve right standing through law-keeping. The law's function is diagnostic, not curative: it identifies sin but cannot heal it.
- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 143:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** The adverb *nyini* ('but now') is both temporal (the Christ-event has happened) and logical (the argument has reached its resolution). The perfect tense *pephanērōtai* ('has been revealed and remains revealed') emphasizes the permanence of this disclosure. The phrase *chōris nomou* ('apart from the law') qualifies the means, not the content: the righteousness is consistent with the law but does not come through law-keeping.
- 22.** The phrase *dia pisteōs Iēsou Christou* ('through faith in/of Jesus Christ') is the center of the 'pistis Christou' debate. The objective genitive reading ('faith in Jesus Christ') makes human faith the instrument by which righteousness is received. The subjective genitive reading ('the faithfulness of Jesus Christ') makes Christ's own fidelity the ground. Both are theologically valid; we render the traditional objective genitive. The phrase *ou gar estin diastolē* ('there is no distinction') eliminates any Jew-Gentile differential in access to salvation.
- 23.** The aorist *hēmarton* ('sinned') views humanity's sin as a historical fact, while the present tense *hysterountai* ('fall short, lack') describes an ongoing condition. The phrase 'glory of God' (*doxēs tou theou*) refers to the divine image and splendor humanity was created to reflect (cf. 1:23 and 8:29-30) — sin has caused humanity to lose its designed glory. The prefix *hystero-* suggests falling behind, being left wanting.

- 24.** Three metaphors converge: legal (*dikaoumenoi*, 'being justified' — declared righteous in court), commercial (*dōrean*, 'freely, as a gift' — without payment), and redemptive (*apolytrōseōs*, 'redemption' — liberation by payment of a ransom). The word *apolytrōsis* originally described the purchase of a slave's freedom and echoes the Hebrew *ga'al* (kinsman-redemption) tradition.
- 25.** The verb *proetheto* ('put forward, set forth publicly') indicates a deliberate, public divine act — not something hidden but something God displayed openly. The word *hilastērion* can be translated 'propitiation' (turning away wrath), 'expiation' (cleansing sin), or 'mercy seat' (the place of atonement). We render 'propitiation' because the context of divine wrath (1:18) demands resolution, but the mercy seat allusion is noted in the expanded rendering.
- 25.** The phrase *dia pisteōs* ('through faith') specifies how the propitiation is received by the individual. The phrase *en tō autou haimati* ('by his blood') specifies the means of the atoning act — the death of Christ. The word *paresin* ('passing over') differs from *aphesis* ('forgiveness') — it means a temporary passing by, not permanent cancellation, suggesting that God's forbearance in the old covenant awaited the cross for final resolution.
- 26.** The phrase *dikaion kai dikaionta* ('just and the justifier') is the theological climax of the passage. The same root (*dik-*) appears in both words, underscoring that God's justifying act is itself an expression of his justice, not a contradiction of it. The phrase *en tō nyn kairō* ('at the present time') contrasts with the past era of forbearance — the cross is the moment when God's righteousness is definitively displayed.
- 27.** The word *kauchēsis* ('boasting') returns from 2:17, 23. If justification is by grace through faith, no one can claim credit. Paul uses *nomos* ('law') in an unusual sense here — 'principle' or 'system' rather than the Mosaic Torah. The 'law of faith' is the principle that right standing before God comes through trust, not achievement.
- 28.** The verb *logizometha* ('we reckon, hold, conclude') is a deliberate summary statement. This verse became the watchword of the Protestant Reformation. Luther famously added 'alone' (*allein*) after 'faith' in his German translation — the word is not in the Greek but captures Paul's intent in this context. The phrase *chōris ergōn nomou* ('apart from works of the law') does not mean faith is opposed to obedience but that the ground of justification is trust in Christ, not law-keeping performance.
- 29.** Paul's argument now appeals to monotheism: if there is one God (the fundamental Jewish confession, the *Shema*), then he must be God of all peoples, not Jews exclusively. The theological ground for Gentile inclusion is not a new revelation but the oldest confession in Israel's faith.
- 30.** Paul varies the prepositions — *ek pisteōs* ('from/by faith') for the circumcised and *dia tēs pisteōs* ('through faith') for the uncircumcised — but the variation is likely stylistic rather than theologically significant. Both groups are justified by the same faith. The one God has one means of justification for all.
- 31.** The verb *katargoumen* ('abolish, overthrow, nullify') is the same word from verse 3. Paul anticipates the charge that justification by faith makes the law irrelevant. His emphatic denial (*mē genoito*) is followed by the claim that faith actually 'establishes' (*histanomen*, 'causes to stand') the law. How faith upholds the law is not explained here but is developed through the Abraham argument in chapter 4 and the Spirit's work in chapter 8.

4

Summary: *Romans 4 presents Abraham as the paradigmatic case of justification by faith. Paul argues from Genesis 15:6 that Abraham was reckoned righteous through faith, not works — and that this reckoning occurred before circumcision (Genesis 17), making Abraham the father of both believing Gentiles and believing Jews. David is cited as a second witness to the blessedness of being reckoned righteous apart from works. Paul concludes by showing that Abraham's faith — trusting God to bring life from the deadness of his body and Sarah's womb — is the prototype of Christian faith in the God who raised Jesus from the dead.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's exegesis of Genesis 15:6 is one of the most influential readings of any Old Testament text in Christian history. The entire argument hinges on the Greek verb *logizomai* ('to reckon, credit') — used eleven times in this chapter. The chronological argument (vv. 9-12) is precise: Genesis 15 (faith reckoned as righteousness) precedes Genesis 17 (circumcision) by at least fourteen years, proving that Abraham's right standing predated and was independent of circumcision. The chapter redefines who Abraham's true children are.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between Paul's reading of Abraham and James 2:21-24 (which argues Abraham was justified by works) has been debated since the Reformation. Paul and James use 'justify' in different senses and address different situations. We render Paul's Greek faithfully without harmonizing with James. The phrase 'apart from works' must be understood in Paul's specific argumentative context — he is not denying that genuine faith produces obedience (cf. 1:5, 'obedience of faith').*

Connections: Genesis 15:6 is the foundational text, also cited in Galatians 3:6 and James 2:23. The David quotation comes from Psalm 32:1-2. The promise to Abraham (v. 13) draws on Genesis 12:1-3 and 17:4-5. Abraham's faith in the life-giving God (v. 17) connects to 2 Corinthians 1:9 and Hebrews 11:17-19. The resurrection formula in verse 25 echoes Isaiah 53:4-5, 12.

¹What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, found? ²For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about — but not before God. ³For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁴Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. ⁵But to the one who does not work but trusts in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness. ⁶Just as David also speaks of the blessedness of the person to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: ⁷"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸Pronounced a blessing on is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. ⁹Is this blessedness then only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? For we say, "Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness." ¹⁰How then was it credited — when he was circumcised or uncircumcised? It was not after but before he was circumcised. ¹¹He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be credited to them as well, ¹²The Parent of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision sole, but who as well conduct your lives in the steps of that trust of our Parent Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. ¹³For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is emptied and the promise is nullified. ¹⁵For the law produces wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. ¹⁶That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring — not only to those who are of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, ¹⁷Indeed, as it is written, I have made you a Father of numerous nations,) prior to him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. ¹⁸Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed that he would become the father of many nations, just as it had been spoken to him: "So shall your offspring be." ¹⁹Without weakening in his faith, he considered his own body, which was as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰Yet he did not waver in unbelief regarding God's promise but was strengthened in his faith, giving glory to God, ²¹Being fully persuaded that, what he had sworn, he was able also to perform. ²²That is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." ²³Now the words "it was credited to him" were not written for Abraham's sake alone, ²⁴However, for us also, to whom it will be imputed, if we trust in on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; ²⁵Who was handed over for our wrongdoings, and was brought back again for our justification.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *kata sarka* ('according to the flesh') most likely modifies 'forefather' — Abraham is the physical ancestor of the Jewish people. Some scholars attach it to 'found' — what did Abraham discover by human effort? The former reading is more natural syntactically. Paul begins with Abraham because he is the foundational figure of Jewish identity and the recipient of the covenant promises.
2. Paul concedes the hypothetical: if justification were by works, boasting would be warranted. The critical qualifier is 'not before God' — human achievement may impress humans, but no one can stand before God on the basis of personal merit. The word *kauchēma* ('ground for boasting') differs from *kauchēsis* ('act of boasting') in 3:27.
3. Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 (LXX), the theological foundation of the entire chapter. The verb *episteusen* ('believed, trusted') is the aorist of *pisteuō* — Abraham placed his trust in God's promise. The verb *elogisthē* ('was credited, reckoned') is the key term: righteousness was not earned but counted to Abraham's account by God's sovereign decision. The same quotation appears in Galatians 3:6 and James 2:23.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 15:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Paul uses an employment analogy: a worker's pay (*misthos*) is not a gift but a debt the employer owes. If justification were earned, God would be obligated to pay — but grace, by definition, is unearned. The contrast between *charin* ('grace, gift') and *opheilēma* ('debt, obligation') is absolute.

5. The phrase *ton dikaounta ton asebē* ('the one who justifies the ungodly') is shocking by Old Testament standards. Proverbs 17:15 declares 'he who justifies the wicked is an abomination to the LORD.' Yet Paul claims this is exactly what God does — he declares righteous those who are not righteous in themselves. The paradox is resolved by the *hilotērion* of 3:25: God can justify the ungodly because the penalty has been paid.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Proverbs 17:15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Paul introduces a second witness (David) following the legal principle of two witnesses. The word *makarismōn* ('blessedness, pronouncement of blessing') is a declaration of well-being, not a description of emotion. David, like Abraham, received God's grace despite — and in the midst of — serious sin.
7. Paul quotes Psalm 32:1-2 (LXX 31:1-2), traditionally attributed to David after his sin with Bathsheba. The two parallel lines use different vocabulary: *anomia* ('lawless deeds') and *hamartiai* ('sins') are forgiven and covered respectively. The verb *epekalyphthēsan* ('were covered') echoes the Hebrew *kippur* ('to cover, atone') — the very language of atonement.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 32:1-2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The double negative *ou mē* with the subjunctive *logisētai* creates the strongest possible denial: the Lord will absolutely never reckon sin to this person's account. The same verb *logizomai* now describes what God does not do — he refuses to enter sin into the ledger. Justification is not only the crediting of righteousness but the non-crediting of sin.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 32:1-2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Paul now poses the decisive question that will determine whether Abraham is the father of Jews only or of all believers. The argument hinges on chronology: when was faith credited as righteousness?
10. The chronological argument is simple but devastating: Genesis 15:6 (the crediting of righteousness) precedes Genesis 17 (the institution of circumcision) by at least fourteen years in the biblical narrative. Abraham was justified while still technically a Gentile. This means circumcision was not the basis of his right standing.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 15:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 17 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. Paul redefines circumcision: it is a *sēmeion* ('sign') and *sphragida* ('seal') — a confirmation of a righteousness already received, not the means of obtaining it. Like a seal on a completed document, circumcision authenticated what faith had already accomplished. The word 'father' (*pater*) establishes Abraham's spiritual paternity of Gentile believers.
12. The verb *stoichousin* ('walk in line, follow in step') is a military metaphor — walking in formation, following the same path. Jewish believers must follow Abraham's faith-path, not merely bear his physical mark. Abraham is father of believing Gentiles (v. 11) and of believing Jews (v. 12), but not of unbelieving Jews — a radical redefinition of Abrahamic lineage.
13. The phrase *klēronomon kosmon* ('heir of the world') goes beyond the specific land promise of Genesis 12-15. Jewish tradition had already expanded Abraham's inheritance to cosmic scope (cf. Sirach 44:21). Paul sees this as fulfilled in the gospel's universal reach. The word *spermati* ('seed, offspring') is collective, pointing to all Abraham's descendants — both physical and spiritual.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 12-15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The verbs *ekenōtai* ('has been emptied, voided') and *katērgētai* ('has been nullified') describe devastating consequences: if law-keeping is the condition of inheritance, then faith becomes meaningless and the promise is cancelled. Paul argues that law and promise are different modes of God's relating to his people — promise is unconditional and prior.
15. Paul identifies the law's actual function: not to save but to define and expose sin, thereby activating wrath. The word *parabasis* ('transgression, violation') differs from *hamartia* ('sin') — *parabasis* is specifically the conscious violation of a known commandment. Sin existed before the law (5:13), but transgression (conscious law-breaking) requires a law to break.
16. Paul links faith, grace, and the certainty of the promise in a logical chain: because it is by faith, it is by grace; because it is by grace, it is guaranteed (*bebaian*, 'firm, secure, reliable'). If the promise depended on human performance, it would be uncertain. The phrase 'father of us all' includes Paul's Gentile readers in Abraham's family.
17. Paul quotes Genesis 17:5. The verb *tethika* ('I have made/appointed') is a perfect tense — God's declaration makes it an accomplished fact even before the physical fulfillment. The two divine attributes — 'giving life to the dead' and 'calling into existence what does not exist' — describe creation *ex nihilo* and resurrection. These are the powers Abraham trusted and the powers that raised Jesus (v. 24).
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 17:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

- 18.** The paradox *par' elpida ep' elpidi* ('against hope, in hope') captures the nature of faith: the circumstances offered no ground for hope (humanly speaking), yet Abraham chose to hope based on God's word. The quotation is from Genesis 15:5, where God tells Abraham to count the stars — the very context of the Genesis 15:6 quotation.
- 18.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 15:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 19.** Some manuscripts read *ou katenōēsen* ('he did not consider') while the SBLGNT reads *katenōēsen* without the negative — meaning Abraham did consider the obstacles but was not overcome by them. This is the harder and likely original reading: faith is not denial of reality but trust in God despite reality. The word *nenekrōmenon* ('made dead, deadened') uses the same root as *nekrous* ('dead') in verse 17, connecting Abraham's body to the God who raises the dead.
- 20.** The verb *diekrithē* ('wavered, doubted, was divided') literally means 'to be divided against oneself.' Abraham was not internally torn between faith and doubt. Instead, he was *enedunamōthē* ('was empowered, strengthened') — the passive suggests God strengthened his faith. The participle *dous doxan* ('giving glory') shows that faith and worship are inseparable: trusting God's promises is the highest form of glorifying him.
- 21.** The participle *plērophorētheis* ('being fully convinced, fully assured') means to be carried to full measure — Abraham's conviction was complete, not partial. The logic of faith is simple: God promised; God is able; therefore it will happen. The focus is on God's ability (*dynatos*), not Abraham's worthiness.
- 22.** Paul returns to Genesis 15:6, closing the circle of the argument. The conjunction *dio* ('therefore, for this reason') shows that the faith described in verses 18-21 is what Genesis 15:6 was talking about — trust in God's promise against all odds.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 15:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** Paul explicitly states his hermeneutical principle: Old Testament narratives are not merely historical records but have ongoing relevance for later believers. Scripture was written 'for us' (v. 24). This does not mean the original context is irrelevant but that the pattern of faith established in Abraham is paradigmatic.
- 24.** The parallel between Abraham's faith and Christian faith is precise: Abraham believed in the God who gives life to the dead (v. 17); Christians believe in the God who raised Jesus from the dead. The object of faith is the same life-giving God; only the specific act differs. The title 'our Lord' (*ton kyrion hēmōn*) applies to the risen Jesus the Septuagint title for YHWH.
- 25.** This verse is likely a pre-Pauline creedal formula that Paul quotes. The verb *paredothē* ('was delivered up, handed over') echoes Isaiah 53:12 (LXX) and the same verb used of God 'giving over' in 1:24, 26, 28 — but now the direction is reversed. In chapter 1, God gave humanity over to sin; here, God gives his Son over for sinners. The word *dikaiōsin* ('justification') appears only here and in 5:18 in Paul's letters — it is the noun form of *dikaioō* ('to justify'). The preposition *dia* with the accusative can mean 'because of' or 'for the purpose of' — Christ was raised both because our justification was accomplished and in order to secure it.
- 25.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 53:12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

5

Summary: *Romans 5 opens with the results of justification: peace with God, access to grace, hope of glory, and the ability to rejoice even in suffering (vv. 1-11). God's love is poured into believers' hearts through the Holy Spirit, and Christ's death for the ungodly is the supreme proof of that love. The chapter then shifts to a sweeping Adam-Christ comparison (vv. 12-21): through one man sin and death entered the world; through one man grace and life overflow. Where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verses 1-11 present the most comprehensive summary of the benefits of justification in the New Testament. The 'boasting in suffering' sequence (vv. 3-5) — suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, character produces hope — is not Stoic endurance but eschatological hope grounded in the Holy Spirit. The Adam-Christ typology (vv. 12-21) is Paul's most ambitious theological construction, treating the entire human race as represented by two figures. The rhetorical crescendo of 'much more' (*pollō mallon*, vv. 9, 10, 15, 17) drives the argument: if God did the harder thing (dying for enemies), how much more will he do the easier thing (saving those now reconciled).*

Translation Friction: Verse 12 contains a famously difficult clause: eph' hō pantes hēmarton ('because all sinned'). This has been read as 'because all sinned [in Adam]' (Augustine), 'because all sinned [individually]' (Pelagius), or 'with the result that all sinned.' We render the causal sense ('because all sinned') while noting the ambiguity. The precise nature of Adam's headship over humanity — federal representation, biological inheritance, or archetypal pattern — is debated.

Connections: The peace and reconciliation themes (vv. 1, 10-11) connect to 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. The Adam-Christ typology is developed further in 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49. The Spirit's role in pouring out love (v. 5) anticipates Romans 8. The 'reign of grace through righteousness' (v. 21) prepares for the 'shall we sin that grace may abound?' question of 6:1.

¹Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²By whom as well we possess access by path of trust into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in confident expectation of the glory of God. ³Not only that, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴Indeed, patience, experience. And experience, hope:. ⁵Indeed, hope makes not ashamed. Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us. ⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷For one would scarcely die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person someone might even dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹How much more then, having now been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath. ¹⁰For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. ¹¹Not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. ¹²Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned — ¹³For until the instruction of Moses wrongdoing was in the world — but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like Adam's transgression. Adam is a type of the one who was to come. ¹⁵But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, how much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, overflowed to the many. ¹⁶And the gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. ¹⁷For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all people, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all people. ¹⁹For just as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so also through the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. ²⁰Now the law came in alongside so that the trespass would increase. But where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more, ²¹That as sin has reigned to death, even so might grace reign by way of righteousness to eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. A significant textual variant exists: some manuscripts read echomen ('we have,' indicative) while others read echōmen ('let us have,' subjunctive). The indicative is preferred (SBLGNT) because Paul is stating the result of justification, not issuing an exhortation. The whole section (vv. 1-11) describes what is true of the justified, not what they should pursue.
2. The word prosagōgēn ('access, introduction, approach') is a court term — the prosagōgeus was the official who introduced visitors to a king. Christ is the one who ushers believers into the royal presence of grace. The perfect tense hestēkamen ('we stand') indicates a settled, secure position. The verb kauchōmetha ('we boast, rejoice, exult') resumes the boasting theme from 2:17 and 3:27 — boasting is not eliminated but redirected from self to God's glory.
3. The shift from rejoicing in hope (v. 2) to rejoicing in suffering (v. 3) is deliberate and paradoxical. The Greek thlipsis ('tribulation, suffering, pressure') refers to the afflictions that accompany faith in the present age. Paul does not say suffering is good but that it produces something good. The verb katergazetai ('produces, works out, accomplishes') describes a process with an intended outcome.
4. The word dokimēn ('proven character, tested quality') describes metal that has passed through fire and been verified as genuine. The KJV's 'experience' misses this — the idea is character that has been tested and approved. The chain of progression (suffering endurance character hope) is not automatic but describes the Spirit-empowered process of maturation.

5. The verb *ekkechytai* ('has been poured out') is a perfect tense — the pouring happened and the love remains. The image is of abundant, overflowing love. This is the first mention of the Holy Spirit in Romans since 1:4, and it introduces the Spirit's crucial role that will dominate chapter 8. The phrase 'love of God' (*agapē tou theou*) is primarily God's love for us (subjective genitive), not our love for God, as the following verses (6-10) demonstrate.
6. The word *asthenōn* ('weak, powerless, helpless') describes humanity's inability to save itself. The phrase *kata kairon* ('at the right time, at the appointed time') echoes Galatians 4:4 ('when the fullness of time had come'). Paul uses three terms to describe those for whom Christ died: 'weak' (v. 6), 'sinners' (v. 8), and 'enemies' (v. 10) — an escalating description of unworthiness.
7. Paul distinguishes between *dikaioi* ('righteous' — one who meets obligations) and *agathos* ('good' — one who goes beyond obligations, who is generous and beneficent). Even for such people, voluntary death is rare. The word *tolma* ('dare') suggests that dying for another requires exceptional courage. The point of the comparison: what Christ did (dying for the ungodly) exceeds what anyone would do even for the best of people.
8. The verb *synistēsai* ('demonstrates, proves, shows') is present tense — God's love is not a past event but an ongoing demonstration. The cross is the permanent exhibit of divine love. The phrase *eti hamartōlōn ontōn hēmōn* ('while we were still sinners') is the crucial qualifier: God's love is not a response to human worthiness but an initiative toward the unworthy.
9. The first of the 'much more' (*pollō mallon*) arguments. The logic: if God did the costly thing (justifying enemies by Christ's blood), how much more will he do the less costly thing (preserving the already-justified from final wrath). 'The wrath' (*tēs orgēs*) with the definite article points to the eschatological day of wrath (2:5). Justification is past; salvation from wrath is future — a reminder that salvation has a 'not yet' dimension.
10. The word *echthroi* ('enemies') is the strongest of the three descriptions (weak, sinners, enemies). Reconciliation (*katallassō*) is a relational metaphor — the restoration of a broken relationship. The two-stage argument: reconciliation comes through Christ's death; ongoing salvation comes through his life (his resurrection life and continuing intercession, cf. 8:34). This 'much more' is the second in the series.
11. The section that began with peace (v. 1) ends with rejoicing. The word *katallagēn* ('reconciliation') is better than the KJV's 'atonement,' which in modern English suggests the means of reconciliation rather than the reconciled state itself. The verb *elabomen* ('we received') is aorist — reconciliation is a completed gift, already possessed.
12. This verse begins a sentence Paul never completes — the 'just as' (*hōsper*) expects a 'so also' that does not arrive until verse 18. The parenthetical material (vv. 13-17) interrupts the comparison. The phrase *eph' hō pantes hēmarton* is one of the most debated in the New Testament. The Latin Vulgate's 'in quo' ('in whom') led to the Augustinian doctrine of original sin — all sinned 'in Adam.' The Greek more naturally reads 'because' (*eph' hō* as a causal conjunction). We render the causal sense while acknowledging the complexity.
12. Sin is personified as an invading power that 'entered' (*eisēlthen*) the world. Death came 'through' (*dia*) sin — death is sin's consequence and agent. Paul traces the universal human condition to a historical origin in Adam.
13. Paul addresses a logical problem: if sin is transgression of a known law, how can sin exist before the law was given? His answer: sin was present but not formally 'counted' (*ellogeitai*, an accounting term meaning 'charged to one's account'). The word *ellogeitai* is related to *logizomai* from chapter 4 but emphasizes formal bookkeeping.
14. The verb *ebasileusen* ('reigned') personifies death as a king — a monarch whose rule extends over all humanity from Adam to Moses (the pre-law period). People died even though they had not sinned by violating a specific divine command as Adam had. The word *typos* ('type, pattern, figure') introduces typology: Adam foreshadows Christ. Paul will now show how the type and the antitype both correspond and differ.
15. Paul insists the analogy breaks down because the gift far exceeds the trespass. The third 'much more' (*pollō mallon*). The word *charisma* ('gift of grace, free gift') shares the root of *charis* ('grace'). The phrase *hoi polloi* ('the many') in Semitic idiom means 'the totality, the great number' — not 'many but not all.' The verb *eperisseusen* ('overflowed, abounded') means the gift doesn't merely match the damage but far surpasses it.
16. A second contrast: the judgment (*krima*) came from one sin (Adam's) and resulted in condemnation (*katakrima*); the gift (*charisma*) dealt with many trespasses and resulted in justification (*dikaiōma*, 'righteous verdict, acquittal'). The asymmetry is staggering: one sin condemnation for all; many sins justification for all who believe. Grace is not merely proportional to sin but exponentially exceeds it.
17. The fourth 'much more.' The stunning shift: in the Adam-regime, death reigned over people; in the Christ-regime, people reign over death. Believers are not merely rescued from death's kingdom but enthroned in life's kingdom. The phrase *perisseian tēs charitos* ('abundance of grace') uses the language of overflow and excess. The gift is not just righteousness but the gift of righteousness — *dikaiōsynē* as something received, not achieved.
18. Paul finally completes the sentence begun in verse 12. The parallel is precise: one trespass (*paraptōmatos*) all people condemnation; one righteous act (*dikaiōmatos*) all people justification of life. The phrase *dikaiōsin zōēs* ('justification of life') ties justification to its result — not merely a legal verdict but life itself. The 'all people' (*pantas anthrōpous*) in the second half has been debated: universalists read it as universal salvation; most interpreters qualify it by the reception language of verse 17 ('those who receive').
19. The contrast between *parakoēs* ('disobedience' — literally 'hearing amiss') and *hypakoēs* ('obedience' — literally 'hearing under, heeding') connects to 1:5 ('obedience of faith'). Christ's obedience refers to his entire life of faithful submission to the Father's will, culminating in the cross (cf. Philippians 2:8). The verb *katestathēsan/katastathēsontai* ('were constituted, will be constituted') may mean 'made' or 'appointed to the category of.'
20. The verb *pareisēlthen* ('came in alongside, entered as a side-issue') is striking — the law is not the main storyline but a subsidiary element in the Adam-Christ drama. The purpose clause *hina pleonasē* ('so that the trespass would increase') is intentionally provocative: the law's purpose was not to reduce sin but to multiply it (by making sin conscious and deliberate, cf. 7:7-13). The verb *hypereperisseusen* ('super-abounded, overflowed exceedingly') is a double-compound superlative — Paul coins an extravagant word to express the extravagance of grace.

21. The chapter concludes with two personified monarchs: sin reigned through death (its instrument), and grace now reigns through righteousness (its instrument) leading to eternal life. The phrase *dia dikaïosynēs* ('through righteousness') is crucial — grace does not bypass righteousness but operates through it. God's grace and God's justice are not in competition. The chapter ends where every major section of Romans ends — with Jesus Christ our Lord.

6

Summary: *Romans 6 answers the objection provoked by 5:20-21: if grace increases where sin increases, should believers keep sinning to get more grace? Paul's emphatic answer is no — believers have died to sin through baptism into Christ's death and have been raised to walk in newness of life. The old self was crucified so that the body of sin would be rendered powerless. Believers are now dead to sin and alive to God. The chapter then addresses a second form of the question (v. 15): since believers are under grace, not law, can they sin freely? Again no — they have changed masters, from sin leading to death to obedience leading to righteousness. They are now slaves of righteousness.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's baptismal theology here is the most developed in his letters. Baptism is not merely a ritual of initiation but a participation in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The 'old self' (palaios anthrōpos, v. 6) was co-crucified with Christ — a past, completed event. The slavery metaphor (vv. 15-23) is deliberately provocative: true freedom is not autonomy but willing submission to the right master. The chapter's logic is identity-based: believers do not avoid sin to become righteous; they avoid sin because they are righteous — their identity has changed.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between the indicative ('you have died to sin') and the imperative ('do not let sin reign') is central to Pauline ethics and has been variously interpreted. We render both as Paul states them without resolving the tension. The phrase 'body of sin' (sōma tēs hamartias, v. 6) may mean 'the sinful body,' 'the body dominated by sin,' or 'sin considered as a body/corporate entity.'*

Connections: *The baptismal language connects to Galatians 3:27 and Colossians 2:12. The 'old self/new self' contrast develops in Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:9-10. The slavery-to-righteousness theme echoes 1 Corinthians 7:22. The 'wages of sin is death' conclusion (v. 23) is one of the most quoted verses in Christian tradition.*

¹What shall we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may increase? ²Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know this: that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For the one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, having been raised from the dead, will never die again. Death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰For the death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹In the same way, consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹²Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its desires. ¹³Do not present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments of righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will not have mastery over you, since you are not under law but under grace. ¹⁵What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Absolutely not! ¹⁶Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey — either of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God that although you were once slaves of sin, you have become obedient from the heart to the pattern of teaching to which you were entrusted, ¹⁸Having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification. ²⁰For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹What fruit did you reap at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of

those things is death. ²²But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you reap leads to sanctification, and the outcome is eternal life. ²³For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The deliberative subjunctive *epimenōmen* ('should we continue, shall we remain') poses a question Paul's opponents actually raised (cf. 3:8). The verb *epimenō* means to remain in a place or state — to persist in sin as a way of life. Paul takes the objection seriously because it follows logically from 5:20 if grace is misunderstood as mere permission.
2. The aorist *apethanomen* ('we died') describes a definitive past event, not an ongoing process. The dative *tē hamartia* ('to sin') indicates separation — death severs the relationship. Paul's argument is not moral exhortation ('you should not sin') but ontological declaration ('you have died to sin') — continuing in sin contradicts who believers now are.
3. The phrase *eis Christon Iēsoun* ('into Christ Jesus') indicates incorporation — baptism unites the believer to Christ's person and story. The phrase *eis ton thanaton autou* ('into his death') specifies the particular aspect of Christ's story that baptism enacts. Paul assumes his readers know the basic baptismal theology — the question 'do you not know?' (*ē agnoeite*) implies established teaching.
4. The compound verb *synetaphēmen* ('we were co-buried') emphasizes union with Christ — his burial became our burial. The phrase *dia tēs doxēs tou patros* ('through the glory of the Father') attributes resurrection power to the Father's *kavod* — his weighty, substantial, overwhelming power. The phrase *kainotēti zōēs* ('newness of life') is qualitative: not merely continued existence but a fundamentally different kind of life. The verb *peripatēsōmen* ('we might walk') uses the Hebrew metaphor of 'walking' for daily conduct.
5. The adjective *symphytoi* ('grown together, united, fused') suggests organic union, like a graft into a living tree. The word *homoīōmati* ('likeness, form') indicates that baptism is an enacted likeness of Christ's death, not the death itself. The future *esometha* ('we will be') may refer to the final bodily resurrection or to present resurrection-life — the ambiguity is likely intentional.
6. The phrase *palaios anthrōpos* ('old self, old person, old humanity') refers to who the believer was in Adam — the entire pre-Christ identity. The verb *synestaurōthē* ('was co-crucified') is an aorist passive — a completed event, not an ongoing process. The verb *katargēthē* ('might be rendered powerless, nullified, put out of commission') does not mean 'destroyed' (KJV) but 'made ineffective' — the body is not annihilated but freed from sin's control. The verb *douleuein* ('to serve as a slave') identifies the prior condition as slavery.
7. The verb *dedikaiōtai* ('has been justified, freed, acquitted') is the same verb used for justification in chapters 3-5, here applied to the believer's liberation from sin's mastery. A dead person has no further obligation to a former master. Paul applies a legal principle: death cancels all claims.
8. The conditional *ei* ('if') assumes the reality of the condition — 'since we died with Christ.' The verb *syzēsomen* ('we will co-live') is future, suggesting that while death with Christ is past and completed, the fullness of life with Christ awaits the resurrection. However, present resurrection-life is also implied (cf. v. 4, 'walk in newness of life').
9. The verb *kyrieuei* ('has mastery, lords over, dominates') treats death as a would-be lord — but Christ's resurrection broke its claim permanently. The adverb *ouketi* ('no longer') implies death once had a temporary hold on Christ during his passion but was decisively defeated at the resurrection.
10. The word *ephapax* ('once for all') is emphatic — Christ's death was a unique, unrepeatable event. The dative *tē hamartia* ('to sin') parallels *tō theō* ('to God'): Christ's death severed the connection to sin's realm; his life is directed entirely toward God. This pattern — death to sin, life to God — is the template for Christian existence (v. 11).
11. The verb *logizesthe* ('consider, reckon, count') is the same word used for God's reckoning in chapter 4. Here believers are told to reckon themselves what God has already declared them to be — dead to sin and alive to God. This is not self-deception but faith appropriating an accomplished reality. The phrase *en Christō Iēsou* ('in Christ Jesus') is Paul's most characteristic phrase, denoting the new sphere of existence in which the believer lives.
12. The shift from indicative (vv. 2-11, what is true) to imperative (vv. 12-14, what to do) is the hallmark of Pauline ethics: become what you are. The verb *basileuetō* ('let reign') echoes the personification of sin as king from 5:21. The phrase *thnētō sōmati* ('mortal body') acknowledges that the body remains subject to death and therefore vulnerable to sin's attempts to reassert control.
13. The word *hopla* can mean 'instruments' or 'weapons' — the military connotation fits the context of two competing kingdoms. The verb *paristanete/parastēsate* shifts from present imperative (stop the ongoing practice) to aorist imperative (make a decisive commitment). The phrase *hōsei ek nekrōn zōntas* ('as those alive from the dead') grounds the imperative in the indicative — believers can choose God because they have already been raised with Christ.
14. This is a promise, not a command: sin will not master you. The reason is surprising: not 'because you try harder' but 'because you are under grace, not under law.' Paul implies that law actually empowers sin rather than defeating it (a theme he develops in chapter 7). Grace, not moral effort, is sin's antidote. This statement provokes the next question in verse 15.
15. A second version of the opening question (v. 1), now triggered by verse 14. The verb *hamartēsōmen* is aorist subjunctive — 'should we commit acts of sin?' (punctiliar) rather than the present tense of verse 1 ('should we continue in sin?' — habitual). Paul addresses both the lifestyle of sin and individual sinful acts.

16. Paul introduces the slavery metaphor that dominates the rest of the chapter. The logic is straightforward: everyone serves someone. The only question is which master. The two options are mutually exclusive: sin death, or obedience righteousness. There is no neutral ground, no true autonomy. The second option ('obedience') is the opposite of sin, not a separate concept from faith (cf. 1:5, 'obedience of faith').
17. The past tense *ēte* ('you were') marks a definitive change of status. The phrase *ek kardias* ('from the heart') indicates genuine, interior transformation, not mere external compliance. The phrase *typon didachēs* ('pattern of teaching') refers to the body of apostolic instruction about the gospel. The passive *paredothēte* ('you were entrusted/delivered') is unusual — normally teaching is delivered to people, but here people are delivered to teaching. The gospel is the master to whom they have been handed over.
18. The passive *eleutherōthentes* ('having been freed') attributes liberation to God's action. The paradox is deliberate: freedom from sin is slavery to righteousness. True freedom is not the absence of all obligation but service to the right master. The language of slavery is uncomfortable — Paul will acknowledge this in verse 19.
19. Paul apologizes for the slavery metaphor — *anthrōpinon legō* ('I speak in human terms') acknowledges that comparing service to God with slavery is inadequate. The phrase 'weakness of your flesh' means their limited human capacity to grasp spiritual realities. The progression *anomia eis anomian* ('lawlessness to lawlessness') describes sin's self-compounding nature; the parallel *hagiasmon* ('sanctification, holiness') describes the progressive outworking of the new identity.
20. The ironic 'freedom' — when enslaved to sin, they were 'free' from righteousness, meaning righteousness had no claim on them. This is not genuine freedom but its perverse inversion. Paul is pointing out the absurdity: no one boasts of that kind of freedom.
21. The agricultural metaphor of 'fruit' (*karpos*) asks about the harvest of the former life. The answer is shame and death. The verb *epaischynesthe* ('you are ashamed') uses the same root as 1:16 ('I am not ashamed of the gospel') — the contrast is pointed. The word *telos* ('end, outcome, goal') can mean both 'result' and 'destination.'
22. The 'but now' (*nyni de*) mirrors 3:21 — marking the decisive change from the old situation to the new. The fruit contrast is complete: sin's fruit shame and death (v. 21); God's slavery sanctification and eternal life (v. 22). The word *hagiasmon* ('sanctification') here denotes the progressive transformation of the believer's life.
23. The word *opsōnia* ('wages, soldier's pay, rations') is a military term for the compensation a soldier earns. Sin pays what it owes: death. The contrast with *charisma* ('free gift') is absolute: death is earned; eternal life is given. Paul deliberately avoids saying 'the wages of righteousness is eternal life' — life is never a wage earned but always a gift received. The chapter ends, as always in Romans, with the phrase 'in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

7

Summary: *Romans 7 explores the believer's relationship to the law. Using a marriage analogy, Paul argues that death releases one from legal obligations — believers have died to the law through Christ's body to belong to the risen Christ. He then defends the law itself: the law is not sin, but sin used the law's commandment to provoke desire and bring death. The chapter's second half (vv. 14-25) contains Paul's famous description of inner conflict — wanting to do good but doing evil instead — culminating in the cry 'Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The identity of the 'I' in verses 14-25 is one of the most debated questions in Pauline scholarship. Is Paul describing (1) his pre-conversion experience as a Jew under the law, (2) the ongoing struggle of the Christian believer, (3) Adam's fall, or (4) unregenerate humanity seen from a Christian perspective? The shift from past tense (vv. 7-13) to present tense (vv. 14-25) is the primary evidence for reading it as present Christian experience, though this is not conclusive. The passage has resonated profoundly with readers across centuries precisely because the struggle it describes is universally recognizable.*

Translation Friction: *We render the present tense of vv. 14-25 as present tense without resolving whether Paul describes Christian or pre-Christian experience. The marriage analogy (vv. 1-4) has been criticized as imprecise — in the analogy, the husband dies; in the application, the believer dies — but Paul's point is the legal principle (death ends obligation), not a precise one-to-one correspondence.*

Connections: *The marriage analogy connects to 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5:25-32. The 'I' passage echoes Ovid's Medea ('I see and approve the better, I follow the worse') and similar Greco-Roman moral psychology. The cry of verse 24 is answered by 8:1-2. The role of the law in provoking sin connects to Galatians 3:19-24. The 'law of sin' (v. 25) anticipates the 'law of the Spirit' (8:2).*

¹Or do you not know, brothers and sisters — for I am speaking to those who know the law — that the law has authority over a person only as long as that person lives? ²For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law regarding the husband. ³So then, if she is joined to another man while her husband is living, she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she is joined to another man, she is not an adulteress. ⁴Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another — to him who was raised from the dead — in order that we may bear fruit for God. ⁵For while we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. ⁶But now we have been released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code. ⁷What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Absolutely not! Yet I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." ⁸But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. ⁹I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life, ¹⁰I died — and the commandment, which was ordained to life, I discovered to be to death. ¹¹For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. ¹²So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good. ¹³Did what is good, then, become death to me? Absolutely not! It was sin — in order that sin might be exposed as sin — producing death in me through what is good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful. ¹⁴For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. ¹⁵For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. ¹⁶Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law that it is good. ¹⁷But as it is, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ¹⁸For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For the desire to do what is right is present with me, but the ability to carry it out is not. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want — that is what I keep doing. ²⁰Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. ²¹So I find this principle at work: when I want to do good, evil lies close at hand. ²²For I delight in God's law in my inner being, ²³However, I see another law in my members, warring opposed to the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? ²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The parenthetical 'those who know the law' (ginōskousin nomon) addresses hearers familiar with Torah, likely Jewish Christians or God-fearers in the Roman church. The verb *kyrieuei* ('has authority, exercises lordship') echoes 6:9 and 6:14 — the question is who or what has mastery. Paul's principle is basic: legal obligations bind the living, not the dead.
2. The adjective *hypandros* ('under a man, married') is a legal term for a woman under marital authority. The verb *katērgētai* ('is released, discharged, freed') is the same word used for 'rendered powerless' in 6:6. Death dissolves legal bonds. The illustration draws on the Torah's own marriage laws.
3. The verb *chrēmāteisei* ('will be designated, called, publicly labeled') is a formal, official designation — not mere gossip but a legal status. Paul's point is established: death changes legal relationships. The analogy is imperfect by design — Paul is illustrating a principle, not constructing an allegory.
4. In the application, it is the believer who dies (to the law), not the law itself. The phrase *dia tou sōmatos tou Christou* ('through the body of Christ') refers to Christ's physical death on the cross, in which believers participate (6:3-6). The word *heteros* ('another') is the second husband in the analogy — the risen Christ. The purpose of the new union is fruitfulness (*karpophorēsōmen*, 'bear fruit'), contrasting with the 'fruit of death' in verse 5.
5. The phrase *en tē sarki* ('in the flesh') describes the pre-conversion state dominated by the sinful nature, not merely physical existence. The explosive phrase *ta dia tou nomou* ('those through the law') directly states that the law aroused sinful passions — a claim Paul will develop in verses 7-13. The fruit imagery is inverted: instead of fruit for God (v. 4), the old life produced fruit for death.
6. The verb *katērgēthēmen* ('we have been released, discharged') echoes verses 2-3. The contrast between 'newness of Spirit' (*kainotēti pneumatos*) and 'oldness of letter' (*palaiotēti grammatos*) parallels 2:29 and anticipates 8:2-4. The Spirit replaces the written code as the governing principle of the believer's life. This does not mean the law's content is abandoned but that the mode of obedience has changed.
7. Paul defends the law against the implication of verse 5. The law is not sinful but diagnostic — it reveals sin. The tenth commandment (*ouk epithymēseis*, 'you shall not covet,' Exodus 20:17) is chosen because covetousness is an internal desire, not an external act. This suggests that the law's deepest function is to expose the interior disposition of the heart, not merely to regulate behavior. The switch to first person 'I' (*egō*) begins here.

7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 20:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The word *aphormēn* ('opportunity, base of operations, launching point') is a military term for a beachhead from which to mount an attack. Sin is personified as a strategist who uses the commandment as a base of operations. The paradox is that the good commandment became the instrument of evil. The phrase *chōris nomou hamartia nekra* ('apart from the law, sin is dead') does not mean sin does not exist without law but that it lies dormant, unactivated.
9. The phrase 'I was alive apart from the law' likely alludes to Adam's pre-fall state in Eden or to Paul's pre-bar-mitzvah childhood before conscious moral accountability. The verb *anezēsen* ('came back to life, revived') implies sin was dormant and the commandment reawakened it. The language echoes Genesis 2-3: a command given, a prohibition, and sin exploiting the prohibition.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 2-3:. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The ironic reversal: the commandment was *eis zōēn* ('toward life') by design but *eis thanaton* ('toward death') in effect. Leviticus 18:5 promises 'the one who does these things will live by them,' but in the hands of sin, the commandment became an instrument of death. Paul is not blaming the law but the power of sin that hijacks it.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 18:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The verb *exēpatēsen* ('deceived, thoroughly deluded') echoes Genesis 3:13, where Eve says 'the serpent deceived me.' Paul presents sin as the true serpent — the commandment is the tree, and sin is the deceiver who uses the prohibition to entice. The verb *apekteinen* ('killed') makes sin a murderer who uses the law as its weapon.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 3:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. Paul's conclusion exonerates the law completely. Three adjectives defend the commandment: *hagia* ('holy' — set apart by God), *dikaia* ('righteous' — in accord with God's character), and *agathē* ('good' — beneficial in purpose). The problem is not the law but sin's exploitation of it. This is Paul's most positive statement about the law in Romans.
13. The double purpose clause is important: the law exposes sin's true nature. By using something good (the commandment) to produce something evil (death), sin reveals itself as *kath' hyperbolēn hamartōlos* ('exceedingly sinful, sinful beyond measure'). The law functions as a diagnostic that makes the disease visible in its full severity.
14. The shift to present tense begins here and continues through verse 25. The adjective *pneumatikos* ('spiritual') affirms the law's divine origin. The adjective *sarkinos* ('made of flesh, fleshly') describes the human condition in stark contrast. The phrase *pepramenos hypo tēn hamartian* ('sold under sin') uses slave-market language — a person sold into slavery to a master called Sin. This echoes 1 Kings 21:20, 25 (LXX), where Ahab is said to have 'sold himself to do evil.'
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Kings 21:20. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The verb *katēgazomai* ('accomplish, produce, carry out') describes the actual result of one's actions. The verb *ginōskō* ('know, understand') here means 'comprehend, recognize as mine' — the 'I' is bewildered by its own behavior. The three-part confession — I do not do what I want; I do what I hate — describes the fragmentation of the will that sin produces. The language resonates with Ovid's *Medea*: '*video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*' ('I see the better and approve it; I follow the worse').
16. The verb *sympheimi* ('agree, consent, concur') means that the divided will of the 'I' — wanting the good but doing the evil — proves that the law is *kalos* ('good, beautiful, admirable'). The desire for good, even when unfulfilled, is itself a testimony to the law's goodness.
17. Paul distinguishes the 'I' (the willing self that approves the good) from 'sin dwelling in me' (the alien power that produces the evil). This is not an evasion of responsibility but an analysis of the human predicament: sin has colonized the self. The verb *oikousa* ('dwelling, residing') presents sin as a resident alien occupying the territory of the self.
18. The crucial qualifier *tout' estin en tē sarki mou* ('that is, in my flesh') limits the claim. Paul does not say the self is entirely devoid of good — the inner self desires the good (v. 22) — but the flesh (the unredeemed human condition) is incapable of producing it. The verb *parakeitai* ('is present, lies at hand') means the will is available but the execution is not.
19. A restatement of verse 15 with heightened intensity. The verb *prassō* (present tense, 'I keep doing') emphasizes the repetitive, habitual nature of the failure. The parallel structure — 'the good I want / I do not do' and 'the evil I do not want / I practice' — creates a rhetorical cage from which the 'I' cannot escape.
20. A repetition of verse 17, reinforcing the conclusion: the true 'I' and indwelling sin are distinguishable. This is not philosophical dualism (two equal powers) but a description of the enslaved will — the self wants the good but is overpowered by sin's occupation.
21. The word *nomos* ('law') here means 'principle' or 'pattern' rather than the Torah — a regularity Paul has discovered through experience. The verb *parakeitai* ('lies close at hand, is present') from verse 18 now applies to evil rather than the desire for good. Evil is always the closer companion.

22. The verb *synēdomai* ('I delight in, rejoice with') expresses genuine joy in God's law — this is not reluctant compliance but heartfelt approval. The phrase *esō anthrōpon* ('inner person, inner self') describes the deepest part of the self, the part that aligns with God's purposes. This inner delight in the law echoes Psalm 1:2 and 119:97.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 1:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. Three 'laws' (principles) are in play: the law of God (v. 22), the law of the mind (*tō nomō tou noos*, the rational self that approves God's law), and the law of sin (*tō nomō tēs hamartias*, sin's governing principle operating in the body). The military metaphors *antistrateuomenon* ('waging war against') and *aichmalōtizonta* ('capturing, taking prisoner') depict an internal battle the 'I' is losing. This sets up the desperate cry of verse 24.
24. The exclamation *talaipōros* ('wretched, miserable, pitiable') is a cry of anguish, not self-pity. The phrase *sōmatos tou thanatou toutou* ('this body of death') may mean 'this body doomed to death,' 'this body in which death operates,' or 'this deathly body.' The question 'who?' (*tis*) is the crucial word — the 'I' has exhausted all self-rescue options and can only look outside itself for deliverance.
25. The thanksgiving answers the question of verse 24: deliverance comes through Jesus Christ. The summary statement that follows describes the dual reality: the mind (*nous*) serves God's law, while the flesh (*sarx*) serves sin's law. This tension, unresolved in chapter 7, is resolved in chapter 8 through the Spirit. The phrase *autos egō* ('I myself') emphasizes that this divided condition describes the same person — not two people but one person in two simultaneous states.

8

Summary: *Romans 8 is the climax of Paul's theological argument, moving from no condemnation (v. 1) to no separation (v. 39). The Spirit — mentioned only once in chapters 1-7 (apart from 1:4 and 5:5) — appears over twenty times here, replacing the law as the governing power of the believer's life. The Spirit sets free from sin and death, fulfills the law's requirement, gives life, adopts believers as God's children, and intercedes for them. Paul then discusses the groaning of creation, the groaning of believers, and the groaning of the Spirit, all awaiting final redemption. The chapter concludes with one of the most soaring passages in all of Scripture: God works all things together for good, and nothing in all creation can separate believers from God's love in Christ Jesus.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter moves from cosmic theology (creation groaning) to intimate personal assurance (the Spirit crying 'Abba, Father') to majestic doxology (nothing can separate us). The 'golden chain' of verse 29-30 (foreknew, predestined, called, justified, glorified) presents salvation as an unbreakable divine sequence. The shift to 'glorified' in the past tense (*edoxasen*) — treating the future consummation as already accomplished — is one of the boldest grammatical choices in the New Testament. The chapter's final question-and-answer series (vv. 31-39) is structured as a courtroom drama with God as judge, Christ as advocate, and all possible accusers silenced.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'the mind set on the flesh is death' (v. 6) and 'those who are in the flesh cannot please God' (v. 8) have been variously interpreted. We render them as describing the unregenerate state, not the ongoing struggle of believers. The 'groaning' of creation (v. 22) uses language of childbirth, not despair — the groaning is productive, anticipating new birth. The list of potential separators (vv. 35, 38-39) reflects first-century cosmological categories (angels, rulers, height, depth) that may correspond to spiritual powers.*

Connections: *The 'no condemnation' of v. 1 answers the condemnation of 5:16, 18. The Spirit's work fulfilling the law (v. 4) resolves 7:14-25. The adoption language (vv. 15-17, 23) connects to Galatians 4:4-7. The groaning of creation (vv. 19-22) develops Genesis 3:17-19. The 'all things work together for good' (v. 28) is one of the most quoted promises in Scripture. The Psalm 44:22 quotation (v. 36) is the only direct quotation in the chapter.*

1There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sin offering, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not following the flesh, but following the Spirit. 5For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace. 7For the mind set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law — indeed, it cannot. 8Those who are in the flesh

cannot please God. ⁹You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. ¹²So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors — not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. ¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption as children, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷If children, then heirs. Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be as well glorified as one. ¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹Indeed, because the creature itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the God's children. ²²For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we eagerly await adoption as children — the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what they see? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with endurance. ²⁶Likewise the Spirit also helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷And he who searches hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to God's will. ²⁸And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰And those whom he predestined, he also called; and those whom he called, he also justified; and those whom he justified, he also glorified. ³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died — more than that, who was raised — who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written: "For your sake we are being put to death all day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors by way of him that loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor rulers, neither things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT text is shorter than the KJV, omitting 'who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' This longer reading appears in later manuscripts and was likely assimilated from verse 4. The word *ara* ('therefore') connects to the entire argument of chapters 1-7: because of justification by faith, union with Christ in death and resurrection, and release from the law, there is now no condemnation.
2. The adverb *nyn* ('now') is both temporal (in the present age of grace) and logical (given the preceding argument). The preposition *en* ('in') *Christō Iēsou* marks the foundational Pauline concept of incorporation into Christ.
3. Two 'laws' (governing principles) are contrasted: the law of the Spirit of life and the law of sin and death (introduced in 7:23, 25). The Spirit is the new governing power that replaces sin's regime. The SBLGNT reads *se* ('you,' singular) rather than *me* ('me'), though manuscripts vary. The aorist *ēleutherōsen* ('set free') points to a completed liberation.
4. The phrase *to adynaton tou nomou* ('the impossibility of the law') identifies the law's limitation: not a defect in the law itself but in the flesh it addressed (cf. 7:12-14). The phrase *en homoiōmati sarkos hamartias* ('in the likeness of sinful flesh') is carefully worded: Christ took real human flesh (not merely its appearance) but without the dominion of sin. The phrase *peri hamartias* ('concerning sin' / 'for sin') may be a technical term for a sin offering (cf. Leviticus 4-5 LXX, where *peri hamartias* translates the Hebrew *chatta't*). We render 'as a sin offering' to capture this allusion.

3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 4-5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The word *dikaiōma* ('righteous requirement, just demand') is singular — the law's fundamental demand. The passive *plērōthē* ('might be fulfilled') does not specify whether believers fulfill it actively or Christ fulfills it on their behalf — likely both are in view. The Spirit enables the obedience the law demanded but the flesh could not produce. This resolves 3:31 ('do we overthrow the law through faith? We uphold it').
5. The verb *phronousin* ('set their minds on, are oriented toward, give attention to') describes a fundamental orientation of the whole person, not merely intellectual focus. The two groups — *kata sarka* ('according to the flesh') and *kata pneuma* ('according to the Spirit') — represent two modes of human existence, not two parts of every person.
6. The word *phronēma* ('mindset, orientation, way of thinking') appears only in Romans 8 in the New Testament (vv. 6, 7, 27). It describes not individual thoughts but a settled disposition. The flesh-oriented mindset results in *thanatos* ('death') — not merely physical death but spiritual separation from God. The Spirit-oriented mindset results in *zōē* ('life') and *eirēnē* ('peace,' the Hebrew *shalom* — wholeness and reconciliation with God).
7. The word *echthra* ('hostility, enmity') is not mere indifference but active opposition to God. The flesh-orientation is structurally incapable of submission to God's law — *oude gar dynatai* ('nor is it able'). This is not about effort but capacity: the flesh-mind cannot obey God no matter how hard it tries. This explains why the law was 'weakened by the flesh' (v. 3).
8. The phrase *en sarki ontes* ('being in the flesh') describes an unregenerate state, not the mere fact of having a physical body. Believers still have physical bodies but are no longer 'in the flesh' in Paul's theological sense — they are 'in the Spirit' (v. 9). The verb *aresai* ('to please') echoes the Old Testament language of what is pleasing to God.
9. Paul uses three titles interchangeably: 'the Spirit' (to *pneuma*), 'the Spirit of God' (*pneuma theou*), and 'the Spirit of Christ' (*pneuma Christou*) — indicating that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son. The conditional *eiper* ('if indeed, assuming that') assumes the condition is true for his readers. The negative statement is defining: possession of the Spirit is the essential mark of belonging to Christ.
10. The interchange continues: verse 9 said the Spirit is in you; verse 10 says Christ is in you — the Spirit mediates Christ's indwelling. The body remains 'dead' (*nekron*) in the sense that it is mortal and still subject to sin's legacy of physical death. But the Spirit is 'life' (*zōē*) — present tense reality, not merely future promise. The phrase *dia dikaiosynēn* ('because of righteousness') can mean 'because of the righteousness God has granted' or 'for the purpose of righteous living.'
11. The logic is simple and powerful: the same Spirit who raised Jesus now lives in believers; therefore, that Spirit will do the same work in their mortal bodies. The verb *zōpoiēsei* ('will make alive, give life') points to bodily resurrection, not merely spiritual vitality. The phrase *ta thnēta sōmata* ('your mortal bodies') — bodies that still die — will be transformed. The Spirit's current indwelling is the guarantee of future resurrection.
12. The word *opheiletai* ('debtors, those under obligation') sets up a contrast Paul does not explicitly complete: we are not debtors to the flesh (the implicit completion: we are debtors to the Spirit). The believer's obligation is to the Spirit who gave life, not to the flesh that produced death.
13. The conditional presents a stark binary: flesh-living death; Spirit-empowered mortification life. The verb *thanatoute* ('you put to death, you kill') is violent and active — not passive resignation but active assault on sinful habits. Crucially, this is done *pneumati* ('by the Spirit') — not by willpower alone but by the Spirit's power. The 'deeds of the body' (*praxeis tou sōmatos*) are the sinful behaviors the unredeemed body habitually performs.
14. The verb *agontai* ('are led, guided, driven') is present passive — an ongoing experience of the Spirit's direction. The word *huiōi* ('sons') in the ancient world denoted legal heirs regardless of gender; we render 'children' to reflect the inclusive scope while noting that 'sons' carried specific inheritance rights in Roman law that Paul will exploit in verses 15-17.
15. The contrast between 'spirit of slavery' and 'Spirit of adoption' defines the change: the old relationship to God was fear-based; the new is family-based. The verb *krazomen* ('we cry out') is a strong word suggesting spontaneous, Spirit-driven exclamation — not a quiet prayer but an instinctive cry of a child to a parent. The switch from 'you' (*elabete*) to 'we' (*krazomen*) includes Paul himself in the experience.
16. The compound verb *symmartyrei* ('bears witness together with, co-testifies') implies two witnesses: the Holy Spirit and the believer's own spirit. Together they confirm the reality of adoption. We render 'himself' (*auto*) rather than the KJV's 'itself' because the Spirit is personal. The word *tekna* ('children') differs from *huiōi* ('sons') — *tekna* emphasizes the familial relationship, *huiōi* the legal status.
17. The logic: children heirs co-heirs with Christ. In Roman law, all children inherited equally. The compound *syn-* ('together with') appears three times: *synklēronomoi* ('co-heirs'), *sympaschomen* ('co-suffer'), and *syndoxasthōmen* ('co-glorified'). The path to glory passes through suffering — not as a condition to be earned but as the pattern of Christ's own journey.
18. The verb *logizomai* ('I reckon, consider, calculate') is the same word used for God's reckoning righteousness (4:3). Paul makes a deliberate cost-benefit calculation: present suffering versus future glory. The result is that suffering is *xiā* ('worthy, equivalent') — the scales are not even close. The phrase *eis hēmas* ('to/in us') can mean the glory will be revealed 'to us' (we will see it) or 'in us' (we will embody it). Both are true.
19. The word *apokaradokia* ('eager expectation, anxious longing') is a vivid compound: *apo* (away) + *kara* (head) + *dokēō* (to watch) — literally 'craning the neck forward to see.' Creation itself is personified as expectantly waiting. The 'revealing of the children of God' (*apokalypsin tōn huiōn tou theou*) refers to the final manifestation of believers' glorified identity at the return of Christ.

- 20.** The word *mataiotēti* ('futility, emptiness, purposelessness') echoes Ecclesiastes' refrain 'vanity of vanities' (*hebel* in Hebrew). Creation was subjected to this futility *ouch hekousa* ('not willingly') — it did not choose this condition. The one who subjected it is most likely God (in response to Adam's sin, Genesis 3:17-19), though some identify Adam. The crucial qualifier is *eph' helpidi* ('in hope') — the subjection was not final but forward-looking.
- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 3:17-19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** Creation's destiny is linked to humanity's: when God's children are glorified, creation itself will be liberated. The phrase *douleias tēs phthoras* ('bondage to decay/corruption') describes the second law of thermodynamics in theological terms — everything deteriorates. The phrase *eleutherian tēs doxēs* ('freedom of glory') is the opposite: the liberated creation will share in the glory of the redeemed.
- 22.** The compound verbs *systemazei* ('groans together') and *synōdinei* ('labors in birth-pain together') use the *syn-* prefix to indicate that all of creation participates. The childbirth metaphor is significant: the groaning is not death-agony but labor-pain — it anticipates new birth, not extinction. The phrase *achri tou nyn* ('until now') indicates this is the current reality.
- 23.** Three groanings: creation (v. 22), believers (v. 23), and the Spirit (v. 26). Believers groan despite having the *aparchēn tou pneumatōs* ('firstfruits of the Spirit') — the Spirit is the initial installment of the full harvest. The word *huiōthesian* ('adoption') reappears: believers already have adoption (v. 15) but await its full consummation — the redemption of the body at resurrection.
- 24.** The aorist *esōthēmen* ('we were saved') points to the decisive moment of salvation while the context makes clear that salvation has a 'not yet' dimension — the body's redemption is still future. Hope by definition involves the unseen; visible possession would eliminate the need for hope.
- 25.** The word *hypomonēs* ('endurance, patient steadfastness') is the same virtue produced by suffering in 5:3-4. The chain continues: hope is not passive but actively enduring, pressing through the present age toward the promised future.
- 26.** The compound verb *synantilambantai* ('helps, comes to assist alongside') pictures the Spirit as one who takes hold of a burden together with the one carrying it. The honest admission *ouk oidamen* ('we do not know') is pastoral: believers often lack the words or clarity for prayer. The Spirit's *stenagmois alalētois* ('wordless groanings, sighs beyond speech') correspond to the groanings of creation (v. 22) and believers (v. 23). The Spirit translates human helplessness into effective intercession.
- 27.** The 'one who searches hearts' is God (cf. 1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Chronicles 28:9; Jeremiah 17:10). God understands the Spirit's wordless intercession because the Spirit intercedes *kata theon* ('according to God,' in alignment with God's will). The prayers the Spirit offers on behalf of believers are always perfectly aligned with what God purposes.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Samuel 16:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Chronicles 28:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 17:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** Some manuscripts read 'God works all things together for good' (*ho theos panta synergei*), making God the explicit subject. The SBLGNT reading (*panta synergei*) can mean 'all things work together' or 'he [God] works all things together.' Either way, God's sovereignty is the theological point. The promise is not that all things are good but that they are worked together (*synergei*) for good — even suffering, even what seems pointless. The qualifying phrase *tois agapōsin ton theon* ('for those who love God') and *tois kata prothesin klētois* ('those called according to purpose') identifies the recipients.
- 29.** The 'golden chain' begins. The verb *proegnō* ('foreknew') in biblical usage means more than advance knowledge — it implies intimate, relational knowing and choosing (cf. Amos 3:2). The verb *proōrisen* ('predestined, predetermined') specifies the goal of God's knowing: conformity to Christ's image (*symmorphous tēs eikōnos*). The phrase 'firstborn among many brothers and sisters' (*prōtotokos en pollois adelphois*) makes Christ the eldest in a large family, not an only child.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Amos 3:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 30.** Five links: foreknew predestined called justified glorified. Each step leads inevitably to the next — no one is lost between links. The most stunning word is the final one: *edoxasen* ('glorified') is in the aorist (past) tense, treating the future glorification of believers as already accomplished. From God's perspective, the outcome is so certain it can be spoken of as a completed fact. This is called the 'proleptic aorist' — the future made present by divine certainty.
- 31.** The rhetorical questions of verses 31-35 form a courtroom crescendo. The first question — 'if God is for us, who can be against us?' — is not the claim that no one opposes believers (they clearly do) but that no opposition can ultimately prevail. The preposition *hyper* ('for, on behalf of') means God is an active advocate, not a neutral bystander.
- 32.** The verb *epheisato* ('spared') echoes Genesis 22:16 (LXX), where God says to Abraham 'you did not spare (*ouk epheisō*) your only son.' Paul presents the cross as God's own *Aqedah* — what Abraham was willing to do, God actually did. The verb *paredōken* ('gave over, handed over') is the same word used of God 'giving over' humanity in 1:24, 26, 28 — now inverted: God gives over his own Son for the sake of those he once gave over to judgment. The 'much more' argument: if God gave the greater gift (his Son), the lesser gifts (all things) are guaranteed.

32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 22:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. The verb *enkalesei* ('bring a charge, accuse') is a legal term for a formal prosecution. The answer is that no accuser can stand because the Judge himself has declared the verdict: justified. The word *eklektōn* ('chosen ones, elect') emphasizes divine initiative in salvation.
34. Four actions of Christ silence condemnation: he died (atonement), was raised (vindication), sits at God's right hand (authority, cf. Psalm 110:1), and intercedes (ongoing advocacy). The verb *entynchanei* ('intercedes, intervenes on behalf of') presents the risen Christ as believers' permanent advocate before God. The phrase *mallon de* ('more than that, rather') corrects the first statement — the resurrection, not just the death, is the decisive factor.
34. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 110:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
35. The list of seven potential separators moves from general suffering to violent death. These are not hypothetical — Paul experienced all of them (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:23-27). The phrase 'love of Christ' (*agapēs tou Christou*) is primarily Christ's love for us (subjective genitive), not our love for him. The question expects the answer 'no one and nothing.'
36. Paul quotes Psalm 44:22 (LXX 43:23), a communal lament from Israel's history. The Psalm describes suffering that comes not from sin but from faithfulness to God ('for your sake'). Paul applies it to the church's present experience: suffering is the norm for God's people, not the exception. Yet even this does not separate from Christ's love.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 44:22. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. The verb *hypernikōmen* ('we super-conquer, we overwhelmingly prevail') is another Pauline superlative compound — not merely victory but overwhelming triumph. The preposition *en* ('in') is significant: believers conquer not by escaping suffering but in the midst of it. The phrase *dia tou agapēsantos* ('through the one who loved') identifies Christ's love as the power source for this conquest.
38. The perfect tense *pepeismai* ('I am and remain convinced') expresses settled, unshakable certainty. Paul lists potential separators in pairs: death/life (the two modes of existence), angels/rulers (supernatural powers), present/future (all time). The word *archai* ('rulers, principalities') and *dynameis* ('powers') refer to cosmic spiritual authorities, whether benign or hostile. Paul asserts that even the most powerful spiritual beings in the universe cannot override God's love.
39. The final pair *hypsōma/bathos* ('height/depth') may refer to astrological terms for the highest and lowest points of a celestial body's orbit, encompassing all cosmic space. The sweeping phrase *tis ktisis hetera* ('any other created thing') is a catch-all: if Paul has missed anything in his list, this covers it. The conclusion lands on 'the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord' — all of God's love is mediated through Christ. The chapter that began with 'no condemnation' ends with 'no separation.' The phrase *en Christō Iēsou tō kyriō hēmōn* closes the chapter with the same formula that ends chapters 5, 6, and 7.

9

Summary: *Romans 9 opens a new section (chapters 9-11) addressing the most pressing theological problem raised by Paul's gospel: if righteousness comes by faith apart from the law, what about Israel? Has God's word failed? Paul expresses his deep anguish over Israel's unbelief, then argues that God's word has not failed because not all descended from Israel are truly Israel. God's purposes have always operated by sovereign election — choosing Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau. Paul defends God's right as Creator to show mercy and harden as he chooses, using the potter-and-clay metaphor. The chapter concludes by arguing that Gentiles have obtained the righteousness of faith while Israel, pursuing righteousness through the law, stumbled over Christ — the stumbling stone.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's anguish (vv. 1-5) is extraordinary — he wishes he could be cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of his kinspeople. This is the same Paul who just declared nothing can separate from Christ's love. The list of Israel's privileges (v. 4-5) is one of the fullest in the New Testament: adoption, glory, covenants, law, worship, promises, patriarchs, and the Messiah. The potter-clay metaphor (vv. 19-24) is drawn from Isaiah 29:16, 45:9, and Jeremiah 18:1-10. The chapter's argument about divine sovereignty is counterbalanced by chapters 10-11, which emphasize human responsibility and God's ultimate purpose of mercy.*

Translation Friction: *The tension between divine sovereignty (God hardens whom he wills, v. 18) and human responsibility (Israel pursued works rather than faith, v. 32) is one of the deepest theological tensions in Scripture. We render both emphases without harmonizing them. The Pharaoh hardening (v. 17) must be read alongside Exodus, where Pharaoh also hardens his own heart. The 'vessels of wrath' and 'vessels of mercy' language*

(vv. 22-23) has been debated between Calvinist and Arminian interpreters for centuries.

Connections: The Old Testament quotations are extensive: Genesis 21:12 (v. 7), Genesis 18:10 (v. 9), Genesis 25:23 (v. 12), Malachi 1:2-3 (v. 13), Exodus 33:19 (v. 15), Exodus 9:16 (v. 17), Isaiah 29:16/45:9 (v. 20), Hosea 2:23/1:10 (vv. 25-26), Isaiah 10:22-23 (vv. 27-28), Isaiah 1:9 (v. 29), Isaiah 8:14/28:16 (v. 33).

¹I am speaking the truth in Christ — I am not lying, as my conscience confirms in the Holy Spirit — ²Indeed, that I have remarkable heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. ³For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers and sisters, my kinspeople according to the flesh — ⁴They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. ⁵To them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. ⁶It is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. ⁷Indeed, neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children — but, In Isaac will your seed be called. ⁸This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. ⁹For this is what the promise said: "About this time I will return, and Sarah shall have a son." ¹⁰And not only that, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our ancestor Isaac — ¹¹(For the offspring while not yet brought into the world, neither possessing done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, ¹²Indeed, not of works, but of him that calleth;) it was stated to her, The elder will serve the younger. ¹³As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." ¹⁴What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? Absolutely not! ¹⁵And I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion, for he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. ¹⁶So then it depends not on human will or effort, but on God who has mercy. ¹⁷For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might display my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." ¹⁸So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. ¹⁹You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who has resisted his will?" ²⁰But who are you, a mere human, to argue back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" ²¹Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? ²²What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with great patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³Indeed, that he might make known the riches of all his splendor on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared to glory, ²⁴Indeed us, whom he has known as, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? ²⁵As indeed he says in Hosea: "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'" ²⁶"And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'children of the living God.'" ²⁷And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel were as the sand of the sea, only a remnant will be saved, ²⁸Indeed, since he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness — because a short work will the Lord make upon the world. ²⁹And as Isaiah predicted: "If the Lord of Hosts had not left us offspring, we would have become like Sodom and been made like Gomorrah." ³⁰What shall we say then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have obtained it — that is, a righteousness that is by faith; ³¹However, Israel, which followed following the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. ³²Why? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were based on works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, ³³As it is written, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence — and whosoever believes on him will not be ashamed.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul invokes a triple oath: truth in Christ, denial of falsehood, and the witness of his Spirit-informed conscience. This unusually intense affirmation signals that what follows is deeply personal and potentially misunderstood. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, must demonstrate that his gospel does not represent indifference to Israel.
2. The word *lypē* ('grief, sorrow') is strong; *odynē* ('anguish, sharp pain') is stronger. The adjective *adialeiptos* ('unceasing, constant') — the same word used for prayer in 1:9 — means this grief never leaves Paul. His pain over Israel's unbelief is not occasional but perpetual.
3. The verb *ēuchomēn* (imperfect) can mean 'I was wishing' or 'I could wish' — either a past wish or a present hypothetical. The word *anathema* ('accursed, devoted to destruction') is the Greek equivalent of Hebrew *cherem* — total separation from God. Paul echoes Moses in Exodus 32:32, who asked God to blot him from the book of life for Israel's sake. The irony is stunning: Paul who just said nothing can separate from Christ's love now

wishes for separation on behalf of others.

3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 32:32 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Paul lists eight privileges of Israel: (1) *huiiothesia* — adoption as God's son (Exodus 4:22), (2) *doxa* — God's glory-presence (the *Shekinah*), (3) *diathekai* — the covenants (Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic), (4) *nomiothesia* — the giving of the Torah, (5) *latreia* — the temple worship system, (6) *epangeliai* — the covenant promises. The plural *diathekai* ('covenants') is notable — God made multiple covenants with Israel.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 4:22. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The final two privileges: (7) the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) and (8) the Messiah himself. The phrase *to kata sarka* ('according to the flesh') limits Christ's Israelite identity to his human nature. The doxological clause *ho ōn epi pantōn theos eulogētos* ('who is God over all, blessed forever') is one of the most debated punctuation questions in the New Testament. It can be read as (a) a statement about Christ: 'who is God over all, blessed forever' or (b) a separate doxology to God the Father: 'God who is over all be blessed forever.' We follow reading (a), which is the more natural Greek syntax.
6. This is the thesis of chapters 9-11. The verb *ekpeptōken* ('has fallen, has failed') means to fall to the ground, to prove empty. Paul's answer to the apparent failure of God's promise is a redefinition of Israel: physical descent does not automatically equal covenant membership. There is an 'Israel within Israel' defined by God's electing purpose.
7. Paul quotes Genesis 21:12. Abraham had two sons — Ishmael and Isaac — but only Isaac was the child of promise. Physical descent from Abraham did not automatically make Ishmael an heir. The principle of selective election operates within the family from the very beginning.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 21:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Paul draws the theological conclusion: *tekna tēs sarkos* ('children of the flesh,' born by natural means) are distinguished from *tekna tēs epangelias* ('children of the promise,' born by God's word). The verb *logizetai* ('are counted, reckoned') is the same verb from chapter 4 — divine reckoning, not human achievement, determines who belongs to Abraham's true line.
9. Paul quotes Genesis 18:10, 14. Isaac's birth was not a natural event but a supernatural fulfillment of God's promise to a barren, elderly couple. The point: God's people are constituted by divine promise, not natural processes.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 18:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Paul introduces a stronger example. With Isaac and Ishmael, one could argue the difference was due to different mothers (Sarah vs. Hagar). With Jacob and Esau, the same mother (Rebekah) and the same father (Isaac) produced two sons, eliminating any argument based on parentage. The Greek *koitēn echousea* ('having a bed/conception') is a euphemism for sexual intercourse and conception.
11. Paul emphasizes that God's choice was made before the twins' birth and before any action — good or bad — that could serve as a basis for merit. The phrase *kat' eklogēn prothesis* ('purpose according to election') places the ground of God's choice in his own purpose, not in foreseen human merit.
12. Paul quotes Genesis 25:23. The reversal of primogeniture — the elder serving the younger — is a consistent pattern in Genesis (Ishmael/Isaac, Esau/Jacob, Manasseh/Ephraim). God's choice does not follow human convention but divine freedom. The phrase *ek tou kalountos* ('from the one who calls') makes God's calling the sole basis of election.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 25:23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Paul quotes Malachi 1:2-3, written over a thousand years after the twins. 'Hated' (*emisēsa*) in Semitic idiom can mean 'loved less' or 'not chosen' (cf. Genesis 29:31; Luke 14:26) — it denotes non-election rather than personal animosity. Malachi's original context concerns the nations of Israel and Edom, not merely the individuals Jacob and Esau.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Malachi 1:2-3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 29:31 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The objection is predictable: if God chooses before birth without regard to works, is that unjust? Paul's *mē genoito* is emphatic. The word *adikia* ('injustice, unrighteousness') is the negation of *dikaioσynē* — the charge is that God's election violates his own righteousness.
15. Paul quotes Exodus 33:19, God's response to Moses' request to see his glory. The double statement (mercy/mercy, compassion/compassion) is a Hebrew idiom emphasizing divine freedom: God's mercy is determined by God's own will. This was spoken in a context of grace — God had just forgiven the golden calf incident.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 33:19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

16. The three sources are contrasted: not the willing person (tou thelontos), not the running person (tou trechontos, a metaphor for striving), but God who shows mercy (tou eleountos theou). Human desire and effort, however sincere, cannot compel divine mercy. This does not eliminate human response but grounds the possibility of response in prior divine initiative.
17. Paul quotes Exodus 9:16. The verb *exēgeira* ('I raised up, I brought onto the stage') does not necessarily mean God created Pharaoh for the purpose of destruction but that God elevated him to power and sustained him through the plagues to display divine power. The purpose is the proclamation of God's name throughout the earth — even Pharaoh's hardening serves a redemptive-historical purpose.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 9:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. Paul draws the double conclusion: God's sovereignty operates in both directions — mercy and hardening. The verb *sklērynei* ('hardens') echoes the Exodus narrative where God hardened Pharaoh's heart. This must be read in its full Exodus context, where Pharaoh also hardened his own heart (Exodus 8:15, 32). Divine hardening is judicial — confirming a direction already chosen — not arbitrary.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 8:15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The diatribe partner objects: if God's will is irresistible, how can God blame anyone? This is the logical conclusion of verse 18 pushed to its extreme. The verb *antheistēken* ('has resisted, has stood against') is a perfect tense — who has ever successfully opposed God's purpose? Paul takes the objection seriously but reframes it.
20. Paul's response appeals to the Creator-creature distinction. The verb *antapokrinomenos* ('arguing back, answering in opposition') implies presumptuous back-talk. The potter-clay metaphor draws on Isaiah 29:16, 45:9, and Jeremiah 18:1-10. The point is not that human questions are illegitimate but that the creature has no standing to put the Creator on trial.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 29:16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 18:1-10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The word *exousian* ('right, authority, power') establishes the potter's prerogative. The phrase *ek tou autou phymatos* ('out of the same lump') emphasizes that the difference between vessels is not in the material but in the potter's purpose. We render *eis atimian* as 'for common use' rather than 'for dishonor' — the contrast is between special and ordinary, not necessarily between good and evil. However, in context, Paul is building toward the 'vessels of wrath' in verse 22.
22. The sentence begun here continues through verse 24. The phrase *skeuē orgēs* ('vessels of wrath') describes those destined for judgment. The participle *katērtismena* ('prepared, fitted') is in the middle/passive voice and does not specify who did the preparing — God, the individuals themselves, or sin. This ambiguity may be intentional. The phrase *en pollē makrothymia* ('with great patience') shows that even toward vessels of wrath, God exercises long-suffering restraint.
23. The contrast with verse 22 is significant: the vessels of wrath are described with a passive participle (*katērtismena*, 'prepared' — agent unspecified), while the vessels of mercy are described with an active verb (*proētoimasen*, 'he prepared beforehand' — God is the explicit agent). This asymmetry suggests that God actively prepares the vessels of mercy but does not actively prepare the vessels of wrath in the same direct way.
24. The vessels of mercy are now identified: 'us' — both Jewish and Gentile believers. God's electing purpose, which operated within Israel (choosing Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau), now operates beyond Israel's ethnic boundaries to include Gentiles.
25. Paul quotes Hosea 2:23 (LXX). In Hosea's original context, the promise of restoration refers to Israel itself — the unfaithful northern kingdom. Paul applies it to Gentile inclusion: those who were outside the covenant ('not my people') are now called God's people. This typological reading sees the same pattern of grace operating in a new context.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Hosea 2:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. Paul quotes Hosea 1:10 (LXX 2:1). The reversal is total: the location of rejection becomes the location of adoption. 'The living God' (*theou zōntos*) contrasts with dead idols and reinforces the theme of God's life-giving power (cf. 4:17).
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Hosea 1:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. Paul now turns from Gentile inclusion to the painful reality of Israel's partial rejection, quoting Isaiah 10:22-23. The word *hypoleimma* ('remnant') introduces a concept central to prophetic theology: God always preserves a faithful core within the nation, even when the majority falls away. The verb *krazei* ('cries out') suggests urgency and prophetic passion.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 10:22-23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The phrase *logon syntelōn kai syntemnōn* ('completing and cutting short the word/sentence') describes God's decisive, swift judicial action. The LXX text Paul uses differs from the Hebrew of Isaiah 10:23. The point: God's judgment will be thorough and final.

- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 10:22-23 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** Paul quotes Isaiah 1:9. The title *kyrios sabaōth* ('Lord of Hosts/Armies') transliterates the Hebrew YHWH Tseva'ot. The comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah — total destruction — emphasizes that even the remnant exists only by God's grace, not by human merit. The word *sperma* ('seed, offspring') echoes the Abrahamic promise.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 1:9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 30.** The irony is sharp: Gentiles who were not even trying to achieve righteousness received it, while Israel who was intensely pursuing it missed it. The verb *katelaben* ('obtained, grasped, attained') suggests catching something that was not being chased. The qualifier *ek pisteōs* ('from faith') identifies the kind of righteousness obtained.
- 31.** The verb *diōkōn* ('pursuing') is the same verb used for pursuit in a race or persecution of an enemy — Israel was zealously, energetically chasing righteousness. The tragic verb *ouk ephthasen* ('did not arrive, did not reach') describes failure at the finish line. The phrase *nomon dikaioynēs* ('law of righteousness') is debated — it may mean 'the law that would lead to righteousness' or 'the standard of righteousness.'
- 32.** Paul diagnoses Israel's failure: wrong method, not wrong goal. They pursued righteousness as if (*hōs*) it could be achieved by works rather than received by faith. The verb *prosekopsan* ('stumbled against, struck against') introduces the stone metaphor that the following quotation develops. Israel's very zeal for the law became the obstacle to receiving the gospel.
- 33.** Paul combines Isaiah 28:16 and Isaiah 8:14 — one text about a cornerstone, the other about a stumbling stone. The same Christ is both: a foundation for faith and an obstacle for unbelief. The promise 'will not be put to shame' (*ou kataischynthēsetai*) echoes 5:5 and 10:11. The pronoun *ep' autō* ('in him') personalizes the stone — it is not an abstract principle but Christ himself.
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 28:16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

10

Summary: *Romans 10 continues Paul's argument about Israel. He affirms Israel's zeal for God while lamenting that it is not based on knowledge — they seek to establish their own righteousness rather than submitting to God's righteousness. Christ is the end (telos) of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Paul then presents the accessibility of the gospel through the 'word of faith' — no one needs to ascend to heaven or descend to the abyss, because the word is near, in your mouth and heart. Confession of Jesus as Lord and belief in his resurrection lead to salvation. The chapter concludes with the famous missionary logic: calling requires believing, believing requires hearing, hearing requires a preacher, preaching requires being sent. Paul ends by noting that Israel heard but did not obey.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verse 4 — 'Christ is the telos of the law' — is one of the most consequential verses for understanding Paul's theology of the law. The word telos can mean 'end' (termination), 'goal' (purpose), or 'fulfillment' (completion). Each reading has different theological implications. Verses 6-8 are a creative midrash on Deuteronomy 30:12-14, replacing the Torah with Christ. The preaching logic of verses 14-15 has been foundational to Christian missionary theology. The Isaiah 52:7 quotation ('how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news') has become iconic.*

Translation Friction: *The meaning of telos in verse 4 is the primary exegetical challenge. We render 'end' (culmination/goal) and note the range. The relationship between 'the righteousness of faith' (vv. 6-8) and Moses' words in Deuteronomy 30 is a bold hermeneutical move by Paul that has been variously assessed.*

Connections: *The Deuteronomy 30:12-14 reinterpretation (vv. 6-8) connects to Baruch 3:29-30. The missionary sending logic (vv. 14-15) cites Isaiah 52:7 and connects to Matthew 28:19-20. The 'word of faith' (v. 8) connects to the 'obedience of faith' bookend (1:5; 16:26). Isaiah 53:1 (v. 16), Psalm 19:4 (v. 18), Deuteronomy 32:21 (v. 19), and Isaiah 65:1-2 (vv. 20-21) all contribute.*

¹Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. ²For I can testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but it is not based on knowledge. ³For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴For Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. ⁵For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law: "The person

who does these things will live by them." ⁶But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" — that is, to bring Christ down — ⁷or 'Who will go down into the depths below?' (that is, to bring Christ back from the dead). ⁸But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" — that is, the word of faith that we proclaim. ⁹That if you shalt confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt trust in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shalt be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, richly blessing all who call on him. ¹³For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." ¹⁴How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ¹⁵And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" ¹⁶But not all have obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" ¹⁷So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. ¹⁸But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have: "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." ¹⁹But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry." ²⁰Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me." ²¹But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul reaffirms his personal anguish (cf. 9:1-3). The word *eudokia* ('desire, delight, good pleasure') expresses a deep longing of the will, not merely a wish. The fact that Paul prays for Israel's salvation implies it is still possible — they are not irreversibly rejected. Some manuscripts read 'for Israel' (hyper tou Israēl) rather than 'for them' (hyper autōn); the SBLGNT follows the shorter reading.
2. Paul speaks from personal experience — he himself had the same misdirected zeal before his conversion (Philippians 3:6; Galatians 1:14). The word *zēlon* ('zeal, jealousy, enthusiasm') is positive but insufficient. The word *epignōsin* ('full knowledge, recognition, understanding') with the *epi-* prefix implies accurate, deep comprehension rather than mere information.
3. The word *agnoontes* ('being ignorant, not recognizing') does not excuse Israel but diagnoses their error. The phrase *idian dikaiosynēn* ('their own righteousness') is righteousness achieved by human effort — Paul's pre-conversion pursuit (Philippians 3:9). The verb *hypētagēsan* ('submitted') suggests that receiving God's righteousness requires surrender of self-generated righteousness.
4. The word *telos* ('end, goal, culmination, fulfillment') is deliberately ambiguous: Christ is both the goal toward which the law pointed and the termination of the law as a means of achieving righteousness. We render 'culmination' to capture both dimensions. The qualifier *panti tō pisteuonti* ('to everyone who believes') universalizes the offer — not just Jews or just Gentiles but everyone. This verse is the theological hinge between Israel's failed pursuit (v. 3) and the accessibility of faith-righteousness (vv. 5-13).
5. Paul quotes Leviticus 18:5. The 'do and live' principle defines law-righteousness: perfect obedience yields life. But as Paul has shown (3:20; 7:7-13), no one actually achieves this. The law's righteousness is real but unattainable by sinful humanity. This sets up the contrast with faith-righteousness in the following verses.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 18:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Paul personifies faith-righteousness as a speaker and paraphrases Deuteronomy 30:12-14. In Moses' original context, the point was that the Torah was accessible — no one needed to go to heaven to find it. Paul applies the same accessibility to Christ: the gospel does not require impossible feats. The interpretive gloss 'that is, to bring Christ down' (*tout' estin Christon katagagein*) replaces Moses' reference to the commandment with Christ.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 30:12-14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Deuteronomy 30:13 originally said 'who will cross the sea?' Paul substitutes 'the abyss' (*abyssos*), the realm of the dead, and interprets it as referring to Christ's resurrection. No human effort is needed to accomplish incarnation (v. 6) or resurrection (v. 7) — God has already done both. The gospel is near, not distant.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 30:12-14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 30:14. What Moses said about the Torah, Paul says about the gospel: it is near, accessible, ready to be received. The phrase *rhēma tēs pisteōs* ('word of faith') identifies the gospel message that demands and enables faith. The two locations — mouth and heart — correspond to the confession and belief of verse 9.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 30:12-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. This is the earliest Christian confession formula. The verbal confession *kyrion Iēsoun* ('Jesus is Lord') was the baptismal declaration and the most concise summary of Christian faith. In the Roman world, 'Lord' (*kyrios*) was a title for Caesar; confessing Jesus as Lord was both a theological claim and a political act. The heart-belief specified is the resurrection — the historical event that vindicated Jesus' identity. Mouth (external confession) and heart (internal belief) together constitute saving faith.
10. Paul reverses the order of verse 9 (mouth/heart heart/mouth), creating a chiasmic structure. The two clauses are not describing two separate events but two dimensions of one reality: believing leads to righteousness (*dikaiosynēn*, justification), and confessing leads to salvation (*sōtērian*). These are not sequential steps but simultaneous aspects of faith.
11. Paul returns to Isaiah 28:16 (quoted in 9:33) but adds the crucial word *pas* ('everyone') — making the promise explicitly universal. No one who trusts Christ will be disappointed or disgraced. The verb *kataischynthēsetai* ('will be put to shame') has eschatological force: at the final judgment, those who believed will be vindicated.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 28:16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The phrase *ou diastolē* ('no distinction') echoes 3:22. The universality of sin (3:22-23) corresponds to the universality of salvation (10:12-13). The participle *ploutōn* ('being rich, bestowing richly') describes God's generosity as inexhaustible — there is enough grace for all who call.
13. Paul quotes Joel 2:32 (LXX 3:5). In Joel's original context, 'the Lord' (*kyrios*) translates YHWH. Paul applies this to Jesus as Lord — those who call on Jesus' name receive the salvation promised to those who call on YHWH's name. This is one of the clearest implicit affirmations of Christ's divine status in Paul's letters.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Joel 2:32 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Paul constructs a chain of necessary conditions working backward from calling to believing to hearing to preaching. Each link depends on the prior one. The logic establishes the necessity of gospel proclamation — faith is not a spontaneous human achievement but a response to a proclaimed message. The Greek *hou ouk ēkousan* can mean 'whom they have not heard' (hearing Christ himself through the preacher) or 'of whom they have not heard' (hearing about Christ).
15. The chain's final link: preaching requires sending (*apostalōsin*, from *apostellō* — the root of 'apostle'). Paul quotes Isaiah 52:7, which describes messengers bringing news of Israel's return from exile. Paul applies it to gospel preachers. The SBLGNT has a shorter quotation than the KJV, omitting 'the gospel of peace' — which appears in the fuller Isaiah text.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 52:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The verb *hypēkousan* ('obeyed') equates believing the gospel with obeying it — consistent with the 'obedience of faith' framework (1:5; 16:26). Paul quotes Isaiah 53:1, the opening of the Suffering Servant passage. The word *akoē* ('what is heard, report, message') connects to the hearing-chain of verse 14. Isaiah's lament is that the message was proclaimed but not believed.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 53:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. Paul summarizes the chain: faith originates in hearing (*ex akoēs*), and hearing is mediated by the word of Christ (*dia rhēmatos Christou*). The SBLGNT reads 'word of Christ' (*Christou*) rather than the KJV's 'word of God' (*theou*) — the critical text attributes the gospel message specifically to Christ. The *rhēma* ('word, message, spoken word') is the concrete, proclaimed gospel.
18. Paul addresses a potential excuse: perhaps Israel did not hear. He refutes this with Psalm 19:4 (LXX 18:5), which originally described creation's testimony to God. Paul applies it to the gospel's proclamation — the message has reached everywhere. Israel's failure is not for lack of hearing.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 19:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. A second potential excuse: perhaps Israel did not understand. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:21 — God himself predicted that he would provoke Israel's jealousy through Gentile inclusion. The Gentiles, once considered 'no nation' (*ouk ethnei*) and 'foolish' (*asyneto*), now receive what Israel rejected. This theme of provoking jealousy will be central to 11:11-14.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 32:21. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Paul quotes Isaiah 65:1. The verb *apitolma* ('dares, is bold enough') acknowledges that Isaiah's statement is provocative. God was found by those not seeking him and revealed himself to those not asking — this is the Gentile experience of unexpected grace. The verbs are passive/reflexive from God's perspective: God actively reveals himself to those who had no claim on him.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 65:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

21. Paul quotes Isaiah 65:2. The image of God stretching out his hands (*exepetasa tas cheiras*) is one of the most poignant in Scripture — God reaching out, arms extended, to a people who refuse to come. The two adjectives *apeithonta* ('disobedient, rebellious') and *antilegonta* ('contradicting, opposing') describe Israel's active resistance, not passive ignorance. The chapter ends with this image of divine longing and human stubbornness — but the outstretched hands suggest God has not given up. This sets up chapter 11's argument.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 65:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

11

Summary: *Romans 11 resolves the Israel question. Paul asks: has God rejected his people? No — Paul himself is proof. A remnant exists by grace. The rest were hardened, but their stumbling has brought salvation to the Gentiles, which will in turn provoke Israel to jealousy. Using the olive tree metaphor, Paul warns Gentile believers not to boast against the natural branches — if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare the grafted ones either. Paul then reveals a mystery: a partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, and so all Israel will be saved. The chapter concludes with a doxology praising the depth of God's wisdom and knowledge.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The 'mystery' of verse 25-26 is one of the most debated passages in the New Testament. 'All Israel will be saved' has been interpreted as (1) all ethnic Israel will eventually believe, (2) the elect from Israel across all generations, or (3) the full people of God (Jew and Gentile). The olive tree metaphor (vv. 17-24) is Paul's most vivid illustration of the relationship between Israel and the church — Gentile believers are grafted into Israel's olive tree, not the reverse. The concluding doxology (vv. 33-36) is one of the most sublime passages of theological worship in all of Scripture.*

Translation Friction: *The meaning of 'all Israel' (*pas Israēl*) in verse 26 is the central interpretive challenge. We render the Greek as given and note the range of interpretations. The olive tree metaphor involves botanically unusual grafting (wild branches onto a cultivated tree), which Paul himself acknowledges as 'contrary to nature' (v. 24).*

Connections: *The Elijah narrative (vv. 2-4) draws from 1 Kings 19:10-18. The hardening motif quotes Deuteronomy 29:4, Isaiah 29:10, and Psalm 69:22-23. The olive tree may allude to Jeremiah 11:16. The 'deliverer from Zion' quotation (v. 26) combines Isaiah 59:20-21 and Isaiah 27:9. The doxology echoes Isaiah 40:13 and Job 41:11.*

1I ask then, has God rejected his people? Absolutely not! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says about Elijah, how he appeals to God against Israel? 3"Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have torn down your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life." 4But what is God's reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5So too at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace. 6But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace. 7What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was pursuing. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, 8According as it is recorded, God has granted them the inner life of slumber, sight that they should not witness, and ears that they should not hear;) to this day. 9And David says: "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; 10Let their eyes grow dark so they cannot see, and let their backs be bent under the burden forever. 11So I ask, did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Absolutely not! Rather, through their trespass salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. 12Now if their trespass means riches for the world, and their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean! 13Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my physical nature, and may rescue some of them. 15For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? 16If the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among them and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree, 18Boast not opposed to the branches. But if you boast, you bearest not the root, but the root you. 19Then you will say, "Branches were

broken off so that I might be grafted in." ²⁰True enough. They were broken off because of their unbelief, and you stand by faith. So do not be arrogant, but be afraid. ²¹For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you. ²²Consider then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness toward you — provided you continue in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off. ²³And even they, if they do not persist in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. ²⁴For if you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree! ²⁵For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of this mystery — lest you be wise in your own sight — that a partial hardening has come upon Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, ²⁶So all Israel will be saved — as it is written, There will come out of Sion the Deliverer, and will turn away ungodliness from Jacob: ²⁷"And this will be my covenant with them, when I take away their sins." ²⁸Regarding the gospel, they are enemies for your sake; but regarding election, they are beloved for the sake of the patriarchs. ²⁹For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰For just as you were once disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹In deed, even so have these also now not believed, that by way of your mercy they also may obtain mercy. ³²For God has consigned all to disobedience, so that he may have mercy on all. ³³Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how untraceable his ways! ³⁴Since who has known what the Lord is thinking? or who has been his advisor? ³⁵"Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" ³⁶Are all things — to whom be glory for ever, for of him, and through him, and to him. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *apōsato* ('pushed away, rejected') echoes the language of Psalm 94:14 (LXX 93:14): 'the LORD will not reject his people.' Paul offers himself as exhibit A: if God had rejected Israel, Paul — a thoroughbred Israelite — would not be an apostle. The tribe of Benjamin was significant: it remained loyal to the house of David and was the tribe of Israel's first king, Saul (Paul's namesake).
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 94:14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The verb *proegnō* ('foreknew') links back to 8:29 — God's foreknowledge is not mere advance awareness but relational choosing. A people whom God foreknew cannot be ultimately rejected. The verb *entynchanei* ('appeals, intercedes') is the same word used for Christ's intercession in 8:34, but here Elijah intercedes against Israel.
3. Paul quotes 1 Kings 19:10, 14 (with slight modifications from the LXX). Elijah's despair is absolute — he believes he is the sole remaining faithful person in Israel. The historical parallel to Paul's time is clear: apparent wholesale rejection of God's purposes.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Kings 19:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The word *chrēmatismos* ('divine reply, oracle') is a formal, authoritative response. God corrects Elijah's perception: seven thousand remained faithful. The verb *katelipōn* ('I kept, I reserved for myself') is emphatic — God preserved the remnant by his own initiative. The phrase *emautō* ('for myself') makes the remnant God's personal possession. Paul quotes 1 Kings 19:18.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Kings 19:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Paul applies the Elijah precedent to his own era: just as God preserved seven thousand in Elijah's day, so now a remnant of Jewish believers exists. The phrase *kat' eklogēn charitos* ('according to the election of grace') identifies grace, not merit, as the basis of remnant membership.
6. Paul states the logical incompatibility of grace and works as bases for election. The SBLGNT omits the longer reading found in the KJV ('But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work'), which appears in later manuscripts. The principle is absolute: if the remnant is chosen by grace, works cannot be the basis — the two are mutually exclusive.
7. Paul distinguishes two groups within Israel: *hē eklogē* ('the elect,' the remnant that believed) and *hoi loipoi* ('the rest,' the majority). The verb *epōrōthēsan* ('were hardened, made callous') is a divine passive — God hardened them, as in 9:18. The word *pōrōsis* suggests the formation of a callus or the hardening of stone.
8. Paul combines Deuteronomy 29:4 (LXX) and Isaiah 29:10. The word *katanyxeōs* ('stupor, deep sleep, numbness') describes a spiritual insensibility — aware of God's truth yet unable to perceive it. The phrase *heōs tēs sēmeron hēmeras* ('until this present day') extends the condition from Moses and Isaiah's time to Paul's own.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 29:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 29:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Paul quotes Psalm 69:22-23 (LXX 68:23-24), attributed to David. The 'table' (trapeza) may symbolize the Torah or the temple sacrifices — Israel's privileges become the very instruments of their ensnaring when they cling to them as substitutes for faith in Christ.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 69:22-23. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The continuation of Psalm 69:23. Darkened eyes and bent backs describe a people burdened and blinded. The phrase *dia pantos* ('forever, continually') seems final — but Paul will argue in the following verses that this hardening is not permanent. The Psalm's imprecatory language is applied typologically, not as Paul's personal wish.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 69:22-23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. Paul distinguishes between stumbling (*ptaiō*, a temporary misstep) and falling (*piptō*, a permanent collapse). Israel stumbled but did not fall permanently. The divine purpose behind Israel's trespass is twofold: (1) salvation goes to the Gentiles, and (2) Israel is provoked to jealousy by Gentile faith. This jealousy is redemptive, not destructive — it is meant to draw Israel back.
12. Another 'how much more' (*posō mallon*) argument: if Israel's rejection produced worldwide blessing, Israel's acceptance will produce something even greater. The word *plērōma* ('fullness, full number, full inclusion') is the positive counterpart to 'failure' (*hēttēma*) — the full restoration of Israel.
13. Paul turns to address the Gentile believers in Rome directly. The verb *doxazō* ('I glorify, magnify, honor') applied to his ministry means he takes his apostolic role seriously and exercises it strategically.
14. Paul reveals his strategy: by successfully evangelizing Gentiles, he hopes to provoke his fellow Jews (*mou tēn sarka*, 'my flesh,' i.e., his kinspeople) to jealousy. The modest 'some of them' (*tinas ex autōn*) is realistic — Paul does not expect all Israel to believe through his personal ministry.
15. The parallel is breathtaking: rejection (*apobolē*) world reconciliation; acceptance (*proslēmpsis*) life from the dead. The phrase *zōē ek nekrōn* ('life from the dead') may mean (1) the general resurrection at the end of the age, triggered by Israel's restoration, or (2) a spiritual renewal of extraordinary proportions. Either way, Israel's future restoration will produce something beyond what their rejection produced.
16. Two analogies making the same point: the part consecrates the whole. The 'firstfruits' (*aparchē*) and 'root' (*rhiza*) likely refer to the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), whose consecration sanctifies their descendants (the 'lump' and 'branches'). The reference to Numbers 15:17-21, where a portion of dough was offered to consecrate the whole batch, supports this reading.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 15:17-21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The olive tree metaphor begins. The natural branches (Israel) were partially broken off; the wild olive shoot (Gentile believers) was grafted in. The word *tines* ('some') is crucial — not all branches were broken off. The Gentile believer shares in (*synkoinōnos*, 'co-partaker of') the root's richness. The olive tree represents the covenant people of God, rooted in the patriarchs.
18. The verb *katakauchō* ('boast against, exult over') is a compound suggesting boasting at the expense of others. The corrective is theologically fundamental: Gentile Christians are supported by Israel's heritage ('the root bears you'), not the reverse. The church does not replace Israel but is grafted into Israel's covenant story.
19. Paul voices the Gentile believer's triumphalist logic: Israel's rejection was for our benefit. While there is a partial truth (cf. v. 11), the tone of self-congratulation is dangerous.
20. Paul concedes the factual point (*kalōs*, 'true enough, granted') but redirects the conclusion. The dative *pistei* ('by faith') is the only basis for the Gentile believer's standing — not ethnic merit or moral superiority. The imperative *phobou* ('fear, be afraid') is a warning: the same God who broke off natural branches can break off grafted ones.
21. The verb *epheisato* ('spared') echoes 8:32, where God 'did not spare his own Son.' The argument from lesser to greater: if God did not spare the natural (*kata physin*) branches who had prior claim, Gentile grafts should not presume on his patience.
22. The word *chrēstotēta* ('kindness, goodness') and *apotomia* ('severity, sternness' — literally 'cutting off') describe two aspects of God's character, both equally real. The conditional *ean epimenēs* ('if you continue') introduces a genuine warning: standing in grace is maintained by continuing in faith. The threat *ekkopēsē* ('you will be cut off') is addressed to Gentile believers corporately.
23. The door remains open: Israel's unbelief is not a permanent condition but can be reversed. The phrase *dynatos estin ho theos* ('God is able') appeals to divine power — the same God who raised the dead (4:17) can restore broken branches.
24. Paul acknowledges the botanical oddity: grafting wild stock onto cultivated stock is *para physin* ('contrary to nature') — normally the reverse is done. If God performed this unnatural grafting for Gentiles, how much more easily can he regraft Israel's own natural branches into their own tree. The phrase *tē idia elaiā* ('their own olive tree') is poignant — Israel belongs to this tree.

- 25.** Paul uses his disclosure formula (cf. 1:13) to reveal a *mystērion* ('mystery') — not something secret but something previously hidden now revealed. The mystery has three elements: (1) the hardening is partial (*apo merous*, 'from a part'), (2) it is temporary (*achris hou*, 'until'), and (3) its terminus is the entry of 'the fullness of the Gentiles' (to *plērōma tōn ethnōn*). The purpose of revealing this mystery is to prevent Gentile arrogance (en *heautois phronimoi*, 'wise in your own estimation').
- 26.** The phrase *pas Israēl* ('all Israel') is the interpretive crux. The word *houtōs* ('in this way, thus') points to the process described: through the dynamic of Gentile fullness provoking Jewish response. Paul quotes Isaiah 59:20-21 with modifications. 'The Deliverer' (*ho rhyomenos*) is Christ at his return. 'All Israel' most likely refers to the ethnic nation as a whole (not every individual but the nation as an entity), consistent with the Mishnaic usage of 'all Israel' (Sanhedrin 10:1).
- 26.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 59:20-21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 27.** Paul quotes from Isaiah 27:9 (LXX), connecting it to the new covenant promise. The word *diathēkē* ('covenant') echoes Jeremiah 31:31-34 — the new covenant includes the forgiveness of sins. Israel's salvation will be a covenant act of divine grace, not human achievement.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 59:20-21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 27:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 31:31-34. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** Paul holds two realities in tension: in terms of their present response to the gospel, unbelieving Israel is in opposition (*echthroi*, 'enemies'); in terms of God's eternal purpose, they remain *agapētoi* ('beloved'). The ground of their belovedness is not their own merit but the patriarchs — God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- 29.** The word *ametamelēta* ('irrevocable, without regret, not to be taken back') is the theological anchor: God does not revoke his gifts or calling. What was given to Israel (the privileges listed in 9:4-5) remains theirs. God's faithfulness to his covenant promises is permanent.
- 30.** Paul traces a providential pattern: Gentile disobedience Gentile mercy (through Israel's faithfulness in preserving Scripture and producing the Messiah); Israel's disobedience Gentile mercy (through the gospel going to the nations). The verb *ēpēthēsate* ('were disobedient') and *ēlēthēte* ('received mercy') summarize the Gentile journey.
- 31.** The pattern continues: Israel's present disobedience serves the purpose of their future mercy. The phrase *tō hymeterō eleēi* ('by the mercy shown to you') means that Gentile mercy provokes Jewish jealousy (v. 11), which leads to Jewish mercy. The word *nyn* ('now') appears twice in some manuscripts — the SBLGNT includes both, emphasizing present-tense mercy.
- 32.** The verb *synekleisen* ('shut up together, imprisoned, consigned') presents God as deliberately allowing universal disobedience — not because he delights in sin but because universal disobedience is the prerequisite for universal mercy. If anyone could claim self-achieved righteousness, mercy would be unnecessary. The double *tous pantas* ('all...all') encompasses both Jew and Gentile. This verse is the theological conclusion of chapters 9-11 and arguably of Romans 1-11.
- 33.** Paul erupts into doxology. The exclamation *ō bathos* ('O depth!') expresses wonder at the fathomless nature of God's plan. Three divine attributes are celebrated: *ploutou* ('riches' — abundance of resources), *sophias* ('wisdom' — skill in deploying resources), and *gnōseōs* ('knowledge' — comprehensive awareness). The adjectives *anexeraunēta* ('unsearchable, beyond investigation') and *anexichniastoi* ('untraceable, beyond tracking') mean God's ways cannot be fully mapped by human reason.
- 34.** Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13 (LXX). The rhetorical questions expect the answer 'no one.' God does not consult advisors; his wisdom is self-generated. This is not an anti-intellectual statement but a confession that divine wisdom exceeds human capacity.
- 34.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 40:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 35.** Paul alludes to Job 41:11. No one has put God in their debt. God is the ultimate source; all things flow from him. The verb *proedōken* ('gave first, gave in advance') implies a prior gift that creates obligation — no such gift exists. God's mercy is free because no one can establish a prior claim.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Job 41:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** The threefold prepositional phrase encompasses all reality: *ex autou* ('from him' — origin), *di' autou* ('through him' — sustenance), *eis auton* ('to him' — destination). All things come from God, are sustained by God, and exist for God's glory. The doxology 'to him be glory forever, Amen' brings the theological argument of chapters 1-11 to a fitting conclusion before the ethical exhortations of chapters 12-16 begin.

12

Summary: *Romans 12 marks the transition from theological argument (chapters 1-11) to ethical exhortation (chapters 12-16). Paul urges believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices and to be transformed by the renewing of their minds (vv. 1-2). He then addresses the body of Christ: each member has different gifts — prophecy, service, teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, mercy — and all should function within their calling. The chapter concludes with a series of rapid-fire ethical instructions about genuine love, honoring one another, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, overcoming evil with good, and living at peace with everyone.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verses 1-2 function as the hinge of the entire letter — the 'therefore' (oun) connects all of chapters 1-11 to all of chapters 12-16. The theological indicative becomes the ethical imperative. The concept of 'living sacrifice' (thysia zōsa) is a deliberate paradox: sacrifices are normally dead. Paul redefines worship from temple ritual to total-life offering. The phrase 'be transformed by the renewing of your mind' (metamorphousthe tē anakainōsei tou noos) uses the same verb as Christ's transfiguration (Mark 9:2). The rapid ethical commands of vv. 9-21 echo the Sermon on the Mount and Proverbs.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase logikēn latreian (v. 1) is difficult: 'rational worship,' 'spiritual worship,' or 'reasonable service'? Each translation captures a different dimension. We render 'true and proper worship' but note the alternatives. The gifts list (vv. 6-8) is not systematic or exhaustive — it differs from 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4.*

Connections: *The living sacrifice language (v. 1) transforms Old Testament sacrificial theology (Leviticus 1-7). The body metaphor (vv. 4-5) parallels 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. The 'overcome evil with good' (v. 21) echoes Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:38-48. The command to bless persecutors (v. 14) directly reflects Jesus' words (Luke 6:28).*

¹Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship. ²Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good, pleasing, and perfect. ³For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you: do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, ⁵So we, being numerous, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of yet another. ⁶Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: if prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷Or ministry, let us remain on our ministering — or he that teaches, on teaching. ⁸Or he that exhorteth, on encouragement — he that gives, allow him do it with generosity. He that ruleth, with diligence. He that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. ⁹Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹²Rejoice in hope, be patient in affliction, be persistent in prayer. ¹³Contribute to the needs of the saints and pursue hospitality. ¹⁴Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. ¹⁵Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of everyone. ¹⁸If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all people. ¹⁹Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord." ²⁰To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb parastēsai ('to present, offer') is the same word used for presenting sacrifices at the altar (cf. 6:13). Three adjectives describe the sacrifice: zōsan ('living' — not dead), hagian ('holy' — set apart for God), euaireston ('pleasing' — acceptable to God). The phrase logikēn latreian is notoriously difficult. We render 'true and proper worship,' capturing both the rational and the fitting dimensions.

2. Two contrasting verbs: *sychēmatizesthe* ('be conformed, shaped by external pressure') and *metamorphousthe* ('be transformed, changed from within'). The first suggests external molding; the second suggests organic, internal change. The word *aïōni* ('age') refers to the present world-system, not geography. The verb *dokimazein* ('to test, prove, discern') means evaluating and approving what is genuinely excellent. Three adjectives describe God's will: *agathon* ('good'), *euareston* ('pleasing'), *teleion* ('perfect, complete, mature').
3. Paul uses four forms of the *phronein* ('think, have a mindset') word group in rapid succession — a wordplay impossible to reproduce in English. The compound *hyperphronein* ('to over-think, to think arrogantly') is contrasted with *sōphronein* ('to think soundly, soberly'). The 'measure of faith' (*metron pisteōs*) determines one's function within the body — different gifts reflect different allocations of faith.
4. Paul introduces the body metaphor he develops more extensively in 1 Corinthians 12. The word *praxin* ('function, activity, practice') emphasizes that different members have different roles — diversity of function is by design.
5. The phrase *en Christō* ('in Christ') defines the sphere in which the many become one. The phrase *allēlōn melē* ('members of one another') emphasizes mutual interdependence — each believer belongs not just to the body but to every other member.
6. The word *charismata* ('gifts of grace') shares the root of *charis* ('grace') — gifts are grace-given, not self-generated. The phrase *analogian tēs pisteōs* ('proportion of faith') means prophecy should be exercised within the bounds of sound faith, not exceeding one's measure.
7. The word *diakonian* ('service, ministry') is the root of 'deacon.' Paul's instruction is simple: whatever your gift, devote yourself to it. The repeated *en* ('in') construction emphasizes focus and dedication to one's calling.
8. Three gifts receive qualifiers: giving should be done *en haplotēti* ('with generosity, sincerity, simplicity'), leading *en spoudē* ('with diligence, eagerness, earnestness'), and mercy *en hilarotēti* ('with cheerfulness, gladness'). The last word gives us 'hilarity' — mercy should not be grudging but joyful. The list covers intellectual (prophecy, teaching), practical (service, giving, leadership), and relational (exhortation, mercy) gifts.
9. The adjective *anypokritos* ('genuine, unhypocritical, without pretense') contains the root *hypokrisis* ('hypocrisy, play-acting'). Love must be real, not performed. The verb *apostygountes* ('abhorring, detesting viscerally') is a strong word — revulsion, not mere disapproval. The verb *kollōmenoi* ('clinging to, being glued to') suggests adhesion — goodness should stick.
10. The word *philadelphia* ('brotherly love') and *philostorgoi* ('warmly affectionate') combine family love terms. The phrase *allēlous proēgoumenoi* ('outdoing one another, taking the lead in honoring') creates a competition of generosity rather than self-promotion.
11. Three rapid commands: negative (not *oknēroi*, 'lazy, sluggish'), positive (*zeontes*, 'boiling, on fire' — the Spirit is compared to boiling water), and directional (*douleuontes*, 'serving as a slave to the Lord'). Some manuscripts read 'serving the time' (*kairō*) instead of 'serving the Lord' (*kyriō*), but the SBLGNT reads *kyriō*.
12. Three more rapid commands forming a triad: hope *rejoicing* (looking forward), affliction *patience* (enduring the present), prayer *persistence* (sustained communion with God). The verb *proskarterountes* ('persisting, being devoted to, not giving up') implies consistent, unwavering prayer.
13. The verb *koinōnountes* ('sharing, participating in, contributing to') implies personal involvement, not distant charity. The verb *diōkontes* ('pursuing, chasing after') is the same verb used for pursuing righteousness (9:30) — hospitality should be actively sought out, not merely offered when convenient. The word *philoxenian* ('hospitality, love of strangers') was a crucial virtue in the ancient world where travelers depended on hosts.
14. This directly echoes Jesus' teaching (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28). The verb *eulogeite* ('bless, speak well of, invoke good upon') is the opposite of *katarasthe* ('curse, invoke evil upon'). The repetition of 'bless' (*eulogeite kai mē katarasthe*) emphasizes the command — the natural response to persecution is cursing; the Christ-shaped response is blessing.
15. Two infinitives of purpose expressing empathy: shared joy and shared grief. The simplicity of the command belies its difficulty — it is often harder to rejoice with others' success than to weep with their sorrow. Both require genuine emotional identification with another person.
16. Three commands about social orientation: (1) to *auto phronountes* ('think the same thing' — unity of mind), (2) *tois tapeinois synapagomenoi* ('being carried along with the humble' — identifying with those of low status), (3) *mē ginesthe phronimoi par' heautois* ('do not become wise in your own eyes' — quoting Proverbs 3:7). The word *tapeinois* can be masculine ('humble people') or neuter ('humble things').
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 3:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The prohibition against retaliation (*kakon anti kakou*, 'evil in exchange for evil') echoes 1 Thessalonians 5:15 and 1 Peter 3:9. The verb *pronoumenoi* ('giving thought to, planning for, considering in advance') suggests that honorable conduct requires deliberate planning, not merely spontaneous reaction. Paul quotes Proverbs 3:4 (LXX).
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Proverbs 3:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The double qualifier — *ei dynaton* ('if possible') and *to ex hymōn* ('so far as it depends on you') — is realistic: peace is not always achievable because it requires two willing parties. The believer's responsibility is to do everything within their power to maintain peace while recognizing that others may refuse.
19. The address *agapētoi* ('beloved') softens the stern command. The phrase *dote topon tē orgē* ('give place to the wrath') means step aside and let God handle justice. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 32:35. Relinquishing vengeance is not passive acceptance of injustice but active trust that God will judge

rightly.

19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 32:35. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Paul quotes Proverbs 25:21-22. The 'burning coals' (anthrakas pyros) metaphor is debated: it may mean (1) causing the enemy's shame and repentance, (2) an Egyptian ritual of carrying coals on the head as a sign of contrition, or (3) intensifying divine judgment. The context (overcoming evil with good, v. 21) favors the redemptive reading — kindness produces contrition.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Proverbs 25:21-22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The chapter's concluding command summarizes the entire ethical section's approach: the Christian response to evil is not passive acceptance or retaliatory violence but active goodness that defeats evil on its own terms. The verb *nika* ('conquer, overcome, prevail') uses battle language — this is spiritual warfare waged with the weapons of kindness, generosity, and love.

13

Summary: *Romans 13 addresses three topics: the believer's relationship to governing authorities (vv. 1-7), the debt of love that fulfills the law (vv. 8-10), and the urgency of the present eschatological moment (vv. 11-14). Paul argues that governing authorities are instituted by God and serve as his agents for order; therefore believers should submit, pay taxes, and give proper respect. He then summarizes the law's commands under the single command to love one's neighbor. The chapter concludes with an appeal to wake from sleep, cast off the works of darkness, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The passage on governing authorities (vv. 1-7) is one of the most consequential and controversial texts in Christian political theology. Written to Christians in Rome — the seat of imperial power — it enjoins submission to the very government that would soon persecute them under Nero. The passage must be read alongside Revelation 13 (where the state is the beast), Acts 5:29 ('we must obey God rather than men'), and the broader biblical witness about unjust governments. The love-fulfills-the-law argument (vv. 8-10) is remarkably concise and anticipates the fuller treatment in Galatians 5:14.*

Translation Friction: *The scope of submission to governing authorities (vv. 1-7) has been extensively debated. Paul's statement appears absolute but was written in a specific context (the relatively stable early years of Nero's reign) and must be balanced with the rest of Scripture. We render the text as given without limiting or extending its application. The clause 'there is no authority except from God' (v. 1) has been used to justify tyranny; this is a misreading that ignores the purpose clause (v. 4) — authorities are God's servants for good.*

Connections: *The submission to authorities echoes Jesus' 'render to Caesar' teaching (Mark 12:17) and 1 Peter 2:13-17. The love-command summary (v. 9) quotes Leviticus 19:18, as does Jesus (Mark 12:31) and James (James 2:8). The 'put on Christ' language (v. 14) connects to Galatians 3:27 and the baptismal 'clothing with Christ.' The eschatological urgency (vv. 11-12) echoes 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8.*

¹Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God. ²Therefore whoever resists the authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval, ⁴Since he is the minister of God to you for good. But if you do that which is evil, be afraid. Since he beareth not the sword in vain — since he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. ⁵Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. ⁶For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed. ⁸Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. ¹¹Besides this, you know the time, that the hour has already come for

you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. ¹²The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *pasa psychē* ('every soul, every person') includes all believers without exception. The verb *hypotassesthō* ('be subject, be subordinate') is a military term for ranking under authority. The passive *tetagmenai* ('have been established, ordered, arranged') attributes the existence of governing structures to God's providential ordering. This does not mean every governmental action is divinely approved but that the institution of governance itself is God's provision for human society.
2. The verb *antitassomenos* ('resists, opposes, sets oneself against') uses the same root as *hypotassō* in verse 1 — it is the opposite of submission. The word *krima* ('judgment') here likely means judgment from the governing authority (cf. vv. 3-4) rather than eternal damnation — the KJV's 'damnation' is too strong.
3. Paul describes the ideal function of government: rewarding good and punishing evil. This describes how government should function and often does function, not an absolute guarantee. When government reverses these functions — punishing good and rewarding evil — other biblical principles (obedience to God above all, prophetic critique of injustice) come into play.
4. The word *diakonos* ('servant, minister') is used twice: the governing authority serves God's purposes. The phrase *tēn machairan phorei* ('bears the sword') refers to the government's authority to use coercive force, including capital punishment. The word *ekdikos* ('avenger, agent of justice') describes the government as executing a function that belongs ultimately to God (12:19). Paul draws a direct line between God's wrath (1:18; 2:5) and its earthly administration through government.
5. Paul gives two motivations for submission: fear of punishment (*dia tēn orgēn*, 'because of wrath') and moral conviction (*dia tēn syneidēsin*, 'because of conscience'). The higher motivation is conscience — knowing that submission to legitimate authority is right before God.
6. The word *leitourgoi* ('ministers, public servants') is a cultic/liturgical term (from which we get 'liturgy') — governing authorities perform a kind of divine service. The verb *proskarterountes* ('attending to, being devoted to') suggests diligent, sustained attention to governing duties.
7. The word *opheilas* ('what is owed, debts') connects to the 'debt of love' in verse 8. Paul lists four obligations: *phoron* ('direct taxes, tribute'), *telos* ('indirect taxes, customs, tolls'), *phobon* ('fear, respect'), and *timēn* ('honor'). The movement from financial to personal obligations broadens the scope of civic duty. This echoes Jesus' 'render to Caesar' teaching (Mark 12:17).
8. The transition from civic obligations (v. 7) to love's obligation (v. 8) uses the same vocabulary of 'owing' (*opheilete*). All debts can be discharged except one: the debt of love, which remains perpetually outstanding. The perfect tense *peplērōken* ('has fulfilled') indicates that love is the complete and ongoing fulfillment of the law's demands.
9. Paul lists four of the Ten Commandments (all from the 'second table' — obligations to neighbor) and subsumes them under Leviticus 19:18. The verb *anakephalaioitai* ('is summed up, is recapitulated, is brought under one heading') means love is not a replacement for the specific commands but their summary and fulfillment. The SBLGNT omits 'you shall not bear false witness,' which appears in some manuscripts.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 20:13-17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 19:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Paul states love's relationship to the law in both negative (does no harm) and positive (fulfills) terms. The word *plērōma* ('fulfillment, completion, fullness') is the same word used for the 'fullness of the Gentiles' (11:25) and the 'fullness of Christ' (Ephesians 4:13). Love fills up the law's requirements completely.
11. The word *kairon* ('time, season, decisive moment') denotes not clock time (*chronos*) but the strategic, eschatological moment. The metaphor of sleep (*hypnos*) represents spiritual complacency. The word *sōtēria* ('salvation') here refers to the consummation — the return of Christ and final redemption — which draws closer with each passing day.
12. Two metaphors: clothing (casting off/putting on) and light/darkness. The 'night' is the present evil age; the 'day' is the coming age of Christ's return. The word *hopla* ('armor, weapons') — the same word from 6:13 — indicates that the Christian life is a battle requiring divine equipment. Light is not merely moral goodness but the radiance of the approaching day.
13. The adverb *euschēmonōs* ('properly, decently, honorably') means living as if the day has already arrived. Three pairs of vices are listed: *kōmois/methais* ('orgies/drunkenness' — excesses of consumption), *koitais/aselgeiais* ('sexual immorality/sensuality' — excesses of the body), *eridi/zēlō* ('quarreling/jealousy' — excesses of the ego). The word *koitais* (literally 'beds') is a euphemism for illicit sexual activity.
14. The metaphor of 'putting on' (*endysasথে*) Christ echoes the baptismal language of Galatians 3:27 — Christ is the garment that covers and transforms the believer. The phrase *tēs sarkos pronoian mē poieisthe* ('do not make provision for the flesh') means do not plan or prepare for sin — starve the flesh of opportunity. This verse was famously the one that Augustine read in the garden at his conversion (Confessions VIII.12.29), which immediately ended his struggle with sexual temptation.

14

Summary: *Romans 14 addresses disputes between the 'weak' and 'strong' within the Roman church over food restrictions and the observance of special days. Paul argues that both positions are legitimate expressions of faith and that neither group should despise or judge the other, since each person stands or falls before their own Lord. The chapter establishes key principles: the kingdom of God is not about food and drink but about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit; each person will give an account to God; and no one should put a stumbling block before a brother or sister for whom Christ died.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's pastoral approach here is remarkable for its balance. He clearly agrees with the 'strong' that all foods are clean (v. 14, 'I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself'), yet he devotes the entire chapter to urging the strong not to use their correct theology as a weapon against the weak. The twice-repeated 'Christ died and lived again' formula (vv. 9, 15) grounds the ethics of tolerance in Christology. The quotation of Isaiah 45:23 (v. 11) — a monotheistic confession in Isaiah — is applied to Christ as the one before whom every knee will bow.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'weak' and 'strong' is debated. The weak may be Jewish Christians maintaining Torah food laws, Gentile Christians influenced by ascetic philosophy, or a mixed group with various scruples. Paul does not fully identify them, and the labels 'weak' and 'strong' may reflect the groups' own self-designations or Paul's assessment. The statement 'nothing is unclean in itself' (v. 14) appears to set aside Levitical food laws entirely, which raises questions about the continuity of Torah for Jewish believers.*

Connections: *The 'weak and strong' discussion parallels 1 Corinthians 8-10 (food offered to idols). The phrase 'we do not live to ourselves' (v. 7) echoes Galatians 2:20. The Isaiah 45:23 quotation (v. 11) is also used in Philippians 2:10-11. The 'stumbling block' language (v. 13) connects to the stumbling stone of 9:32-33. The kingdom language (v. 17) echoes Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God.*

¹As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. ²One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. ⁵One person considers one day more sacred than another, while another considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. ⁷For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. ⁸For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. ¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹And every tongue will confess to god, for it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to me. ¹²So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. ¹³Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. ¹⁴I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it is unclean. ¹⁵For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by others. ¹⁹So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. ²⁰Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. ²¹It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. ²²The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no

reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. ²³But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *proslambanesthe* ('welcome, accept, receive into fellowship') is the same word used for God's acceptance of believers (v. 3, 15:7). The phrase *diakriseis dialogismon* ('quarrels over opinions, disputes about doubtful matters') indicates that the issues in question are matters of conscience, not core doctrine.
2. The 'strong' believer's faith extends to all foods without restriction. The 'weak' believer restricts their diet to vegetables (*lachana*), likely to avoid any possibility of eating unclean meat or meat associated with idol sacrifice. The vegetarian practice appears to be a strategy of avoidance rather than a principled vegetarianism.
3. Paul identifies the characteristic sins of each group: the strong tend to *exoutheneito* ('despise, look down on, treat with contempt') the weak as backward, while the weak tend to *krineteo* ('judge, condemn') the strong as worldly. Both responses are forbidden because God has welcomed (*proselabeto*) both.
4. The metaphor is from household slavery: a servant (*oiketen*, 'household slave') answers to his own master, not to another household's slaves. The believer's 'master' (*kyrio*) is Christ. The promise 'he will be upheld' (*stathesetai*) expresses confidence that God sustains his servants even when they err on secondary matters.
5. A second issue emerges: the observance of special days, likely Sabbaths and Jewish festivals. Paul's approach is the same as with food — both positions are acceptable. The verb *plerophoreitho* ('be fully convinced, be fully assured') demands that each person act from genuine conviction, not from peer pressure or unexamined habit.
6. Paul's criterion is not the practice itself but the intention behind it: both the one who eats and the one who abstains do so *kyrio* ('to the Lord, for the Lord'). The act of thanksgiving (*eucharistei to theō*) is the evidence that both practices are oriented toward God. The SBLGNT omits the clause about the one who does not observe the day, found in some manuscripts.
7. This verse universalizes the principle: the Christian life in its entirety — living and dying — belongs to the Lord, not to the individual. Self-autonomy is displaced by christological ownership.
8. The threefold repetition builds to the climactic declaration *tou kyriou esmen* ('we belong to the Lord'). This ownership by Christ is the basis for Christian freedom from human judgment — since we belong to the Lord, only his verdict matters. The structure is liturgical, almost creedal.
9. The SBLGNT has the shorter reading: 'died and lived' (*apethanen kai ezesen*) rather than 'died, rose, and lived' in the Textus Receptus. The purpose of Christ's death and resurrection is lordship (*kyrieuse*) over all human existence, encompassing death and life. This lordship is the basis for his exclusive right to judge his servants.
10. Paul addresses both groups in turn — the judging weak and the despising strong — using the second person singular for direct challenge. The phrase *bemati tou theou* ('judgment seat of God') refers to the eschatological tribunal. The SBLGNT reads 'God' rather than 'Christ' (found in some manuscripts), though both refer to the same judgment.
11. Paul quotes Isaiah 45:23, prefaced with the oath formula from Isaiah 49:18 ('As I live'). In Isaiah, YHWH declares that every knee will bow to him — the ultimate monotheistic claim. Paul applies this to the final judgment, where God (through Christ, as in Philippians 2:10-11) will be the universal judge.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 45:23. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 49:18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The phrase *logon dosei* ('will give an account, will render a word') is judicial language — each person will explain their life directly to God. The emphasis on 'himself' (*heautou*) makes judging others irrelevant: focus on your own account, not your neighbor's.
13. Paul plays on the word *krinomen* ('judge'): stop judging each other and instead make a judgment (*krinate*) about your own behavior. The terms *proskomma* ('stumbling block') and *skandalon* ('hindrance, trap, cause of falling') refer to actions that cause a weaker believer to violate their conscience.
14. Paul reveals his own position: he sides with the strong. The double attestation 'I know and am persuaded' (*oida kai pepeismai*) is emphatic. The word *koinon* ('common, unclean') is the technical term for ritually impure food (cf. Mark 7:2, Acts 10:14). Yet Paul immediately qualifies: if someone's conscience regards a food as unclean, for that person it is unclean. Conscience has real moral authority even when objectively mistaken.
15. The verb *lypeitai* ('is grieved, is distressed') indicates real spiritual harm, not mere annoyance. The command 'do not destroy' (*me apollye*) uses a strong word — *apollymi* means to ruin or bring to utter loss. The climactic phrase 'for whom Christ died' (*hyper hou Christos apethanen*) is the ultimate argument: if Christ valued this person enough to die for them, how can you not sacrifice a food preference for them?

16. The 'good' (to agathon) refers to the strong believer's legitimate freedom. The verb blasphemeistho ('be blasphemed, be spoken evil of') indicates that misusing freedom provokes others to slander the faith. Freedom exercised without love becomes a scandal.
17. This is one of Paul's rare uses of 'the kingdom of God' (he basileia tou theou), a phrase more common in the Gospels. The triad of dikaiosyne ('righteousness'), eirene ('peace'), and chara ('joy') defines the kingdom's essence in relational rather than ritual terms. The phrase 'in the Holy Spirit' (en pneumati hagio) indicates that these qualities are Spirit-produced, not humanly achieved.
18. Serving Christ 'in this' (en touto) — in righteousness, peace, and joy — gains both divine acceptance (euairestos to theos) and human approval (dokimos tois anthropois). The word dokimos ('approved, tested and found genuine') is a technical term for metals that have passed the assayer's test.
19. The verb diokomen ('let us pursue') is the same word used for pursuing hospitality (12:13) — peace and mutual edification require active effort. The word oikodomes ('building up, edification') is an architectural metaphor: the community is a building under construction, and every member's actions either build it up or tear it down.
20. The phrase to ergon tou theou ('the work of God') refers to the believing community or the individual believer — both are God's workmanship. Paul again affirms the strong position: panta kathara ('all things are clean,' echoing Jesus' teaching in Mark 7:19). Yet clean food becomes a moral problem when it causes others to stumble.
21. Paul extends the principle beyond food to wine and 'anything' (the open-ended category) that might cause a brother to stumble. The word kalon ('good, noble, right') describes the moral quality of voluntary self-restriction for the sake of others. The SBLGNT has a shorter reading than the Textus Receptus.
22. Paul addresses the strong: your freedom is real, but it is between you and God — do not flaunt it. The macarism ('blessed is') describes the person whose conscience is clear about their choices. The verb dokimazei ('approves, tests and approves') indicates thoughtful, examined freedom rather than careless license.
23. The verb diakrinomenos ('doubting, hesitating, being divided in mind') describes an unsettled conscience. The principle is profound: acting against one's conscience, even if the action is objectively permissible, is sin because it does not proceed from faith. The closing maxim — 'whatever is not from faith is sin' — has broad application beyond food disputes: it establishes conscience informed by faith as the necessary basis for all Christian conduct.

15

Summary: *Romans 15 concludes the 'weak and strong' discussion by pointing to Christ as the ultimate example of bearing with others rather than pleasing oneself. Paul grounds mutual acceptance in Scripture, citing a chain of Old Testament texts that promise the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's praise. He then describes his own apostolic ministry as a priestly service bringing the Gentile offering to God, recounts his missionary strategy of preaching where Christ has not been named, and outlines his travel plans — first to Jerusalem with the collection from Macedonia and Achaia, then to Rome en route to Spain. The chapter closes with an urgent request for prayer as Paul faces danger in Judea.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The density of Old Testament quotations in vv. 9-12 is striking: Paul strings together Psalm 18:49, Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalm 117:1, and Isaiah 11:10 in rapid succession, all demonstrating that Gentile inclusion was always God's plan. Paul's self-description as a 'priestly minister' (leitourgon, v. 16) performing the 'priestly service' (hierourgounta) of the gospel is unique in his letters — he reimagines his apostolic mission in cultic terms, with the Gentiles themselves as the acceptable offering. The collection for Jerusalem (vv. 25-27) represents Paul's concrete attempt to bind Jewish and Gentile churches together, and his anxiety about its reception (v. 31) reveals the real tensions in the early church.*

Translation Friction: *Paul's claim to have 'fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ' from Jerusalem to Illyricum (v. 19) raises historical questions — did Paul personally evangelize every region, or does he mean he established representative churches? His planned trip to Spain (v. 24, 28) is mentioned nowhere else in the undisputed letters, and whether he ever reached Spain remains debated. The collection's theological logic (v. 27) — Gentiles owe material gifts because they received spiritual blessings — has been read as either a voluntary gesture of gratitude or an obligatory debt.*

Connections: The 'bearing with the weak' theme (vv. 1-3) directly continues chapter 14 and parallels 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. Christ quoting Psalm 69:9 (v. 3) connects to John 2:17. The Isaiah 11:10 citation (v. 12) links to the 'root of Jesse' in Revelation 5:5 and 22:16. The collection for Jerusalem (vv. 25-28) is discussed in detail in 2 Corinthians 8-9 and referenced in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 and Galatians 2:10. Paul's request for prayer (vv. 30-32) foreshadows the events of Acts 21:27-36.

¹Now we who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. ³For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." ⁴For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶so that together, with one voice, you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Therefore welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "For this reason I will praise you among the nations, and sing to your name." ¹⁰And again it says, "Rejoice, O nations, together with his people." ¹¹And again, "Praise the Lord, all nations, and let all the peoples extol him." ¹²And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, the one who rises to rule the nations; in him the nations will hope." ¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁴I myself am convinced about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. ¹⁵But on some points I have written to you rather boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God ¹⁶to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, serving as a priest of God's gospel, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁷In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to boast in my work for God. ¹⁸For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience — by word and deed, ¹⁹by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God — so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. ²⁰and so I make it my ambition to preach the gospel not where Christ has already been named, so that I would not build on another person's foundation, ²¹but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand." ²²This is the reason why I have so often been prevented from coming to you. ²³But now, since I no longer have room for work in these regions and have longed for many years to come to you, ²⁴I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while. ²⁵But at present I am going to Jerusalem to serve the saints there. ²⁶For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. ²⁷They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material things. ²⁸When I have completed this task and have delivered this fruit to them safely, I will set out for Spain by way of you. ²⁹I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ. ³⁰I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf, ³¹that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, ³²so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. ³³Now the God of wholeness remain with you all. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *opheilomen* ('we ought, we are obligated') indicates moral duty, not mere recommendation. The word *asthenēmata* ('weaknesses, failings') refers to the scruples of the weak conscience, not moral failures. The word *bastazein* ('to bear, carry') implies active support, like carrying a burden, not passive tolerance.
2. The phrase *eis to agathon* ('for his good') qualifies the pleasing — not flattery or people-pleasing, but genuinely seeking the other's benefit. The word *oikodomēn* ('building up, edification') continues the architectural metaphor from 14:19.

3. Paul quotes Psalm 69:9 (LXX 68:10), a psalm widely used in the NT as a passion psalm (cf. John 2:17, 15:25, 19:28-29; Acts 1:20). The logic is christological: if Christ himself absorbed insults directed at God rather than pleasing himself, believers must likewise absorb inconvenience for the sake of others. Christ is both the model and the motive for self-denial.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 69:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Paul articulates a hermeneutical principle: the entire Old Testament (hosa proographē, 'whatever was written beforehand') serves the instruction of the present community. The Scriptures produce two things: hypomonē ('endurance, steadfast patience') and paraklēsis ('encouragement, comfort'). Together these sustain elpida ('hope'), a key Pauline virtue.
5. This is a wish-prayer: Paul asks God to give what the Scriptures teach. The phrase to auto phronein ('to think the same thing, to be of one mind') does not mean uniformity of opinion but a shared disposition oriented toward Christ. The standard kata Christon Iēsoun ('according to Christ Jesus') means Christ is the model for the community's unity.
6. The adverb homothymadon ('with one mind, unanimously') is characteristic of Luke-Acts (Acts 1:14, 2:46) but rare in Paul. The phrase 'with one mouth' (en heni stomati) is a vivid image of united worship. The goal of mutual acceptance is not mere tolerance but doxological unity — praise that rises from a reconciled community.
7. This verse is the conclusion of the weak/strong argument that began at 14:1. The verb proslambanesthe ('welcome, receive') echoes 14:1 and 14:3. The SBLGNT reads hymas ('you') rather than hēmas ('us') in the Textus Receptus. The purpose clause eis doxan tou theou ('for the glory of God') gives the ultimate rationale: mutual welcome among believers glorifies God.
8. Paul describes Christ's earthly ministry as diakonon peritomēs ('servant of the circumcision') — Christ served the Jewish people first. This fulfilled two purposes: to demonstrate God's faithfulness (alētheias theou) and to confirm (bebaiōsai) the covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Christ's Jewish ministry is the prerequisite for Gentile inclusion.
9. The Gentiles glorify God for eleous ('mercy') rather than for faithfulness to promises — mercy, because they had no covenant claim. Paul begins a catena of four OT quotations proving Gentile inclusion. The first is from Psalm 18:49 (LXX 17:50, = 2 Samuel 22:50), where David praises God 'among the nations.'
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 18:49. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 2 Samuel 22:50. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The second quotation is from Deuteronomy 32:43 (LXX), the Song of Moses. The nations are summoned to rejoice with (meta) God's people — not as outsiders observing, but as participants alongside Israel. The LXX reading differs from the MT here, and Paul follows the LXX.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 32:43 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The third quotation is Psalm 117:1 (LXX 116:1), the shortest psalm. It commands all nations (panta ta ethnē) and all peoples (pantes hoi laoi) to praise the Lord. Paul reads this as a prophetic summons that is now being fulfilled in the Gentile churches.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 117:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The fourth quotation is Isaiah 11:10 (LXX), climaxing the chain with an explicitly messianic text. The 'root of Jesse' (rhiza tou Iessai) refers to the Messiah as David's descendant. The LXX's 'rising to rule' (ho anistamenos archein) may carry resurrection overtones for Paul. The word elpiousin ('will hope') connects to the theme of hope that frames this section (vv. 4, 13).
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 11:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. This benediction closes the theological argument of the letter (chs. 1-15:13). God is named ho theos tēs elpidos ('the God of hope'), picking up the hope theme from the preceding quotations. The prayer asks for joy and peace (echoing 14:17) that overflow (perisseuein) into hope. The source of this overflow is the Holy Spirit's power (dynamei pneumatos hagiou), not human effort.
14. Paul begins the personal section of the letter with a diplomatic affirmation of the Roman church's maturity. The triad — agathōsynēs ('goodness'), gnōseōs ('knowledge'), and the ability to nouthetein ('instruct, admonish') — indicates they do not need an apostle to resolve their disputes. This is pastoral tact: Paul has spent four chapters correcting them while affirming their competence.
15. The adverb tolmēroteron ('more boldly, rather daringly') acknowledges that writing to a church he did not found required courage. He softens this with apo merous ('on some points, in part') and epanamimnēskōn ('reminding'), framing his letter as a refresher, not a rebuke. His authority rests on charin ('grace') — his apostolic commission from God.
16. This verse contains Paul's most explicitly priestly self-description. He is a leitourgon ('minister, liturgical servant') who performs hierourgounta ('priestly service') with the gospel. The prosphora tōn ethnōn ('offering of the Gentiles') is ambiguous: it could mean the offering that the Gentiles themselves constitute (genitive of apposition) or the offering that the Gentiles bring. The former reading is more likely — the Gentile believers are the sacrificial offering Paul presents to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17. Paul's *kauchēsīn* ('boasting, ground for pride') is qualified: it is *en Christō Iēsou* ('in Christ Jesus') and concerns *ta pros ton theon* ('things pertaining to God'). This is not self-congratulation but a recognition of what God has accomplished through him. The 'boasting in Christ' language recalls 1 Corinthians 1:31 and 2 Corinthians 10:17.
18. Paul insists he will only report what Christ has done through him (*di' emou*), not claim credit for others' work. The goal is *hypakoēn ethnōn* ('obedience of the Gentiles'), echoing the letter's opening (1:5) and closing (16:26). The phrase *logō kai ergō* ('by word and deed') encompasses Paul's preaching and his practical ministry.
19. Paul claims a ministry confirmed by *sēmeiōn kai teratōn* ('signs and wonders'), a phrase rooted in Exodus traditions (Deut 34:11). The geographical scope — from Jerusalem to Illyricum (modern Albania/Croatia) — describes an arc through the eastern Mediterranean. The verb *peplērōkenai* ('I have fulfilled, completed') does not mean every person was reached but that representative churches were planted throughout this region.
20. The verb *philotimoumenon* ('aspiring, making it a point of honor') reveals Paul's missionary strategy: pioneer evangelism in unreached areas. He avoids building on another's *themelion* ('foundation'), using the same construction metaphor as 1 Corinthians 3:10-11. This explains why he has not yet visited Rome — someone else founded that church.
21. Paul quotes Isaiah 52:15 (LXX), part of the fourth Servant Song. In Isaiah, the nations are astonished by the Servant's suffering and exaltation. Paul applies this to his pioneer missionary work — he fulfills the prophetic vision by bringing the message to those who have never heard. The quotation also functions as a scriptural warrant for his strategy.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 52:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The verb *enekoptomēn* ('I was hindered, cut off') explains why Paul has never visited Rome — not lack of desire (1:13) but the demands of his pioneer work in the East. The passive voice may imply divine direction or simply the pressure of circumstances.
23. The remarkable claim *mēketi topon echōn* ('no longer having a place') indicates Paul considers his work in the eastern Mediterranean complete — not that every person is converted, but that churches are established in each region. The word *epipothian* ('longing, deep desire') expresses personal affection for a church he has never visited.
24. Spain (*Spanian*) represents the western frontier of the known world — Paul's ambition is to bring the gospel to the ends of the earth. The verb *propemphthēnai* ('to be sent on, to be helped on one's way') is a technical term for providing material support for a missionary journey (cf. 1 Cor 16:6, 3 John 6). Paul diplomatically signals he needs Rome's logistical support for the Spanish mission. Whether he ever reached Spain is unknown from his letters; 1 Clement 5:7 may refer to it.
25. Before Rome and Spain, Paul must first go to Jerusalem. The verb *diakonōn* ('serving, ministering') describes his role as bearer of the collection. The 'saints' (*hagiois*) refers to the Jerusalem church, which Paul consistently identifies as the mother community.
26. The collection is a major project spanning several years (cf. 1 Cor 16:1-4, 2 Cor 8-9, Gal 2:10). Macedonia and Achaia (northern and southern Greece) are the contributing regions. The word *koinōnian* ('sharing, participation') frames the gift as an act of fellowship, not charity. The phrase *tous ptōchous tōn hagiōn* ('the poor among the saints') specifies economic need in the Jerusalem church.
27. Paul establishes a theological logic of reciprocity: the Gentiles are *opheiletai* ('debtors') to Jerusalem because they received *pneumatikois* ('spiritual things') — the gospel, the Scriptures, the Messiah himself. In return, they should share *sarkikois* ('fleshly, material things'). The verb *leitourgēsai* ('to serve, to render service') has cultic overtones, elevating the financial gift to an act of worship.
28. The verb *sphragisamenos* ('having sealed') likely means 'having delivered securely' — as one seals a document or package to guarantee its integrity. The *karpon touton* ('this fruit') refers to the collection, described as the fruit of the Gentile churches' faith and love. Paul's travel plan is clear: Jerusalem first, then Rome, then Spain.
29. Paul expresses confidence (*oida*, 'I know') that his visit will bring *plērōmati eulogias* ('fullness of blessing'). The SBLGNT omits 'of the gospel' (*tou euangelion*) found in the Textus Receptus. The 'blessing of Christ' encompasses both Paul's teaching and the spiritual enrichment of mutual fellowship.
30. Paul's appeal is unusually urgent, invoking both Christ and the Spirit (a trinitarian formula). The verb *synagōnisasthai* ('to struggle alongside, to contend together') portrays prayer as combat — Paul is heading into danger and needs the Romans' active intercession, not passive well-wishes. The phrase *tēs agapēs tou pneumatōs* ('the love of the Spirit') is unique in Paul.
31. Paul has two fears: first, physical danger from *hoi apeithountes* ('the disobedient, the unbelieving') in Judea; second, the possibility that the Jerusalem church might reject the collection. Both fears proved well-founded — Acts 21:27-36 records his arrest in Jerusalem, and the acceptance of the collection is never explicitly confirmed in Acts. The verb *rhysthō* ('may I be rescued') is the same word used in the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:13).
32. The ultimate goal of Paul's prayer request: to arrive in Rome *en chara* ('with joy'), not as a prisoner. The verb *synanapausōmai* ('may I be refreshed together with') is a compound expressing mutual refreshment — Paul expects to receive as well as give. The phrase *dia thelēmatos theou* ('by the will of God') submits all his plans to divine sovereignty. Ironically, Paul did reach Rome — but as a prisoner (Acts 28:16).
33. A brief peace benediction using the title *ho theos tēs eirēnēs* ('the God of peace'), which Paul also uses in 16:20, Philippians 4:9, and 1 Thessalonians 5:23. If the letter originally ended here (as some scholars propose), this would be a fitting conclusion. The 'amen' seals the benediction as a liturgical prayer.

16

Summary: *Romans 16 opens with a commendation of Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, and then unfolds the longest greeting list in any Pauline letter — naming twenty-six individuals and several households. The greetings reveal a remarkably diverse community: Jews and Gentiles, men and women, slaves and free, with women prominently featured in leadership roles. After the greetings, Paul inserts a sharp warning against those who cause divisions and put obstacles before the community, urging the Romans to avoid them. The letter closes with greetings from Paul's companions in Corinth and a grand doxology praising God who is able to strengthen the believers according to the revelation of the mystery now disclosed through the prophetic Scriptures to all nations.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The greeting list is a goldmine for understanding the early Roman church. Women hold prominent roles: Phoebe is a diakonos ('deacon') and prostatis ('patron/benefactor'); Prisca is named before her husband Aquila (vv. 3-4), suggesting her greater prominence; Junia (v. 7) is described as 'outstanding among the apostles'; and Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, and Persis are all commended for hard labor in the Lord. The diversity of names — Latin, Greek, and Jewish — reflects Rome's cosmopolitan character. Several names are attested in Roman inscriptions for imperial slaves and freedpersons, suggesting the church drew heavily from the slave and freed population.*

Translation Friction: *Romans 16:7 is a famous crux: is Iounian ('Junia') a woman's name or the contracted male form 'Junias'? The overwhelming scholarly consensus now identifies Junia as a woman, and 'outstanding among the apostles' (episēmoi en tois apostolois) as indicating she was an apostle, not merely known to the apostles. The doxology (vv. 25-27) poses a textual problem: some manuscripts place it after 14:23, others after 15:33, and some omit it entirely. Its Pauline authorship has been questioned, though its theology is consistent with Paul. The warning passage (vv. 17-20) is surprisingly harsh compared to the rest of the letter and may address a specific situation Paul has learned about.*

Connections: *Prisca and Aquila (v. 3) appear in Acts 18:2-3, 18:18-26, 1 Corinthians 16:19, and 2 Timothy 4:19. Epäenetos as the 'first convert in Asia' (v. 5) connects to Paul's Ephesian ministry (Acts 19). The 'crushing of Satan' language (v. 20) echoes Genesis 3:15. The 'mystery now revealed' theme of the doxology (vv. 25-26) parallels Colossians 1:26-27 and Ephesians 3:4-6. The phrase 'obedience of faith' (v. 26) forms an inclusio with 1:5, bracketing the entire letter.*

¹I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, ²so that you may welcome her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and help her with whatever she may need from you, for she has been a patron and benefactor of many, and of myself as well. ³Greet Prisca and Aquila, my coworkers in Christ Jesus, ⁴who risked their own necks for my life. Not only I give thanks to them, but so do all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵Greet also the church that meets in their house. Greet my dear friend Epäenetos, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia. ⁶Greet Mary, who has worked very hard for you. ⁷Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews and my fellow prisoners. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. ⁸Greet Ampliatos, my dear friend in the Lord. ⁹Greet Urbanus, our coworker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. ¹⁰Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. ¹¹Greet my fellow Jew Herodion. Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. ¹²Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord. Greet the dear Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. ¹³Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me as well. ¹⁴Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. ¹⁵Give my greetings to Philologos and Julia, to Nereus and his sister, and to Olympas, along with all the believers who gather with them. ¹⁶Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send you greetings. ¹⁷I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the teaching that you have learned. Avoid them. ¹⁸For such people do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. ¹⁹For the report of your obedience has reached everyone. I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise about what is good and innocent about what is evil. ²⁰The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. ²¹Timothy, my

coworker, sends greetings to you, as do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my fellow Jews. ²²I, Tertius, the one who wrote this letter, greet you in the Lord. ²³Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, sends you greetings. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus greet you. ²⁴The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen. ²⁵Now to the one who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept silent for long ages ²⁶but now disclosed and made known through the prophetic Scriptures, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith among all the nations — ²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory forever. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul uses the formal verb *synistēmi* ('I commend, I introduce officially'), a technical term for letters of recommendation in the ancient world. Phoebe is likely the bearer of the letter to Rome. She is identified with the title *diakonon* ('deacon, minister') — the same word used for church officers in Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The church at Cenchreae was the port town east of Corinth, confirming Paul writes from the Corinthian area.
2. Paul asks the Romans to welcome Phoebe *axiōs tōn hagiōn* ('in a manner worthy of the saints') and to assist her in whatever *pragmati* ('matter, business') she requires — she may be conducting personal or church business in Rome. The title *prostatis* ('patron, benefactor') indicates Phoebe was a woman of wealth and social standing who supported the church financially and perhaps legally. Paul himself benefited from her patronage.
3. Prisca (the formal Latin name; Priscilla is the diminutive used in Acts) is named before Aquila in four of six NT references, suggesting her greater prominence in ministry. They were Jewish Christians expelled from Rome by Claudius's edict (Acts 18:2), met Paul in Corinth, moved to Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19, 1 Cor 16:19), and have now returned to Rome. Paul calls them *synergous* ('coworkers'), his highest term of commendation.
4. The phrase *ton heautōn trachēlon hypethēkan* ('they placed their own neck under,' i.e., risked decapitation) refers to a specific life-threatening episode, possibly during the Ephesian crisis (Acts 19:23-41, cf. 1 Cor 15:32, 2 Cor 1:8-10). The gratitude extends beyond Paul to all the Gentile churches — Prisca and Aquila's service had wide impact.
5. Prisca and Aquila hosted a house church (*kat' oikon ekklēsia*) — as they also did in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19). Early Christians had no dedicated buildings; worship met in private homes. Epānetus is called *aparchē tēs Asias* ('firstfruit of Asia'), meaning the first convert in the Roman province of Asia (western Turkey). The SBLGNT reads 'Asia' rather than 'Achaia' (found in some MSS).
6. Mary (Marian) is a Jewish name (Hebrew Miriam). The verb *ekopiasen* ('labored hard, toiled') is Paul's standard term for strenuous ministry work (cf. 1 Cor 15:10, Gal 4:11, Phil 2:16). The SBLGNT reads *eis hymas* ('for you,' i.e., for the Roman church) rather than *eis hēmas* ('for us').
7. This verse is among the most discussed in Pauline studies. Andronicus and Junia are *syngeneis* ('fellow Jews, relatives') and *synaichmalōtous* ('fellow prisoners') — they shared imprisonment with Paul, though when and where is unknown. The identification of Junia as a woman is supported by the unanimous testimony of patristic commentators and by the fact that the male name 'Junias' does not exist in any ancient inscription or text. They became Christians before Paul (*pro emou*), placing their conversion in the earliest years of the church, possibly in Jerusalem.
8. Ampliatius (Ampliaton) is a common Latin slave name, attested frequently in inscriptions from the imperial household. The name appears in the catacomb of Domitilla in Rome in an elaborately decorated tomb, suggesting this early Christian of humble origin achieved honored status in the community.
9. Urbanus (Latin for 'city person') is another common slave name in Roman inscriptions. He is called *synergon* ('coworker'), Paul's term for ministry partners. Stachys (Greek for 'ear of grain') is a rare name but attested among members of the imperial household in Rome.
10. Apelles is called *dokimon* ('approved, tested and found genuine') — the same word used in 14:18 for the believer approved by God. The phrase *tous ek tōn Aristoboulou* ('those from [the household] of Aristobulus') likely refers to slaves or freedpersons of an Aristobulus who may not himself be a Christian. A possible identification is the grandson of Herod the Great who lived in Rome.
11. Herodion's name suggests a connection to the Herodian dynasty, possibly a freedman. He is *syngenē mou* ('my fellow Jew'). The household of Narcissus — specified as those who are *en kyriō* ('in the Lord'), indicating not all household members were Christians — may be the household of the famous freedman Narcissus who served under Emperor Claudius. After Narcissus's death, his slaves would have passed to the emperor.
12. Three more women commended for ministry labor. Tryphaena and Tryphosa (names derived from *tryphē*, 'daintiness') may be sisters or even twins — the pairing of similar names was common. Both are *tas kopiōsas* ('those laboring'), using the standard Pauline term for strenuous ministry. Persis (a name meaning 'Persian woman') receives the intensified commendation *polla ekopiasen* ('labored much'), with the past tense possibly indicating advanced age or a completed phase of work.
13. Rufus is *ton eklekton en kyriō* ('the chosen one in the Lord') — either a general description of all believers as 'elect' or a special commendation of Rufus as an outstanding Christian. Mark 15:21 identifies Simon of Cyrene as 'the father of Alexander and Rufus,' and if Mark's gospel was written for a Roman audience, this may be the same Rufus. Paul's description of Rufus's mother as *kai emou* ('and mine') indicates she had cared for Paul with maternal kindness.

14. These five names are all common slave or freedman names in Roman inscriptions. They are grouped together with 'the brothers who are with them' (tous syn autois adelphous), suggesting they form a distinct house church. The two names Hermēn and Herman (both derived from the god Hermes) indicate the prevalence of pagan theophoric names among early Christians of slave origin.
15. Another cluster forming a probable second house church. Philologus and Julia may be husband and wife — both names are common among imperial slaves. Nereus is known from Roman mythology (a sea god), and the name appears in inscriptions of the imperial household. The unnamed sister of Nereus is one of several women whose contributions are acknowledged even without a name. Olympas may be a shortened form of Olympiodorus.
16. The 'holy kiss' (philēmati hagiō) was a liturgical greeting in early Christian worship (cf. 1 Cor 16:20, 2 Cor 13:12, 1 Thess 5:26, 1 Pet 5:14). The claim that 'all the churches of Christ' (hai ekklēsiai pasai tou Christou) send greetings is bold — Paul speaks as the apostle to the Gentiles with authority to represent the wider church. This is the only time the phrase 'churches of Christ' appears in Paul.
17. The warning is abrupt after the warm greetings — Paul shifts to urgent imperative. The verb skopein ('watch out for, keep your eye on') implies active vigilance. The troublemakers create dichostasias ('divisions, dissensions') and skandala ('stumbling blocks, traps') that contradict the teaching the Romans received. The identity of these opponents is debated — they may be Judaizers, libertines, or false teachers of another kind.
18. The phrase tē heautōn koilia ('their own belly') may be literal (gluttons who violate food ethics) or metaphorical (self-serving in general); cf. Philippians 3:19. The words chrēstologias ('smooth talk, fine-sounding speech') and eulogias ('flattery, pleasant words') describe persuasive rhetoric used to manipulate. The akakōn ('innocent, naive, unsuspecting') are the vulnerable members of the community who lack discernment.
19. Paul balances his warning with affirmation: the Romans' obedience (hypakoē) is widely known (cf. 1:8). His desire that they be sophous eis to agathon ('wise toward the good') and akeriaous eis to kakon ('innocent toward evil') echoes Jesus' instruction to be 'wise as serpents and innocent as doves' (Matt 10:16). The word akeraious ('unmixed, pure, innocent') means untainted by evil, not naive about its existence.
20. This verse combines a promise with a benediction. The phrase ho theos tēs eirēnēs ('the God of peace') appeared in 15:33. The crushing of Satan echoes Genesis 3:15 (LXX), where God promises that the woman's offspring will crush the serpent. The en tachei ('quickly, soon') expresses eschatological urgency. The SBLGNT omits the 'amen' found in some manuscripts after the grace benediction.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 3:15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Timothy is Paul's most prominent coworker, co-sender of six letters. Lucius may be Lucius of Cyrene (Acts 13:1), though identification is uncertain. Jason is likely the Jason of Thessalonica who hosted Paul (Acts 17:5-9). Sosipater may be the Sopater of Beroea mentioned in Acts 20:4. All three are called syngeneis ('fellow Jews, kinsmen').
22. A rare moment where the secretary (amanuensis) identifies himself. Tertius physically wrote the letter at Paul's dictation — a common practice in antiquity (cf. Gal 6:11, where Paul notes his own handwriting). The Latin name Tertius ('third') is a common slave name. His personal greeting en kyriō ('in the Lord') identifies him as a fellow believer, not merely a hired scribe.
23. Gaius is Paul's host and host to holēs tēs ekklēsias ('the whole church'), indicating his house is the main meeting place in Corinth (likely the Gaius of 1 Cor 1:14). Erastus holds the office of oikonomos tēs poleōs ('city treasurer, city steward'), one of the highest-ranking Christians mentioned in the NT. An inscription found in Corinth reads 'Erastus in return for his aedileship laid [this pavement] at his own expense.' Quartus ('fourth') is another Latin numerical name, likely indicating slave origin.
24. This grace benediction is absent from many early manuscripts of the SBLGNT tradition and is bracketed or omitted in critical editions. Some scholars regard it as a scribal addition harmonizing with v. 20b. If original, it serves as a second closing blessing before the doxology. Its placement varies across manuscript families, reflecting the complex textual history of Romans 16.
25. The doxology (vv. 25-27) is one of the most debated textual issues in Paul's letters. Some manuscripts place it after 14:23, others here, others in both locations, and some omit it. Its vocabulary has affinities with Colossians and Ephesians, leading some scholars to question Pauline authorship, though its themes are thoroughly Pauline. The phrase to euangelion mou ('my gospel') is characteristically Pauline (2:16, 2 Tim 2:8). The mystērion ('mystery') is not esoteric knowledge but God's previously hidden plan now revealed.
26. The mystery, once hidden, is now phanerōthentos ('made manifest, disclosed'). The means of disclosure is dia graphōn prophētikōn ('through the prophetic Scriptures') — the OT writings, now read in light of Christ. The phrase eis hypakoēn pisteōs ('for the obedience of faith') forms an inclusio with 1:5, bracketing the entire letter. The goal is universal: eis panta ta ethnē ('to all the nations').
27. The doxology reaches its climax: monō sophō theō ('to the only wise God') echoes 11:33-36 and Jewish liturgical formulations. The mediation of Jesus Christ (dia Iēsou Christou) is characteristic of Paul's theology — glory reaches God through Christ. The relative pronoun hō ('to whom') creates a grammatical ambiguity: does glory go to God or to Christ? The overall structure directs it to God through Christ. The final 'amen' seals the entire letter as an act of worship, concluding Paul's most systematic theological work.

1 Corinthians

1

Summary: *Paul opens his letter to the Corinthian church with a standard apostolic greeting, affirming his calling and the sanctified status of his readers. He gives thanks for the spiritual gifts present in Corinth, then immediately addresses the central crisis: the church has fractured into rival factions claiming allegiance to Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or Christ himself. Paul argues that Christ cannot be divided and that the cross — foolishness to the world — is the true power and wisdom of God. He reminds the Corinthians that God chose what the world considers foolish, weak, and insignificant to shame the wise and strong.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's opening establishes the theological framework for the entire letter: the cross inverts worldly values. The Corinthian factions reflect a culture obsessed with rhetorical skill and social status — values Paul systematically dismantles. The phrase 'the word of the cross' (ho logos tou staurou) in verse 18 is startling in its original context: crucifixion was so shameful that Roman writers avoided detailed discussion of it. Paul places this scandal at the center of God's wisdom.*

Translation Friction: *The Greek schismata (v. 10) literally means 'tears' or 'rips' — the same word used for tearing cloth. We render it as 'divisions' for clarity. The phrase 'Christ crucified' (Christon estauromenon, v. 23) uses the perfect passive participle, indicating a past event with ongoing significance — Christ is not merely 'one who was crucified' but remains 'the crucified one.' The relationship between sophia ('wisdom') and logos ('word/message') in this chapter is complex and resists neat English equivalents.*

Connections: *Paul's argument about divine wisdom overturning human wisdom draws on Isaiah 29:14 (quoted in v. 19) and Jeremiah 9:23-24 (echoed in vv. 26-31). The theme of God choosing the weak to shame the strong echoes the Old Testament pattern seen in David vs. Goliath, Gideon's reduced army, and the election of Israel itself. The baptism discussion (vv. 14-17) will be revisited in chapters 10 and 12.*

¹Paul, called as an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes, ²To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, called as saints, together with all who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place — their Lord and ours: ³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴I always thank my God for you because of the grace of God that was given to you in Christ Jesus, ⁵Through him you have been made rich in every way — in all your speaking and in all your knowledge. ⁶Indeed as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:. ⁷As a result, you are not lacking any spiritual gift while you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to

return. ⁸He will also sustain you to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, by whom you were called into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. ¹⁰Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. ¹¹For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers and sisters, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. ¹²What I mean is this: each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." ¹³Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized by the authority of Paul? ¹⁴I am grateful to God that I did not baptize any of you, but Crispus and Gaius; ¹⁵Lest any should say that I had immersed in mine own identity. ¹⁶I did baptize the household of Stephanas as well. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else. ¹⁷For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel — and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ would not be emptied of its power. ¹⁸For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will set aside." ²⁰Where is the wise person? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has God not made the wisdom of the world foolish? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was pleased through the foolishness of the proclamation to save those who believe. ²²For Jews ask for signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³However, we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks foolishness; ²⁴And the wisdom of god, but to them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God. ²⁵For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. ²⁶For consider your calling, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong, ²⁸Base matters of the age, and matters which are despised, has God chosen, yea, and matters which are not, to bring to nought things that are:. ²⁹Indeed, that no flesh should glory in his presence. ³⁰It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption — ³¹That, in keeping with as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *kletos apostolos* ('called apostle') lacks the infinitive 'to be' — Paul is not 'called to become' an apostle but 'a called apostle,' one whose identity is defined by divine summons. Sosthenes may be the synagogue ruler mentioned in Acts 18:17, though this identification is uncertain.
2. The Greek *hegiasmenois* ('having been sanctified') is a perfect passive participle — sanctification is something God has already done to them, not something they achieved. As with *kletos* in verse 1, *kletois hagios* ('called saints') lacks the infinitive 'to be.' They are not 'called to become saints' but are 'called-saints' — their identity is established by God's call. The final phrase *autōn kai hēmōn* ('theirs and ours') is grammatically ambiguous: it could modify 'place' (every place, theirs and ours) or 'Lord' (their Lord and ours). We follow the latter reading as it reinforces the letter's unity theme.
3. Paul's greeting combines the Greek *charis* ('grace') with the Hebrew-rooted *eirēnē* ('peace,' corresponding to *shalom*). This dual greeting bridges the Greek and Jewish worlds represented in the Corinthian congregation. The pairing of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ as co-source of grace and peace reflects early high Christology.
4. Paul's thanksgiving section (vv. 4-9) is diplomatically crafted — he thanks God for what God has done among them, not for what they have accomplished. The grace (*charis*) is described as 'given' (*dotheisē*, aorist passive) — a definite past act of divine generosity.
5. The verb *eploutisthēte* ('you were enriched') is aorist passive — God did the enriching. The two areas of enrichment, *logos* ('speech/word') and *gnōsis* ('knowledge'), are precisely the gifts the Corinthians valued most and would later abuse. Paul's thanksgiving subtly sets up his critique.
6. The Greek *martyrion tou Christou* ('testimony of/about Christ') could be an objective genitive ('testimony about Christ') or subjective genitive ('testimony from Christ'). We take it as objective — the apostolic witness about Christ was validated in their experience. The verb *ebēbaiōthē* ('was confirmed') is a legal term for establishing or guaranteeing something.
7. The Greek *charisma* ('gift of grace') will become a major topic in chapters 12-14. Paul acknowledges the Corinthians' giftedness while framing it eschatologically — gifts serve the community while they await Christ's return. The word *apokalypsis* ('revelation, unveiling') refers to Christ's return, not a private spiritual experience.
8. The verb *ebēbaiōsei* ('will confirm/sustain') echoes *ebēbaiōthē* in verse 6 — the same God who confirmed the testimony will confirm the believers. The word *anenklētous* ('blameless, without accusation') is a legal term: they will stand unindicted on judgment day. 'The day of our Lord Jesus Christ' refers to the final judgment, corresponding to the Old Testament 'day of the LORD.'

9. The declaration *pistos ho theos* ('faithful is God') anchors the entire thanksgiving — the Corinthians' security rests not on their performance but on God's faithfulness. The word *koinōnia* ('fellowship, participation, sharing') denotes a deep, mutual participation in Christ's life, not merely social association. This term will recur at 10:16 in connection with the Lord's Supper.
10. The Greek *schismata* ('divisions, tears') is the word from which English 'schism' derives — it literally means rips or tears in fabric. The church is being torn apart. The verb *katērtismenoi* ('restored, mended, made complete') is used in Mark 1:19 for mending fishing nets — Paul envisions the torn community being stitched back together. The Greek *adelphoi* ('brothers') is rendered 'brothers and sisters' since Paul addresses the entire congregation, as the context of the letter makes clear.
11. Chloe is named without further identification, suggesting she was well-known to both Paul and the Corinthians. The phrase *tōn Chloēs* ('those of Chloe') likely refers to members of her household — slaves, freedpersons, or family members who had traveled to Paul. That Paul names his source openly suggests he is not trafficking in gossip but acting on reliable intelligence. The word *erides* ('quarrels, strife') indicates active verbal conflict, not merely differing opinions.
12. The four slogans reveal faction lines in the Corinthian church. Apollo was an eloquent Alexandrian Jew (Acts 18:24) whose rhetorical skill likely attracted those who valued sophisticated speech. Cephas (Aramaic for 'rock,' = Peter) may represent a more Jewish-oriented faction. The 'Christ party' is the most debated — they may have claimed a direct, unmediated relationship with Christ that bypassed apostolic authority. Paul's point is that all four slogans are equally problematic.
13. Three rhetorical questions, each expecting a negative answer. The first — *memeristic ho Christos* ('Has Christ been divided?') — could also be read as a statement: 'Christ has been divided!' (an outraged exclamation). Either way, the implication is that factional loyalty tears apart the one body of Christ. The second and third questions establish the logic: only the one who was crucified for them and in whose name they were baptized has any claim on their allegiance.
14. Crispus was the synagogue ruler who believed (Acts 18:8). Gaius is likely the Gaius of Romans 16:23 who hosted the whole church in Corinth. Paul's relief at having baptized so few reveals how baptism was being used as a badge of factional identity — 'I was baptized by Paul' became a status claim.
15. Paul is grateful in retrospect — not that baptism is unimportant, but that the Corinthians' misuse of it to form factions was limited by the fact that he personally baptized so few of them.
16. The correction mid-thought ('I did baptize the household of Stephanas as well') adds an unpolished, authentic quality — Paul is dictating and remembering as he goes. Stephanas's household will be mentioned again at 16:15 as the 'firstfruits of Achaia.' The Greek *oikos* ('household') would include family members, slaves, and dependents.
17. The phrase *ouk en sophia logou* ('not in wisdom of speech/word') targets the Corinthian obsession with rhetorical skill. Corinth was a city that prized sophisticated oratory. Paul insists that clever rhetoric actually undermines the gospel by shifting attention from the cross to the speaker. The verb *kenōō* ('to empty, to make void') is striking — human eloquence can drain the cross of its power by making the message about the messenger.
18. The Greek *ho logos tou staurou* ('the word/message of the cross') is Paul's programmatic statement. Both participles — *apollymenois* ('perishing') and *sōzomenois* ('being saved') — are present tense, indicating ongoing processes rather than fixed states. The word *mōria* ('foolishness, stupidity') is blunt — the cross is not merely misunderstood by outsiders but actively regarded as idiotic.
19. Paul quotes Isaiah 29:14 (from the Septuagint). The original context is God's judgment against Jerusalem's leaders who relied on political alliances rather than trusting God. Paul applies it more broadly to all human wisdom that operates independently of God. The verb *athetēsō* ('I will set aside, reject, nullify') is stronger than the KJV's 'bring to nothing' — it implies active divine rejection.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 29:14. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Three rhetorical questions echo Isaiah 33:18. The 'wise person' (*sophos*) represents Greek philosophical culture, the 'scribe' (*grammateus*) represents Jewish legal scholarship, and the 'debater' (*syzētētēs*) may represent either or both — anyone who relies on human argumentation. The phrase *tou aiōnos toutou* ('of this age') frames worldly wisdom as temporary and passing.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 33:18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The phrase *en tē sophia tou theou* ('in the wisdom of God') suggests that the failure of human wisdom was itself part of God's design — God arranged things so that unaided human intellect would prove insufficient. The Greek *kērygma* ('proclamation, preaching') refers to the content proclaimed, not the act of preaching — it is 'the foolishness of what is proclaimed,' not 'the foolishness of the act of proclaiming.'
22. Paul identifies two cultural orientations: the Jewish demand for miraculous validation (*sēmēia*, 'signs') and the Greek pursuit of philosophical insight (*sophia*, 'wisdom'). Both are legitimate desires misdirected — God does give signs and does offer wisdom, but not in the forms these cultures expect.
23. The phrase *Christon estaurōmenon* ('Christ crucified') uses the perfect passive participle — Christ remains permanently 'the crucified one.' This is not merely a past event but an abiding identity. The word *skandalon* ('stumbling block, snare, offense') gives us 'scandal' — a crucified Messiah was an oxymoron in Jewish expectation, since Deuteronomy 21:23 declares anyone hung on a tree to be under God's curse. For Greeks, the idea that ultimate wisdom would manifest in an executed criminal was simply *mōria* ('stupidity').
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 21:23 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

24. The 'called' (kletois) — the same word from verses 1-2 — now transcend ethnic and cultural categories. What Jews sought in signs (power) and Greeks sought in philosophy (wisdom), both find in the crucified Christ. The sentence structure is compressed: 'Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God' — no verb in the Greek, creating a declarative force.
25. Paul uses the neuter substantive adjectives to mōron ('the foolish thing') and to asthenes ('the weak thing') of God — not attributes God actually possesses, but what human beings perceive as foolish and weak in God's actions. The comparative forms (sophōteron, ischyroteron) create an understatement: God's apparent foolishness exceeds all human wisdom, and God's apparent weakness exceeds all human strength.
26. The verb blepete ('look at, consider') invites the Corinthians to examine the sociological evidence of their own congregation. Paul does not say 'none' (oudeis) but 'not many' (ou polloi) — there were some wealthy and educated members (like Erastus, the city treasurer, Romans 16:23), but the majority were from lower social strata. The phrase kata sarka ('according to the flesh') means 'by worldly standards.'
27. The verb exelegeto ('chose') is the aorist middle of eklegomai — God's deliberate, purposeful selection. The repetition of 'God chose' emphasizes divine initiative. The verb kataischynē ('to put to shame, to humiliate') is stronger than 'confound' — God's choices actively embarrass worldly power structures.
28. The Greek ta agenē ('the low-born, the insignificant') and ta exouthenēmena ('the despised, the things counted as nothing') escalate the social inversion. The climax is ta mē onta ('the things that are not') — God chose what has no existence or standing in the world's eyes. This echoes God's creation from nothing (creatio ex nihilo) and His calling of Abraham from obscurity. The verb katargēsē ('to render inoperative, to nullify, to abolish') is one of Paul's favorite words for describing how God dismantles existing power structures.
29. The Greek pasa sarx ('all flesh') is rendered 'no human being' (with the negative) for natural English. The verb kauchēsētai ('to boast, to glory') is a key term in Paul's theology — the human impulse to claim credit is the root of the problem. The entire argument from verses 26-29 builds to this single purpose clause: God's method of salvation is designed to eliminate human boasting.
30. The phrase ex autou ('from him') places the origin of the believers' union with Christ entirely in God's initiative. Christ himself is identified as sophia ('wisdom') from God, directly countering the Corinthians' pursuit of worldly wisdom. The three terms that follow — dikaiosynē ('righteousness'), hagiasmos ('sanctification'), and apolytrōsis ('redemption') — may be appositional to 'wisdom,' explaining what God's true wisdom looks like in practice.
31. Paul paraphrases Jeremiah 9:23-24 (via the Septuagint), where the prophet contrasts boasting in wisdom, strength, and riches with boasting in knowing the LORD who practices steadfast love (chesed), justice, and righteousness. The allusion perfectly caps the chapter: the only legitimate boast is in what God has done, not in human achievement, rhetorical skill, or factional loyalty.
31. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 9:24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

2

Summary: *Paul continues his argument about the cross and wisdom, now with personal testimony. He reminds the Corinthians that he came to them not with impressive rhetoric but in weakness, choosing to know nothing among them except Christ crucified. Yet he does speak wisdom — a hidden wisdom of God, revealed by the Spirit, which the rulers of this age failed to recognize. The chapter culminates in the distinction between the 'natural person' (psychikos) who cannot receive spiritual things and the 'spiritual person' (pneumatikos) who has 'the mind of Christ.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's admission of personal weakness (vv. 1-5) is remarkable for a culture that prized self-confidence in public speakers. His description of divine wisdom as 'hidden' and 'decreed before the ages' (v. 7) introduces a concept of divine mystery that will shape later Christian theology. The quotation in verse 9 ('What no eye has seen...') may draw on Isaiah 64:4 but does not match any known Old Testament text exactly — its precise source remains debated. The Spirit-searches-everything claim in verse 10 is among the most profound pneumatological statements in Paul's letters.*

Translation Friction: *The term psychikos (v. 14) is notoriously difficult to translate. 'Natural' (KJV, ESV) misses the Greek nuance; 'unspiritual' (NRSV) is too negative. We render it as 'natural person' and explain the Greek in the notes. The phrase 'the deep things of God' (ta bathē tou theou, v. 10) may be language the Corinthians themselves used in a proto-Gnostic way; Paul co-opts it for his own purposes.*

Connections: The 'hidden wisdom' theme connects to Daniel's revelation language (Daniel 2:22, 28) and to Jewish apocalyptic literature. 'The rulers of this age' (v. 8) who crucified Christ echo the principalities and powers of Colossians 1:16 and Ephesians 6:12. The 'mind of Christ' (v. 16) will be developed further in Philippians 2:5-11.

¹When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come with superior speech or wisdom as I proclaimed to you the mystery of God. ²For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ — and him crucified. ³I came to you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴My speech and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵Indeed, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the authority of God. ⁶Yet we do speak wisdom among the mature — though not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are being brought to nothing. ⁷Rather, we speak God's wisdom in a mystery — the wisdom that was hidden, which God predetermined before the ages for our glory. ⁸None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹But as it is written: "What no eye has seen, and no ear has heard, and no human heart has imagined — these are the things God has prepared for those who love him." ¹⁰But God has revealed these things to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. ¹¹For who among humans knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person within them? In the same way, no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand the things freely given to us by God. ¹³And we speak about these things not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual realities to those who are spiritual. ¹⁴The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to that person, and they cannot understand them because they are discerned spiritually. ¹⁵The spiritual person discerns all things but is not subject to anyone else's judgment. ¹⁶For "who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT reads *mystērion* ('mystery') rather than *martyrion* ('testimony'), though manuscripts are divided. 'Mystery' fits the chapter's theme better — Paul is about to describe God's hidden wisdom. The phrase *kath' hyperochēn logou ē sophias* ('with superiority of speech or wisdom') targets the very skills Corinthian culture prized most. Paul deliberately chose not to compete on their terms.
2. The verb *ekrina* ('I decided, I determined') indicates a deliberate choice, not inability. Paul could have displayed rhetorical brilliance but chose instead to make Christ crucified his single message. The emphatic *kai touton estaurōmenon* ('and this one crucified') uses the perfect passive participle again — the crucified state is ongoing and definitive.
3. Paul's triple description of his condition — *astheneia* ('weakness'), *phobos* ('fear'), *tromos* ('trembling') — is a shocking self-portrait for someone claiming apostolic authority. The combination *phobos kai tromos* ('fear and trembling') appears elsewhere in Paul (2 Corinthians 7:15; Philippians 2:12; Ephesians 6:5) and may reflect awareness of standing before God's calling rather than mere stage fright. Paul arrived in Corinth after being beaten in Philippi and mocked in Athens (Acts 16-17).
4. The Greek *peithois sophias logos* ('persuasive words of wisdom') is textually uncertain — *peithois* is a rare word, possibly coined by Paul. The contrast is between human persuasion techniques and *apodeixis pneumatōs* ('demonstration of the Spirit') — a term from rhetoric (*apodeixis* means 'proof') now applied to spiritual reality. Paul uses the rhetorician's own vocabulary to subvert rhetorical culture.
5. This purpose clause reveals why Paul chose weakness over eloquence — a faith built on impressive rhetoric would collapse when a better speaker came along. Only faith grounded in God's power endures. This is particularly pointed for the Corinthians, who were apparently swayed by Apollos's more polished speaking style (Acts 18:24-28).
6. The shift is significant: Paul is not anti-wisdom *per se* — he does speak *sophia*, but only among the *teleioi* ('mature, complete'). The term may ironically echo Corinthian self-descriptions; the Corinthians considered themselves advanced, but Paul will soon call them infants (3:1). The *archontes tou aiōnos toutou* ('rulers of this age') could refer to human political authorities, demonic powers, or both — the ambiguity may be deliberate.
7. The phrase *en mystērō* ('in a mystery') modifies how wisdom is spoken — it comes wrapped in divine secrecy, requiring revelation to understand. The verb *proōrisen* ('predetermined, foreordained') places this wisdom in eternity past — it was not an afterthought or improvisation. The phrase *eis doxan hēmōn* ('for our glory') is stunning: the destiny of believers is glory (*doxa*), the very attribute of God.
8. The title *ton kyrion tēs doxēs* ('the Lord of glory') is extraordinary — it applies to the crucified Jesus a title that in the Old Testament belongs to YHWH alone (Psalm 24:7-10). The irony is devastating: the rulers thought they were executing a criminal; in reality they were crucifying the cosmic Lord. Their ignorance was not exculpatory but revelatory — it exposed the bankruptcy of worldly power and wisdom.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 24:7-10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The quotation loosely combines Isaiah 64:4 and Isaiah 65:17 but does not match any known Old Testament text exactly. Some scholars suggest Paul draws on an otherwise unknown Jewish source. The phrase *epi kardian anthrōpou ouk anebē* ('has not ascended upon the human heart') is a Semitic idiom meaning 'has not entered the mind' or 'has never been imagined.' The point is not about heaven but about the incomprehensibility of God's plan apart from revelation.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 64:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 65:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The verb *apekalypsen* ('revealed, unveiled') is the aorist of *apokalypō* — God has already disclosed His hidden wisdom. The agent of revelation is the Spirit (*día tou pneumatos*). The claim that the Spirit *eraunā* ('searches, explores') even *ta bathē tou theou* ('the deep things of God') is a remarkable statement about the Spirit's access to the inner life of God. The Corinthians may have used 'the deep things' as spiritual self-congratulation; Paul relocates the concept entirely in the Spirit's activity, not human spiritual achievement.
11. Paul uses an analogy from human self-knowledge to explain divine self-knowledge. Just as only a person's own spirit knows their inner thoughts, only God's Spirit knows God's inner reality. The argument establishes that knowledge of God requires God's own Spirit as mediator — human intellect alone cannot penetrate divine reality, no matter how brilliant.
12. The contrast between 'the spirit of the world' (to *pneuma tou kosmou*) and 'the Spirit from God' (to *pneuma to ek tou theou*) parallels the wisdom contrast of chapter 1. The verb *charisthenta* ('freely given, graciously bestowed') shares the root of *charis* ('grace') — everything believers possess is gift, not achievement. The purpose clause *hina eidōmen* ('so that we may know') establishes that the Spirit's role is specifically cognitive — enabling understanding of what God has given.
13. The phrase *pneumatikōis pneumatika synkrinontes* is highly debated. *Synkrinō* can mean 'to compare,' 'to combine,' or 'to interpret' (as in Genesis 40:8 LXX). *Pneumatikōis* could be neuter ('spiritual things with spiritual') or masculine ('spiritual realities to spiritual people'). We follow the interpretation that Paul means 'interpreting/explaining spiritual realities to spiritual people,' which best fits the context of the mature versus immature distinction.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 40:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The Greek *psychikos* ('natural, soulish') derives from *psychē* ('soul/life') and describes someone operating on merely human capacities without the Spirit's illumination. It does not mean 'sinful' but 'limited to natural human faculties.' The verb *anakrinetai* ('are discerned, examined, judged') is a legal/judicial term — spiritual realities require a spiritual faculty of judgment that the *psychikos* person simply does not possess.
15. The *pneumatikos* ('spiritual person') possesses Spirit-given discernment that operates on a different plane than human evaluation. The claim that the spiritual person is 'judged by no one' (*hyp' oudenōs anakrinetai*) does not mean they are above accountability but that their Spirit-informed judgments cannot be evaluated by those lacking the Spirit. Paul will ironically undercut the Corinthians' self-identification as *pneumatikoi* in the next chapter (3:1).
16. Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13 (LXX) — the original context is the incomprehensibility of God's wisdom. The expected answer is 'no one can know or instruct the Lord.' But then Paul makes a stunning claim: *hēmeis de noun Christou echomen* ('but we have the mind of Christ'). Through the Spirit, believers have access to Christ's own way of thinking. This is not omniscience but a Spirit-given orientation toward reality that aligns with God's purposes.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 40:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

3

Summary: Paul confronts the Corinthians directly: despite their claims to spiritual maturity, their factionalism proves they are still infants in Christ, operating by merely human standards. He reframes the relationship between himself and Apollos as fellow workers in God's field, God's building. Paul then introduces the metaphor of building on the foundation of Jesus Christ — some build with gold and silver, others with wood and straw, and the fire of judgment day will test each person's work. The chapter closes with a warning against destroying God's temple (the community itself) and a final appeal to stop boasting about human leaders.

What Makes This Remarkable: *The agricultural and architectural metaphors in this chapter establish Paul's theology of ministry: ministers are servants, not celebrities. The temple imagery (vv. 16-17) is corporate, not individual — the Corinthian community as a whole is God's temple, and those who destroy the community through division are desecrating sacred space. The judgment-by-fire passage (vv. 12-15) has generated extensive debate about purgatory, rewards, and the nature of post-mortem judgment.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'as to people of the flesh' (hōs sarkinois, v. 1) is distinct from sarkikoi (v. 3) — sarkinois means 'made of flesh' (a description of human nature) while sarkikoi means 'characterized by flesh' (a moral critique). This nuance is difficult to capture in English. The 'fire' of verse 13 has been variously interpreted as literal eschatological fire, metaphorical testing, or purgatorial purification; we render the Greek straightforwardly without importing any particular tradition.*

Connections: *The temple imagery connects to Exodus 25-40 (tabernacle construction), 1 Kings 6-8 (Solomon's temple), and Ezekiel 40-48 (eschatological temple). The 'fire will test' language echoes Malachi 3:2-3. The agricultural metaphor draws on Jesus's parables of sowing and growth (Mark 4). The closing quotation combines Job 5:13 and Psalm 94:11.*

¹And I, brothers and sisters, could not speak to you as spiritual people but as people of the flesh — as infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk to drink, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. And even now you are still not ready, ³For you are yet carnal — for whereas there is in the midst of you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men? ⁴For when someone says, "I follow Paul," and another says, "I follow Apollos," are you not merely human? ⁵What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. ⁷So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. ⁸The one who plants and the one who waters are one, and each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. ⁹For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. ¹⁰According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. But each one must be careful how he builds on it. ¹¹For no one can lay a foundation other than the one that has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, ¹³Indeed, every man's work will be made manifest — for the day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire. And the fire will try every man's work of what sort it is. ¹⁴If what anyone has built on the foundation survives, that person will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned up, that person will suffer loss, though the person will be saved — but only as through fire. ¹⁶Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple. ¹⁸Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, let him become a fool so that he may become truly wise. ¹⁹For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness," ²⁰And again the Scripture says, "The Lord knows that the reasoning of the wise is worthless." ²¹So let no one boast in human leaders. For all things belong to you: ²²Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the present age, or life, or death, or matters present, or things to come. All are yours; ²³You are Christ's. And Christ is God's.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek sarkinois ('made of flesh, fleshly') describes their condition at the time of Paul's first visit — they were new believers, still operating from natural capacities. The word nēpiois ('infants, babies') is not pejorative in itself — newborn faith is expected — but the problem, as verse 2 will reveal, is that they have not grown. Paul had addressed them as 'saints' in 1:2; now he calls them babies. The tension is deliberate.
2. The milk/solid food metaphor appears also in Hebrews 5:12-14. Gala ('milk') represents foundational teaching, brōma ('food') represents mature doctrine. The sting is in the final clause: 'even now you are still not ready' (all' oude eti nyn dynasthe). Years have passed since Paul's initial visit, but the Corinthians remain spiritual infants.
3. Paul shifts from sarkinois (v. 1, 'made of flesh' — a description) to sarkikoi ('characterized by flesh' — a critique). The evidence of their immaturity is not theological ignorance but relational failure: zēlos ('jealousy') and eris ('strife'). The phrase kata anthrōpon peripateit ('walking according to human standards') means behaving no differently from those without the Spirit.

4. Paul reduces the four slogans of 1:12 to two — focusing on himself and Apollos, the figures he can address without causing offense. The question *ouk anthrōpoi este* ('are you not merely human?') equates factionalism with sub-Christian behavior. To be 'merely human' for Paul is to fall short of what the Spirit makes possible.
5. The Greek *ti* ('what') rather than *tis* ('who') is deliberate — Paul does not ask about their personal identity but their functional role. They are *diakonoi* ('servants, ministers') — the word from which 'deacon' derives, originally meaning table waiters. This radically deflates the Corinthians' celebrity culture around leaders. The phrase *hekastō hōs ho kyrios edōken* ('as the Lord gave to each') attributes all ministry effectiveness to divine assignment.
6. The agricultural metaphor assigns complementary roles: Paul as church planter and Apollos as nurturer. The imperfect tense *ēuxanen* ('was causing growth') for God's action — versus the aorist (punctiliar) for human actions — suggests that God's growth-giving is continuous and ongoing while human contributions are discrete, limited events.
7. The phrase *oute...estin ti* ('is not anything') is deliberately stark — Paul and Apollos are 'nothing' in comparison to God's agency. This is not false humility but theological precision: in agriculture, the farmer contributes labor but cannot make a seed grow. The parallel to ministry is exact.
8. The Greek *hen eisin* ('are one') means 'are one thing' — they share a single purpose and status. This undercuts any ranking system the Corinthians have constructed. Yet individuality is preserved: each receives *misthos* ('reward, wages') according to their own *kopos* ('labor, toil'). Unity of purpose does not erase individual accountability.
9. Three possessive genitives — *theou synergoi* ('God's co-workers'), *theou geōrgion* ('God's field'), *theou oikodomē* ('God's building') — all emphasize that God is the owner and ultimate agent. *Synergoi* does not mean Paul and Apollos are God's equals but that they work alongside each other in God's service. The shift from agricultural to architectural metaphor (*geōrgion* to *oikodomē*) transitions to the next section.
10. The Greek *architekton* ('master builder, architect') is the origin of the English word. Paul claims the role not by self-promotion but *kata tēn charin* ('according to the grace') — his skill is a gift. The warning *blepetō pōs* ('let him watch how') shifts responsibility to subsequent builders. The foundation is already laid (aorist *ethēka*); the construction continues (present *epoikodomei*).
11. This is a categorical statement: the foundation is non-negotiable and irreplaceable. The present participle *keimenon* ('the one lying, the one that has been laid') indicates a foundation already in place — Jesus Christ is not one option among many but the only possible basis for the community's life.
12. Six building materials descend in value and fire-resistance: gold, silver, and precious stones survive fire; wood (*xyla*), hay (*chorton*), and straw (*kalamēn*) do not. The metaphor concerns the quality of ministry work built upon the Christ-foundation, not the personal salvation of the builders. *Kalamē* ('straw, stubble') was used for cheap construction and burns almost instantly.
13. The definite article *hē hēmera* ('the Day') refers to the eschatological day of judgment without needing further specification — a concept well established in both Old Testament prophetic literature (the 'day of the LORD') and early Christian expectation. The verb *dokimasei* ('will test, will prove') is used for testing metals by fire — the metaphor is of assaying, not punishment. The fire reveals quality, not guilt.
14. The verb *menei* ('remains, survives, endures') is the test — will the work still be standing after the fire? The *misthos* ('reward') is distinct from salvation itself; it concerns the recognition of effective, lasting ministry. The nature of this reward is not specified.
15. This verse has been central in debates about purgatory. The Greek *zēmiōthēsetai* ('will suffer loss') refers to the loss of the work and its reward, not the loss of salvation — as the next clause clarifies: *autos de sōthēsetai* ('the person will be saved'). The phrase *houtōs de hōs dia pyros* ('but as through fire') suggests a barely-escaped salvation, like someone fleeing a burning building with nothing but their life. The emphasis is on the waste of poor-quality ministry, not on post-mortem purification.
16. The Greek *naos* ('temple, sanctuary') refers specifically to the inner sanctuary where God's presence dwelt — not the broader temple complex (*hieron*). The pronoun 'you' (*este, oikei en hymin*) is plural throughout — this is not about individual bodies (as in 6:19) but about the community as a whole being God's dwelling place. The question *ouk oidate* ('do you not know') implies this should be obvious.
17. The verb *phtheirō* means 'to corrupt, to ruin, to destroy' — Paul uses the same verb in both clauses, creating a precise retributive parallel: the one who destroys will be destroyed. In context, 'destroying the temple' means tearing apart the community through factionalism. The word *hagios* ('holy') echoes the Hebrew *qadosh* — the temple is set apart, consecrated. To violate it is to invite divine judgment.
18. The imperative *mōros genesthō* ('let him become a fool') demands a voluntary surrender of worldly-wisdom status. This is not anti-intellectualism but a call to abandon the specific kind of rhetorical-philosophical posturing that was fracturing the Corinthian church. True wisdom, in Paul's paradoxical theology, begins with accepting the 'foolishness' of the cross.
19. Paul quotes Job 5:13 — the only direct quotation from Job in the New Testament. The original speaker is Eliphaz, whose theology is partly refuted by the end of Job, yet Paul adopts this particular statement as valid. The verb *drassomenos* ('catching, seizing') pictures God grabbing the wise in the very trap of their own cunning (*panourgia*, 'craftiness, shrewdness').
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Job 5:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Paul quotes Psalm 94:11 (93:11 LXX), slightly modifying it — the psalm has 'the thoughts of humans' (*anthrōpōn*) while Paul substitutes 'the wise' (*sophōn*), sharpening the application to the Corinthian situation. The word *mataioi* ('futile, empty, vain') denotes not just incorrectness but ultimate pointlessness.

- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 94:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** The conclusion *mēdeis kauchasthō en anthrōpois* ('let no one boast in human beings') directly addresses the faction problem. Paul's reasoning is paradoxically generous: you do not need to choose between leaders because all of them — and everything else — already belong to you in Christ. Factional loyalty actually diminishes what the Corinthians already possess.
- 22.** The list expands breathtakingly from named individuals to cosmic categories. Paul, Apollos, and Cephas are placed alongside life, death, present, and future — all belong to the believers. This is not a claim to ownership but to inheritance: in Christ, believers have access to everything God has provided through every servant and every circumstance.
- 23.** The chain of belonging — all things you Christ God — establishes a hierarchy that dissolves factionalism. You cannot say 'I belong to Paul' when you belong to Christ. The final link, *Christos de theou* ('Christ belongs to God'), is not a subordinationist statement but a declaration of the Son's perfect alignment with the Father's purposes. The entire argument circles back to 1:31: the only legitimate boast is in the Lord.

4

Summary: *Paul defines apostles as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries, accountable only to the Lord's judgment — not to human evaluation. He exposes the Corinthians' arrogance with biting irony: 'Already you are full! Already you have become rich! You have begun to reign without us!' He contrasts their self-satisfaction with the apostles' actual experience of suffering, hunger, and humiliation. The chapter closes with a fatherly appeal — Paul is their spiritual father through the gospel — and a warning that he may come with authority if they do not change.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The 'spectacle' passage (vv. 9-13) is one of Paul's most vivid self-descriptions, drawing on Roman triumphal procession imagery where condemned prisoners were paraded last before execution. The ironic contrast between the Corinthians' self-perceived royalty and the apostles' degradation is devastating rhetoric. Paul's claim to spiritual fatherhood (v. 15) is unique in his letters and establishes an authority claim distinct from mere teaching.*

Translation Friction: *The Greek hyperphronein in verse 6 ('to think beyond what is written') has no clear referent — 'what is written' could mean Scripture, Paul's earlier letter, or a maxim. We render the phrase and note the ambiguity. The word perikatharma (v. 13, 'scum, offscouring') may be a technical term for human scapegoats in Greek purification rituals, adding a sacrificial dimension to Paul's self-description.*

Connections: *The stewardship language (vv. 1-2) connects to Jesus's parables about faithful and unfaithful stewards (Luke 12:42-48). The 'spectacle' imagery echoes 2 Corinthians 2:14 and anticipates the suffering catalogs of 2 Corinthians 4, 6, and 11. The father-child relationship language anticipates Galatians 4:19 and 1 Thessalonians 2:11.*

¹This is how a person should regard us: as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ²Now what is required of stewards is that they be found faithful. ³But it is a very small thing to me that I should be evaluated by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even evaluate myself. ⁴For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not acquitted by this. The one who evaluates me is the Lord. ⁵Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes. He will bring to light the things hidden in darkness and will reveal the purposes of hearts. And then each person will receive commendation from God. ⁶Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that through us you may learn the meaning of the saying, "Nothing beyond what is written," so that none of you will be puffed up in favor of one against another. ⁷For who regards you as superior? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as though you did not? ⁸Already you are satisfied! Already you have become rich! You have begun to reign — and that without us! I wish you really had begun to reign, so that we could reign with you! ⁹For I think that God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world — to angels and to human beings alike. ¹⁰We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are held in honor, but we are dishonored! ¹¹To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed, we are roughly treated, and we are homeless. ¹²We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we respond with

blessing. When we are persecuted, we endure it. ¹³While defamed, we intreat — we are fashioned as the filth of the age, and are the offscouring of all matters to this day. ¹⁴I am not writing these things to shame you but to admonish you as my beloved children. ¹⁵For even if you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I fathered you in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ¹⁶I urge you, therefore, become imitators of me. ¹⁷For this reason I have sent Timothy to you. He is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, and he will remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus, just as I teach them everywhere in every church. ¹⁸Some of you have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. ¹⁹But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. ²⁰For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. ²¹What do you want? Should I come to you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of gentleness?

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *hypēretas* ('servant, attendant') originally referred to an under-rower in a galley — one who takes orders. The *oikonomos* ('steward, household manager') manages resources that belong to someone else. Both terms deflate any celebrity status. The 'mysteries of God' (*mystērion theou*) are the divine secrets entrusted to the apostles for proclamation, not private mystical experiences.
2. The word *pistos* ('faithful, trustworthy') echoes the faithfulness vocabulary (*emunah* in Hebrew, *pistis* in Greek) central to covenant theology. A steward's primary virtue is not brilliance or popularity but fidelity to the owner's instructions.
3. The verb *anakrinō* ('to examine, to investigate, to evaluate') is a judicial term used for preliminary investigation. The phrase *anthrōpinēs hēmeras* ('human day') literally means 'a human day [of judgment]' — Paul contrasts any human evaluation with the Lord's eschatological judgment day (v. 5). His refusal to evaluate even himself is not false humility but a recognition that only God has full knowledge of motives.
4. Paul's clean conscience does not equal innocence — *ouden gar emautō synoida* ('I am conscious of nothing against myself') is not a claim to sinlessness but an honest assessment of his ministry. The verb *dedikaiōmai* ('I am justified/acquitted') is passive — acquittal comes from outside, from the Lord who alone sees truly.
5. The verb *phōtisei* ('will bring to light, will illuminate') and *phanerosei* ('will reveal, will make visible') are both future — ultimate evaluation is reserved for the Lord's return. The phrase *tas boulas tōn kardiōn* ('the purposes/intentions of the hearts') suggests that God judges motives, not just outcomes. The word *epainos* ('praise, commendation') is surprisingly positive — Paul assumes that the faithful will receive divine approval, not merely avoid punishment.
6. The verb *meteschēmatisa* ('I have applied, I have transferred the form') means Paul has used himself and Apollos as illustrations of a principle that applies more broadly — the real targets may be unnamed local leaders. The phrase *to mē hyper ha gegraptai* ('not beyond what is written') remains one of the most debated phrases in the letter. It may be a slogan, a maxim, or a reference to the Scripture quotations in chapters 1-3. The verb *physiousthe* ('you are puffed up, inflated') pictures arrogance as hot air — inflation without substance.
7. Three questions demolish the basis for Corinthian arrogance. The first (*tis se diakrinei*, 'who distinguishes you?') challenges the premise of superiority. The second (*ti echeis ho ouk elabes*, 'what do you have that you didn't receive?') undercuts self-made accomplishment. The third draws the logical conclusion: if everything is received, boasting is absurd. This verse became foundational in Augustinian theology of grace.
8. Paul's irony is at full force. The three declarations — *kekoresmenoi* ('satiated'), *eploutēsate* ('you became rich'), *ebasileusate* ('you began to reign') — mock the Corinthians' spiritual self-satisfaction using the language of eschatological fulfillment. They think they have already arrived at the consummation. The final wish (*ophelon ge ebasileusate*) pierces through the sarcasm with genuine longing — Paul would love it if the kingdom had fully come.
9. The imagery is drawn from the Roman triumphal procession (*pompa*), where conquered prisoners were paraded through the streets before being executed in the arena. The word *eschatous* ('last') means the apostles occupy the place of the condemned at the end of the parade. *Theatron* ('spectacle, theater') is the origin of English 'theater' — the apostles' suffering is a public display. The audience includes the entire cosmos: angels and humans.
10. The three contrasts are dripping with irony — the terms applied to the Corinthians (*phronimoi*, 'prudent'; *ischyroi*, 'strong'; *endoxoi*, 'honored') are what they claim for themselves, while the terms for the apostles (*mōroi*, 'fools'; *astheneis*, 'weak'; *atimoi*, 'dishonored') echo the very values of the cross Paul preached in chapters 1-2. The Corinthians have embraced the world's values while their apostle lives out the cross.
11. Five present-tense verbs describe ongoing apostolic hardship: *peinōmen* ('we hunger'), *dipsōmen* ('we thirst'), *gymniteuomen* ('we are insufficiently clothed'), *kolaphizometha* ('we are struck with fists'), *astatoumen* ('we are unsettled/homeless'). These are not past sufferings but current reality — 'to this very hour' (*achri tēs arti hōras*). This catalog anticipates the more extensive hardship lists in 2 Corinthians.
12. Paul's manual labor (*tais idiais chersin*, 'with our own hands') was a point of contention — in Greco-Roman culture, manual work was degrading for an intellectual or teacher. Paul worked as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3) to avoid burdening the Corinthians, but some saw this as proof he was not a real apostle. The three responses to mistreatment — blessing when reviled, enduring when persecuted, responding gently when slandered — echo Jesus's teaching in Matthew 5:44 and Luke 6:27-28.

13. The words perikatharmata ('scum, off-scourings') and peripsēma ('refuse, scrapings') are among the most degrading terms Paul could choose. Perikatharma may carry sacrificial connotations — in some Greek cities, human scapegoats (peripsēmata) were expelled or killed to purify the community. If Paul intends this allusion, the apostles' suffering has a vicarious, purifying dimension.
14. The shift from biting irony to tender affection is abrupt and deliberate. The verb nouthetōn ('admonishing, counseling, warning') combines nous ('mind') and tithēmi ('to place') — it means to set someone's mind right, combining correction with care. The term tekna agapēta ('beloved children') establishes the parental relationship Paul will develop in the next verse.
15. The paidagōgos was a household slave who supervised a child's conduct and escorted them to school — not a teacher but a guardian. Paul's point: there may be many supervisors, but only one father. The verb egennēsa ('I fathered, I begot') claims a unique generative relationship — Paul brought the Corinthian church into existence through his gospel proclamation. This is the basis of his authority: not rank or office but spiritual parentage.
16. The Greek mimētai ('imitators') is the origin of English 'mimic.' Paul is not being egotistical — the call to imitate him is grounded in his fatherhood (v. 15) and will be qualified in 11:1 ('Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ'). In the ancient world, a father's character was the primary model for his children.
17. Timothy is also called teknon ('child'), extending the family metaphor — he is Paul's spiritual son, sent to Paul's spiritual children. The phrase tas en Christō ('my ways in Christ') refers to Paul's pattern of life and teaching, not merely his doctrines. The claim to teach pantachou en pasē ekklēsia ('everywhere in every church') asserts consistency — Paul's message and lifestyle are the same everywhere.
18. The verb ephysiōthēsan ('they were puffed up, they became inflated') returns from verse 6. Some Corinthians assumed Paul would not dare to return in person and grew bolder in his absence. The construction hōs mē erchomenou mou ('as though I were not coming') implies they are wrong — Paul does intend to come.
19. The qualification ean ho kyrios thelēē ('if the Lord wills') is not a polite formula but a genuine submission of travel plans to divine sovereignty (cf. James 4:15). The contrast between logos ('talk, speech') and dynamis ('power') echoes the chapter 1-2 argument: the Corinthians are all words and no power. Paul will test substance, not rhetoric.
20. The phrase hē basileia tou theou ('the kingdom of God') is relatively rare in Paul's letters compared to the Gospels. Here it serves as the ultimate standard of evaluation. The kingdom operates not on the level of logos ('word, talk, rhetoric') but dynamis ('power') — the transformative power of God that actually changes lives and communities.
21. The rhabdos ('rod, staff') evokes a father's right to discipline — not abuse, but the corrective authority that belongs to a parent. The choice Paul offers is genuine: the Corinthians' response to this letter will determine whether his visit is confrontational or gentle. The word prautētos ('gentleness, meekness') is not weakness but strength under control.

5

Summary: *Paul addresses a shocking case of sexual immorality in the Corinthian church: a man is living with his father's wife, and the congregation — far from being grieved — is arrogant about it. Paul demands the man's expulsion from the community, using Passover imagery to explain why: Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed, so the community must purge the old leaven of sin. The chapter closes with a clarification about Paul's earlier letter: he did not mean they should avoid all sinners in the world, but that they must not tolerate flagrant sin within the church.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The command to 'deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved' (v. 5) is one of the most debated passages in Paul's letters. The Passover typology (vv. 6-8) is one of the earliest Christian interpretations of Christ's death through the lens of Exodus. Paul's distinction between judging insiders and outsiders (vv. 12-13) establishes a principle of church discipline that has shaped Christian practice for centuries.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'his father's wife' (tēn gynaika tou patros, v. 1) likely refers to a stepmother, not the man's biological mother. Whether the father was dead or still living is unclear. The phrase 'for the destruction of the flesh' (eis olethron tēs sarkos, v. 5) could mean physical suffering, physical death, or the destruction of the sinful nature. We render the Greek literally and note the interpretive options.*

Connections: *The Passover lamb imagery connects to Exodus 12 and John 1:29. The leaven metaphor draws on Exodus 12:15-20 and Jesus's warning about the leaven of the Pharisees (Mark 8:15). The expulsion command echoes the Deuteronomic formula 'purge the evil from among you' (Deuteronomy 17:7, 19:19, 22:21, 24:7), which Paul quotes in verse 13.*

1It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you — and of a kind that is not found even among the Gentiles — that a man has his father's wife. 2And you are arrogant! Should you not instead have mourned, so that the one who did this would be removed from among you? 3For though I am absent in body, I am present in spirit, and I have already pronounced judgment on the one who has done such a thing, as though I were present. 4When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus — and my spirit is present with the power of our Lord Jesus — 5Hand this man over to Satan so that his sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord Jesus. 6Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole batch of dough? 7Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with the old leaven or with the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people — 10Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this present age, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters. For then must you needs go out of the present age. 11But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister if that person is sexually immoral, or greedy, or an idolater, or verbally abusive, or a drunkard, or a swindler — not even to eat with such a person. 12For what business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Is it not those inside that you are to judge? 13God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *porneia* ('sexual immorality') is the broad term for illicit sexual conduct. The phrase *gynaixa tina tou patros echein* ('to have a certain woman of the father') uses *echain* ('to have') as a euphemism for an ongoing sexual relationship. Leviticus 18:8 prohibits sexual relations with a father's wife, and Roman law also forbade such unions. Paul's point that even pagans consider this unacceptable heightens the scandal.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 18:8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The verb *pephysiōmenoi* ('puffed up') recurs from 4:6, 18 — the Corinthians' arrogance now manifests as tolerance of flagrant sin, possibly justified by a misunderstanding of Christian freedom. The verb *epenthēsatē* ('mourned, grieved') is striking — the appropriate response to sin in the community is grief, not indifference or celebration.
3. Paul's language *apōn tō sōmati parōn de tō pneumatī* ('absent in body, present in spirit') is not mystical out-of-body experience but an assertion of apostolic authority that operates regardless of physical location. The perfect tense *kekrika* ('I have already judged') indicates a settled verdict — Paul is not deliberating but announcing a decision.
4. The syntax of verses 3-5 is notoriously tangled in Greek, with multiple phrases that can attach to different clauses. The assembly 'in the name of our Lord Jesus' carries judicial authority — they act not on their own behalf but under Christ's name. Paul's spirit (*tou emou pneumatos*) participates in the assembly despite his physical absence.
5. The phrase *paradounai ton toiouton tō satana* ('to hand over such a one to Satan') likely means excommunication — removing the person from the protective sphere of the community into the domain Satan rules (the fallen world). The purpose *eis olethron tēs sarkos* ('for the destruction of the flesh') is debated: it may mean physical suffering, death, or the destruction of the sinful nature. The ultimate goal is redemptive: *hina to pneuma sōthē* ('so that the spirit may be saved'). Even this severe action aims at restoration.
6. Paul transitions to Passover imagery. The proverb about leaven (*zymē*) was widely known — a small amount of yeast permeates an entire batch. In Jewish Passover practice, all leaven was removed from the house before the festival (Exodus 12:15). The Corinthians' tolerance of this sin is like leaving leaven in the dough — it will spread and corrupt the whole community.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 12:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The imperative *ekkatharate* ('clean out thoroughly') echoes the Passover preparation command. The logic is paradoxical: 'become what you already are' — they are unleavened (*azymoi*) in their identity in Christ, so they must live out that identity by removing the leaven of sin. The declaration to *pascha hēmōn etythē Christos* ('Christ our Passover [lamb] was sacrificed') is one of the earliest Passover-typological interpretations of Christ's death, connecting the cross to the Exodus 12 lamb.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The verb *heortazōmen* ('let us celebrate the feast') suggests the entire Christian life is a perpetual Passover festival. The old leaven is identified as *kakia* ('malice, wickedness') and *ponēria* ('evil, depravity'), while the unleavened bread represents *eilikrineia* ('sincerity, purity' — literally, 'tested by sunlight') and *alētheia* ('truth'). Paul transforms a Jewish ritual calendar into a metaphor for ongoing Christian existence.

9. The phrase *en tē epistolē* ('in the letter') refers to a previous letter, now lost, that predates our 1 Corinthians. This means our '1 Corinthians' is actually at least the second letter Paul wrote to this church. The Corinthians apparently misunderstood his instruction, applying it to outsiders rather than insiders.
10. Paul corrects their misunderstanding with practical logic: complete separation from sinners outside the church would require leaving the world entirely, which is impossible. The four categories — *pornoi* ('sexually immoral'), *pleonektai* ('greedy'), *harpaxin* ('swindlers, predators'), *eidōlōlatrai* ('idolaters') — represent common vices in Corinthian society.
11. The key qualifier is *adelphos onomazomenos* ('one called/named a brother') — the issue is not outsiders but insiders who claim Christian identity while living in flagrant contradiction. The six vices expand the earlier list to include *loidoros* ('reviler, verbally abusive person') and *methysos* ('drunkard'). The prohibition *mēde synesthien* ('not even to eat with') would include exclusion from the Lord's Supper and from fellowship meals, effectively cutting off social bonds.
12. Paul establishes a clear jurisdictional boundary: the church judges its own members (*tous esō*, 'those inside') but has no authority over outsiders (*tous exō*, 'those outside'). This distinction was foundational for later Christian thinking about church discipline and the relationship between church and society.
13. The command *exarate ton ponēron ex hymōn autōn* ('remove the evil one from among you') quotes the Deuteronomic formula that appears repeatedly in Deuteronomy (17:7, 19:19, 22:21, 22:24, 24:7) as the conclusion to laws requiring capital punishment. Paul applies the formula to excommunication rather than execution, but the gravity of the language is unmistakable — this is a community-survival matter.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 17:7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

6

Summary: *Paul addresses two issues: lawsuits between believers in secular courts (vv. 1-11) and sexual immorality (vv. 12-20). He is astonished that Christians who will one day judge the world and angels cannot resolve disputes among themselves. He then confronts the Corinthian slogan 'All things are lawful for me' by insisting that the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord. The body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, bought at a price, and must be used to glorify God.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul quotes and then corrects Corinthian slogans in verses 12-13, making this one of the earliest examples of a Christian leader engaging with libertine theology. The statement that the body is a 'temple of the Holy Spirit' (v. 19) shifts the temple language from corporate (3:16) to individual, establishing a theology of the body that has profoundly shaped Christian ethics. The vice list in verses 9-10 has been extensively debated, particularly the terms *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai*.*

Translation Friction: *The terms *malakoi* ('soft ones') and *arsenokoitai* ('man-bedders') in verse 9 are among the most contested words in New Testament scholarship. We render them with their most likely meaning in context while documenting the debate. The Corinthian slogans in verses 12-13 are not always clearly delineated from Paul's own words — we follow the scholarly consensus on where the quotations begin and end.*

Connections: *The 'body as temple' language connects to 3:16-17 and to Jesus's statement about destroying and rebuilding the temple (John 2:19-21). The vice list echoes similar catalogs in Romans 1:29-31 and Galatians 5:19-21. The 'bought with a price' language (v. 20) connects to the redemption vocabulary of 1:30 and anticipates 7:23.*

¹When one of you has a dispute with another, how dare you take it to court before the unrighteous instead of before the saints? ²Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? ³Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life! ⁴So if you have disputes about everyday matters, do you appoint as judges those who have no standing in the church? ⁵I say this to your shame. Is there really no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between brothers and sisters? ⁶Instead, brother goes to court against brother, and this before unbelievers! ⁷The very fact that you have lawsuits against one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? ⁸But instead, you yourselves do wrong and cheat — and you do this to your own brothers and sisters! ⁹Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice passive homosexual acts, nor men who practice active homosexual acts, ¹⁰Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, will

receive God's kingdom. ¹¹And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. ¹²"All things are lawful for me" — but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me" — but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³"Food is for the stomach, and the stomach for food" — and God will do away with both. But the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴God raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Absolutely not! ¹⁶Do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it says, "The two will become one flesh." ¹⁷But the one who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰For you are bought with a price — as a result glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *tolma* ('dares') expresses indignation. The contrast is between *tōn adikōn* ('the unrighteous' — pagan judges) and *tōn hagiōn* ('the saints' — fellow believers). In the Roman colony of Corinth, courts were presided over by pagan magistrates. Paul's objection is not to the legal system per se but to believers airing their disputes before outsiders when the community should be capable of internal resolution.
2. The expectation that saints will judge the world draws on Daniel 7:22 and possibly Jesus's promise to the twelve in Matthew 19:28. Paul's argument moves from the greater to the lesser: if you will judge cosmic matters, surely you can handle small disputes (*kritērion elachistōn*, 'the most trivial courts/cases').
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The claim that believers will judge angels is stated without explanation — Paul treats it as something the Corinthians should already know. The background may be Jewish traditions about the final judgment of fallen angels (cf. Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4). The word *biōtika* ('matters pertaining to daily life') is dismissive — everyday disputes are trivial compared to the cosmic judgment believers will exercise.
4. This verse is grammatically ambiguous — *kathizete* could be indicative ('you appoint') or imperative ('appoint!'). If indicative, Paul is rebuking them for using pagan judges (who have no standing in the church). If imperative, he is sarcastically saying even the least qualified church member would be better than a pagan court. The indicative reading fits the context of rebuke better.
5. The phrase *pros entropēn* ('to shame') is ironic — in 4:14 Paul said he was not writing to shame them, but here the issue warrants it. The word *sophos* ('wise') is pointed: the Corinthians prided themselves on wisdom (1:17-2:16), yet they cannot produce a single person wise enough to arbitrate an internal dispute.
6. The phrase *adelphos meta adelphou krinetai* ('brother is judged with brother') emphasizes the family bond being violated. The phrase *kai touto epi apistōn* ('and this before unbelievers') adds the scandal of public spectacle — the church's dirty laundry is displayed before those outside the faith.
7. The word *hētēma* ('defeat, failure, loss') reveals Paul's perspective: even winning a lawsuit is a loss for the community. The two rhetorical questions echo Jesus's teaching about turning the other cheek (Matthew 5:39-40). Paul suggests it would be better to absorb injustice than to damage the community's witness and unity through litigation.
8. The twist is devastating: not only are they suing fellow believers, but they are the ones doing the wronging (*adikeite*) and cheating (*apostereite*). They are both the perpetrators and the prosecutors. The emphatic *hymeis* ('you yourselves') and the final phrase *kai touto adelphous* ('and this to brothers') drive home the moral failure.
9. The vice list begins with the warning *mē planasthe* ('do not be deceived') — some Corinthians apparently believed that grace eliminated moral consequences. The terms *malakoi* and *arsenokoitai* are heavily debated. *Malakoi* (literally 'soft ones') in this context most likely refers to the passive partner in male homosexual intercourse, though some scholars argue for a broader meaning of 'morally weak' or 'self-indulgent.' *Arsenokoitai* (a compound of *arsēn* 'male' + *koitē* 'bed') appears to be coined from the Septuagint of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13, referring to the active partner in male homosexual intercourse. Both terms refer to specific sexual behaviors, not to orientation as a modern concept.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 18:22. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The list concludes with five more categories: *kleptai* ('thieves'), *pleonektai* ('greedy/covetous'), *methysoi* ('drunkards'), *loidoroi* ('verbal abusers, revilers'), *harpages* ('swindlers, robbers'). The total of ten vices covers sexual, religious, economic, and social sins, suggesting a comprehensive moral vision rather than targeting any single group.
11. The pivotal conjunction *alla* ('but') marks the transition from past identity to present reality. Three aorist passive verbs — *apelousasthe* ('you were washed'), *hēgiasthēte* ('you were sanctified'), *edikaiōthēte* ('you were justified') — describe what God has already accomplished. The order is surprising — washing (baptism) comes first, then sanctification, then justification — which does not match later systematic theology but reflects

Paul's rhetorical emphasis. The dual agency 'in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God' is implicitly trinitarian.

12. The phrase *panta moi exestin* ('all things are lawful/permissible for me') is likely a Corinthian slogan, possibly derived from Paul's own teaching about freedom from the law. Paul quotes it twice and qualifies it twice: first with *ou panta sympherei* ('not all things are beneficial/profitable'), then with *ouk egō exousiasthēsomai hypo tinos* ('I will not be dominated by anything'). Freedom that leads to slavery is not true freedom.
13. Another Corinthian slogan: 'Food for the stomach, stomach for food.' The Corinthians apparently reasoned that just as eating is a morally neutral bodily function, so is sex. Paul agrees that food and stomach are temporary (God will destroy both) but denies the analogy for the body (*sōma*): the body has an eternal destiny and belongs to the Lord. The stunning reciprocal phrase 'the Lord for the body' (*ho kyrios tō sōmati*) declares that the Lord is devoted to the body, not indifferent to it.
14. The bodily resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of believers' bodily resurrection. The verb *exegerei* ('will raise') is future — the body has a destiny beyond this life, which is why sexual conduct matters. The Corinthian dismissal of bodily ethics rested on a dualism (body temporary/spirit eternal) that Paul rejects.
15. Paul's argument rests on the reality of union with Christ — believers' bodies are *melē Christou* ('members/limbs of Christ'). Sexual union with a prostitute would therefore make Christ's own members part of that union. The exclamation *mē genoito* ('may it never be!') is Paul's strongest expression of horror and rejection — it occurs fifteen times in his letters.
16. Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 (via the Septuagint) to argue that sexual union creates a real, ontological bond — not merely a physical act but a union of persons. The verb *kollōmenos* ('joining, clinging, being united') is the same word used in the Septuagint for the marriage bond in Genesis 2:24. Paul's argument assumes that sexual intercourse, even with a prostitute, creates the 'one flesh' reality that Genesis describes for marriage.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 2:24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The parallel is precise: union with a prostitute creates one body (*hen sōma*); union with the Lord creates one spirit (*hen pneuma*). The two unions are incompatible — one cannot simultaneously be united to the Lord in spirit and to a prostitute in body, because the body belongs to the Lord.
18. The imperative *pheugete* ('flee!') demands immediate, decisive action — not negotiation or gradual withdrawal. The claim that *porneia* uniquely sins 'against one's own body' (*eis to idion sōma*) is debated — other sins also affect the body (drunkenness, gluttony). Paul's point may be that sexual sin uniquely involves the body as the instrument and site of the transgression, creating a union (v. 16) that violates the body's belonging to Christ.
19. Here the temple language shifts from corporate (3:16, 'you [plural] are God's temple') to individual — each believer's body is a *naos* ('sanctuary') of the Holy Spirit. The declaration *ouk este heautōn* ('you are not your own') directly challenges the Corinthian individualism and their slogan 'all things are lawful for me.' Autonomy is replaced by belonging.
20. The verb *ēgorasthēte* ('you were bought') is from the marketplace — specifically the slave market. The *timē* ('price') is not specified here but is elsewhere identified as Christ's blood (cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 1:18-19). The imperative *doxasate ton theon en tō sōmati hymōn* ('glorify God in/with your body') makes the body the instrument of worship. The SBLGNT does not include the phrase 'and in your spirit, which are God's' found in later manuscripts and the KJV — we follow the shorter, earlier text.

7

Summary: *Paul responds to the Corinthians' letter about marriage and singleness. He addresses multiple situations: married couples should maintain sexual relations; the unmarried and widows may stay single (Paul's preference) or marry; believers should not divorce unbelieving spouses if the unbeliever is willing to stay; each person should remain in the condition in which they were called. Paul counsels virgins and those betrothed, arguing that singleness allows undivided devotion to the Lord, though marriage is not sin. Throughout, he distinguishes between the Lord's command and his own pastoral advice, and frames everything in light of the 'present distress' and the shortness of the remaining time.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This is the longest sustained discussion of marriage and singleness in the New Testament. Paul's repeated distinction between 'I, not the Lord' (v. 12) and 'the Lord, not I' (v. 10) is remarkable transparency — he clearly differentiates between direct dominical command and his own Spirit-guided counsel. The eschatological urgency ('the appointed time has grown short,' v. 29) shapes all his advice. His affirmation that both marriage and singleness are legitimate callings was countercultural in both Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts.*

Translation Friction: The phrase 'it is good for a man not to touch a woman' (v. 1) may be another Corinthian slogan that Paul is quoting and then qualifying, not his own assertion. The meaning of 'virgin' (parthenos) in verses 25-38 is debated — it could refer to a man's betrothed, his unmarried daughter, or a 'spiritual marriage' partner. The 'present distress' (v. 26) is unidentified — it could be famine, persecution, or eschatological expectation.

Connections: Paul's teaching on divorce (vv. 10-11) directly references Jesus's prohibition (Mark 10:2-12). The 'remain as you are' principle (vv. 17-24) anticipates Paul's theology of contentment in Philippians 4:11-13. The slave/freedom discussion (vv. 21-23) connects to Philemon and Galatians 3:28.

¹Now concerning the matters you wrote about: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." ²But because of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. ³The husband should fulfill his obligation to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. ⁵Do not deprive each other, except perhaps by mutual consent for a set time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again, so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ⁶I say this as a concession, not as a command. ⁷I wish that all people were as I am. But each has a particular gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. ⁸To the unmarried and to widows I say: it is good for them to remain as I am. ⁹But if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with desire. ¹⁰To the married I give this charge — not I, but the Lord — that a wife should not separate from her husband ¹¹(but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband), and a husband should not divorce his wife. ¹²To the rest I say — I, not the Lord — if any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he should not divorce her. ¹³And if any woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she should not divorce him. ¹⁴For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her brother in the faith. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. ¹⁵But if the unbelieving partner separates, let that person go. The brother or sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to peace. ¹⁶For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife? ¹⁷Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned and to which God has called that person. This is my rule in all the churches. ¹⁸Was anyone already circumcised when called? Let him not undo his circumcision. Was anyone uncircumcised when called? Let him not be circumcised. ¹⁹Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing; what matters is keeping the commandments of God. ²⁰Each person should remain in the condition in which they were called. ²¹Were you a slave when called? Do not let it concern you. But if you can gain your freedom, take the opportunity. ²²For the one who was called in the Lord as a slave is the Lord's freedperson, and likewise the one who was free when called is Christ's slave. ²³You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human beings. ²⁴Brothers and sisters, let each person remain with God in the condition in which they were called. ²⁵Now concerning virgins, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. ²⁶I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as they are. ²⁷Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. ²⁸But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. ²⁹This is what I mean, brothers and sisters: the appointed time has grown short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, ³⁰Those who mourn should live as though they do not grieve. Those who are happy should live as though they have no joy. Those who buy something should live as though it is not theirs to keep. ³¹They that use this age, as not abusing it — for the fashion of this age passeth off. ³²I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is concerned about the things of the Lord — how to please the Lord. ³³But the married man is concerned about worldly things — how to please his wife, ³⁴Indeed, there is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit — but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. ³⁵I say this for your own benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but to promote good order and undivided devotion to the Lord. ³⁶If anyone thinks he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, and if his passions are strong and it must be so, let him do

as he wishes — he does not sin. Let them marry. ³⁷But the one who stands firm in his heart, being under no compulsion but having control over his own desire, and has determined in his heart to keep her as his betrothed — he will do well. ³⁸So then, the one who marries his betrothed does well, and the one who refrains from marriage will do even better. ³⁹A wife is bound as long as her husband lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, only in the Lord. ⁴⁰But in my judgment she is more blessed if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *peri de hōn egrapsate* ('now concerning what you wrote') marks the first of several responses to the Corinthians' letter (cf. 7:25, 8:1, 12:1, 16:1). The statement *kalon anthrōpō gynaikos mē haptesthai* ('it is good for a man not to touch a woman') is likely a Corinthian slogan — some members advocated sexual asceticism, possibly even within marriage. The verb *haptesthai* ('to touch') is a euphemism for sexual intercourse. Paul will qualify rather than endorse this absolutist position.
2. Paul's concession *dia de tas porneias* ('because of the acts of sexual immorality') is pragmatic rather than idealistic — marriage provides a legitimate context for sexual expression. The reciprocity is notable: both husband and wife have equal standing in this instruction. The verb *echetō* ('let him/her have') is present imperative, suggesting an ongoing relationship.
3. The word *opheilēn* ('debt, obligation, what is owed') frames marital sexual relations as a mutual obligation, not a one-sided right. The remarkable reciprocity — *homoiōs de kai hē gynē tō andri* ('and likewise also the wife to the husband') — was progressive in the ancient world, where sexual obligations were typically unilateral.
4. The verb *exousiazei* ('has authority over, exercises power over') is used symmetrically — each spouse has authority over the other's body. This mutual surrender of bodily autonomy within marriage is extraordinary in the first-century context. While the first half alone (wife does not control her own body) would have been culturally expected, the second half (husband does not control his own body) was revolutionary.
5. The verb *apostereite* ('deprive, defraud') is the same word used in 6:7-8 for financial fraud — withholding sexual relations from a willing spouse is framed as a form of cheating. Any abstinence must be *ek symphōnou* ('from agreement, by mutual consent'), *pros kairon* ('for a limited time'), and for a specific purpose (prayer). Paul's realism about *akrasia* ('lack of self-control') is characteristically honest.
6. The word *syngnōmēn* ('concession, allowance, pardon') indicates Paul is granting permission rather than issuing a mandate. What exactly is the concession — marriage itself, or the temporary abstinence for prayer? Most likely the latter: Paul is saying the abstinence provision is an allowance, not a requirement.
7. Paul reveals his personal preference for singleness but immediately qualifies it: both singleness and marriage are *charismata* ('gifts') from God. The phrase *ho men houtōs ho de houtōs* ('one in this way, another in that way') treats both states as equally valid divine callings. Neither is spiritually superior.
8. The *agamois* ('unmarried') could include the never-married, the divorced, or widowers. Paul recommends his own state (celibacy) as *kalon* ('good, advantageous') but does not command it. This suggests Paul was either never married or, more likely given his Pharisaic background, was widowed or divorced.
9. The verb *pyrousthai* ('to burn') most likely refers to burning with sexual passion, not to eschatological fire. Paul's pragmatism is evident: singleness is his preference, but marriage is far better than uncontrolled desire. The comparison *kreisson gar estin* ('for it is better') does not denigrate marriage — it positions it as a positive good for those not gifted with celibacy.
10. Paul explicitly attributes this command to the Lord, referencing Jesus's prohibition of divorce (Mark 10:9-12; Matthew 19:6). The verb *chōrīsthēnai* ('to separate, to be separated') is the standard term for divorce in Greek legal usage. Addressing the wife first may reflect a specific situation in Corinth where wives were initiating separations, possibly motivated by the ascetic teaching of verse 1.
11. The parenthetical concession acknowledges that separation sometimes happens despite the prohibition. In such cases, two options remain: singleness (*menetō agamos*) or reconciliation (*katallagētō*). Remarriage to someone else is not offered as an option. The verb *aphienai* ('to release, to divorce') is the legal term for a husband divorcing his wife.
12. Paul now addresses mixed marriages — a situation Jesus's teaching did not directly cover, hence 'I, not the Lord.' This is not a lesser authority claim but an honest acknowledgment that no dominical saying exists on this topic. Paul gives his own Spirit-guided instruction. The verb *syneudokei* ('consents, is pleased, agrees') makes the unbelieving spouse's willingness the key factor.
13. The instruction is perfectly symmetrical: neither believing husband nor believing wife should initiate divorce if the unbelieving partner is willing to remain. Paul addresses women as autonomous agents capable of initiating divorce — a legal reality in Roman (though not traditional Jewish) law that applied in Corinth as a Roman colony.
14. The verb *hēgiastai* ('has been sanctified') does not mean the unbeliever is saved but that the marriage relationship is consecrated — set apart, not defiled — by the believing partner's faith. Paul argues from the children's status: if the marriage were unclean (*akatharta*), the children would be too; but the Corinthians accept their children as *hagia* ('holy, set apart'). The logic assumes the Corinthians already recognize their children's sanctified status.

15. This is the 'Pauline privilege' — if the unbeliever initiates the departure, the believer is not enslaved (ou dedoulōtai, 'is not bound as a slave') to the marriage. Whether 'not bound' means free to remarry has been debated since the early church; the language suggests genuine release from the marriage bond. The closing phrase en de eirēnē keklēken hymas ho theos ('God has called you in peace') may support either maintaining the marriage (for peace) or accepting the separation (peace from conflict).
16. This rhetorical question is ambiguous in tone: it could mean 'you might save your spouse, so stay' (optimistic) or 'you cannot be sure of saving your spouse, so do not stay in an intolerable situation for that reason alone' (realistic). Given the context of verse 15 (letting the unbeliever go), the realistic reading seems more likely — hope of conversion is not sufficient grounds to force a reluctant spouse to stay.
17. This verse introduces the 'remain as you are' principle that governs the next section (vv. 17-24). The verb emerisen ('assigned, apportioned') and keklēken ('has called') both point to God's sovereign arrangement of life circumstances. Paul claims this is not unique counsel for Corinth but his standard teaching en tais ekklesiais pasais ('in all the churches').
18. The verb epispathō ('let him not draw over [the foreskin]') refers to epispasm, a surgical procedure some Hellenistic Jews underwent to reverse circumcision and appear Greek in the gymnasium. Paul's point is that external religious markers are irrelevant to one's standing before God — neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matters after being called.
19. This statement is theologically striking: circumcision — the foundational covenant sign of Genesis 17 — is declared 'nothing' (ouden). Paul does not mean it was never important but that in Christ it no longer defines covenant membership. What matters is tērēsis entolōn theou ('keeping God's commandments'), which for Paul means the ethical commands as fulfilled through love (cf. Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14).
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The word klēsis ('calling') here means not vocation in the modern sense but the life circumstance in which a person was when God called them. The imperative menetō ('let them remain') does not forbid all change but counsels against change motivated by the assumption that a different social status would be spiritually superior.
21. The phrase mallon chrēsai ('rather make use of [it]') is famously ambiguous: 'make use of' what — your slavery or your opportunity for freedom? Most scholars now read it as 'take the opportunity for freedom' rather than 'make use of your slavery,' since Paul's counsel throughout this section is pragmatic, not masochistic. The verb meletō ('let it concern') counsels against anxiety, not against seeking improvement.
22. Paul creates a paradoxical reversal: the slave is the Lord's apeleutheros ('freedperson' — a specific legal status in the Roman world), while the free person is Christ's doulos ('slave'). This does not endorse slavery but relativizes all social categories by redefining them in terms of relationship to Christ.
23. Echoing 6:20, Paul declares that believers' purchase price (Christ's death) makes them God's property. The prohibition mē ginesthe douloi anthrōpōn ('do not become slaves of people') may mean: do not voluntarily surrender your freedom to human masters or human opinions. In context, it warns against allowing social pressure or human leaders to override one's calling from God.
24. The addition of para theō ('with God, before God, in God's presence') transforms the 'remain as you are' principle from passive resignation into active trust — remaining in one's circumstances is not settling but living before God wherever one is.
25. The word parthenōn ('virgins') introduces a new topic. Paul again distinguishes between dominical command (epitagēn kyriou ouk echō, 'I do not have a command from the Lord') and his own gnōmē ('opinion, counsel, judgment'). He grounds his authority not in a direct word from Jesus but in being ēlēēmenos ('having received mercy') and pistos ('trustworthy').
26. The phrase tēn enestōsan anankēn ('the present distress/necessity') is unspecified — it could refer to persecution, famine, general eschatological tribulation, or the ordinary difficulties of living in a fallen world. Whatever the specific reference, it shapes Paul's pragmatic preference for singleness: fewer attachments mean less suffering in times of crisis.
27. The verb dedesai ('you are bound') and the perfect passive lelytai ('you have been released') use binding/loosing language that echoes Jewish divorce terminology. 'Released' could mean divorced, widowed, or never married. Paul's counsel — do not seek change — applies the 'remain as you are' principle to marital status.
28. Paul emphatically clarifies: ouch hēmartēs ('you have not sinned'). Marriage is not sin. His preference for singleness is practical, not moral. The phrase thlipsin de tē sarki ('tribulation in the flesh') refers to the inevitable difficulties of married life — especially in times of distress (v. 26). The verb pheidomai ('I spare, I am trying to protect') reveals pastoral motivation.
29. The phrase ho kairos synestalmenos estin ('the time has been compressed/shortened') expresses eschatological urgency. The perfect passive participle synestalmenos suggests the time has already been shortened — the compression is underway. The series of 'as though not' (hōs mē) clauses (vv. 29-31) describe a posture of detachment from worldly attachments, not abandonment of responsibilities.
30. The 'as though not' (hōs mē) pattern describes eschatological detachment — not emotional suppression but a refusal to let any temporal experience become ultimate. Grief, joy, and commerce are all real but relativized by the nearness of Christ's return.
31. The verb parage ('is passing away') is present tense — the passing is already in progress. The word schēma ('form, outward appearance, shape') suggests the world's current configuration is temporary, like a stage set being dismantled. This does not devalue the world but locates it within a larger eschatological framework.

- 32.** The adjective *amerimnous* ('free from anxiety, without worry') introduces Paul's practical argument for singleness. The verb *merimna* ('is anxious about, is concerned with') is the same word Jesus used in Matthew 6:25-34. Paul is not condemning married people but observing a practical reality: the unmarried person has undivided attention for the Lord's work.
- 33.** The concern for 'worldly things' (*ta tou kosmou*) is not sinful but simply the practical demands of marriage — providing for a household, maintaining a relationship. Paul describes a real tension, not a moral failing.
- 34.** The phrase *kai memeristai* ('and he/she is divided') is the hinge: marriage divides one's attention. Paul applies the same analysis to women as to men, maintaining the symmetry he has shown throughout this chapter. The phrase *hagia kai tō sōmati kai tō pneumati* ('holy in both body and spirit') refers to undivided consecration, not to sexual purity alone.
- 35.** Paul clarifies his intent: *ouch hina brochōn hymin epibalō* ('not to throw a noose on you'). The image of the *brochōn* ('noose, snare') suggests that Paul's advice about singleness should not become another legalistic burden. The goal is *euschēmon* ('seemly, proper, good order') and *euparedron* ('constant attendance, devotion') to the Lord *aperispastōs* ('without distraction').
- 36.** The identity of 'his virgin' (*tēn parthenon autou*) is debated: it could be a man's fiancée/betrothed, his virgin daughter, or a partner in a 'spiritual marriage' (celibate cohabitation). The word *hyperakmos* could mean 'past the bloom of youth' (of the woman) or 'with strong passions' (of the man). We follow the betrothed/fiancée interpretation as most natural in context. The emphatic *ouch hamartanei* ('he does not sin') again underscores that marriage is not sin.
- 37.** Three conditions for choosing not to marry: standing firm (*hestēken hedraios*, 'established, stable'), having no necessity (*mē echōn anankēn*, no external pressure), and having control over one's own will (*exousian echei peri tou idiou thelēmatos*). The decision must be free, settled, and sustainable.
- 38.** The Greek *gamizōn* can mean 'marrying' or 'giving in marriage.' If the subject is a father giving his daughter in marriage, the interpretation shifts, but we follow the reading where the man himself is the one choosing to marry or not. Paul's conclusion is characteristically balanced: marrying is *kalōs* ('well'), not marrying is *kreisson* ('better'). Neither choice is wrong.
- 39.** The verb *dedetai* ('is bound') describes the marriage bond as lasting until death. The verb *koimēthē* ('falls asleep') is the standard early Christian euphemism for death. The phrase *monon en kyriō* ('only in the Lord') is understood to mean the new husband should be a fellow believer, though some interpret it as 'in a manner consistent with the Lord's will.'
- 40.** Paul closes with the comparative *makariotēra* ('more blessed, happier') — widows who remain unmarried are more blessed in his estimation. The final clause *dokō de kagō pneuma theou echein* ('and I think I too have the Spirit of God') is likely ironic — some Corinthians apparently claimed Spirit-authority for views contradicting Paul, and his response is understated: 'I think I too have the Spirit.' The modesty of the claim masks its force.

8

Summary: *Paul addresses the question of eating food offered to idols. He begins by distinguishing knowledge from love: knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. He acknowledges that idols are nothing and there is only one God, so technically idol-food is harmless. But not everyone has this knowledge — some believers with a 'weak conscience' still associate the food with actual idol worship. The 'strong' who eat freely may cause the 'weak' to stumble. Paul concludes that if food causes a brother to fall, he will never eat meat again.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's christological monotheism in verse 6 is remarkable: he reformulates the Jewish Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4) to include Christ as the one Lord 'through whom are all things.' This is one of the highest Christological statements in Paul's letters, embedded almost casually in a discussion about dietary practices. The chapter establishes the principle that rights must yield to love — a theme that will dominate chapters 8-10.*

Translation Friction: *The 'weak' and 'strong' terminology can be misleading in English — the 'weak' are not morally inferior but have a conscience shaped by their pagan past. The phrase *syneidēsis* ('conscience') is a key Pauline concept that does not map perfectly onto modern psychological usage. We render it consistently as 'conscience' and explain the term in notes.*

Connections: *The idol-food discussion continues through chapters 9-10. The 'one God, one Lord' formula (v. 6) connects to Deuteronomy 6:4 and Philippians 2:9-11. The weak-conscience concept anticipates Romans 14-15. The willingness to limit freedom for others' sake connects to Christ's self-emptying in Philippians 2:5-8.*

¹Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ²If anyone thinks they know something, they do not yet know as they ought to know. ³But if anyone loves God, that person is known by God. ⁴As concerning as a result the eating of those matters that are offered in sacrifice to idols, we know that an idol is not a thing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. ⁵For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth — as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords' — ⁶However, to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all matters, and we in him. And one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all matters, and we by him. ⁷But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some, through former association with idols, still eat food as if it were really offered to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸Food will not bring us closer to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. ⁹But be careful that this right of yours does not become a stumbling block to the weak. ¹⁰For if someone with a weak conscience sees you — the one who has knowledge — reclining at table in an idol's temple, will not that person be encouraged to eat food offered to idols? ¹¹For by your knowledge the weak person is destroyed — the brother or sister for whom Christ died. ¹²In this way, by sinning against your brothers and sisters and wounding their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. ¹³Therefore, if food causes my brother or sister to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother or sister to stumble.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *peri de* ('now concerning') marks another response to the Corinthians' letter. The statement *pantes gnōsin echomen* ('all of us possess knowledge') is likely a Corinthian slogan — they claimed universal knowledge about idols being nothing. Paul quotes it and then immediately qualifies it: *gnōsis physioi* ('knowledge puffs up/inflates') uses the same verb as 4:6, 18; 5:2. Love (*agapē*), by contrast, *oikodomei* ('builds up') — the same construction metaphor from chapter 3.
2. Paul deflates intellectual pride: the person who thinks they have arrived at knowledge (*dokei egnōkenai*, 'thinks they have known') has not yet begun to know properly (*oupō egnō kathōs dei gnōnai*). True knowledge is humble, recognizing its own limitations.
3. The shift is remarkable: Paul does not complete the expected pattern ('if anyone loves God, that person truly knows'). Instead, he switches to the passive — *egnōstai hyp' autou* ('is known by him'). What matters is not that we know God but that God knows us. Being known by God is more foundational than knowing about God.
4. Paul agrees with the Corinthian position in principle: *ouden eidōlon en kosmō* ('an idol is nothing in the world') and *oudeis theos ei mē heis* ('there is no God except one'). These statements reflect sound Jewish-Christian monotheism. The problem is not the theology but its application — correct knowledge does not automatically produce loving behavior.
5. Paul acknowledges the cultural reality: the Greco-Roman world was full of *legomenoi theoi* ('so-called gods'). The phrase *hōsper eisin theoi polloi* ('as indeed there are many gods') does not affirm their actual divinity but acknowledges their social and spiritual reality — these entities, whether demonic powers or human constructs, function as gods in people's lives.
6. This verse reformulates the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4, 'Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one') to include Christ. The one God is the Father (*ex hou ta panta*, 'from whom all things' — the source) and the one Lord is Jesus Christ (*di' hou ta panta*, 'through whom all things' — the agent). Christ is included within the identity of the one God of Israel, not added as a second deity. This is one of the earliest and most explicit christological reformulations of Jewish monotheism.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 6:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The Greek *synētheia* ('familiarity, former association, habit') — some manuscripts read *syneidēsei* ('conscience') — describes the ingrained habits of former pagans. Their past worship experience means they cannot separate the meat from its idol-worship context. Their *syneidēsis* ('conscience') is *asthenes* ('weak') — not morally inferior but conditioned by their history. The verb *molynetai* ('is defiled, stained') indicates real spiritual damage, not mere discomfort.
8. This may be another Corinthian slogan that Paul partially endorses. The verb *parastēsei* ('will present, will commend') is a legal term for presenting someone before a judge. Food has no bearing on one's standing before God — Paul agrees with this principle. But the application matters: the 'strong' cannot use this truth to override others' consciences.
9. The word *exousia* ('right, authority, freedom, power') — the same word used for power and authority elsewhere in Paul — is applied to the Corinthians' freedom to eat. Paul does not deny they have this right but warns that rights exercised without love become *proskomma* ('stumbling blocks, obstacles') for weaker believers.
10. Paul paints a specific scenario: a 'knowledgeable' Corinthian reclines (*katakeimenon*, the standard dining posture) in an *eidōleion* ('idol's temple'). Temple dining halls were common venues for social events, business meals, and celebrations in Corinth. The verb *oikodomēthēsetai* ('will be built up') is used ironically — the same word that describes love 'building up' (v. 1) is here used for building up someone toward sin.

11. The verb *apollytai* ('is being destroyed, is perishing') is the same word used in 1:18 for those who are 'perishing.' Paul raises the stakes dramatically: exercising knowledge without love can spiritually destroy a fellow believer. The appositional phrase *ho adelphos di' hon Christos apethanen* ('the brother for whom Christ died') is the theological knockout — how can you use your freedom to destroy someone Christ valued enough to die for?
12. Paul draws a direct line: sinning against a brother's conscience = sinning against Christ. The verb *typtontes* ('striking, beating, wounding') is physical violence language applied to spiritual harm — damaging someone's conscience is an act of assault. Because believers are members of Christ's body (6:15), wounding them wounds Christ himself.
13. Paul's personal pledge — *ou mē phagō krea eis ton aiōna* ('I will never ever eat meat') — uses the strongest possible negation in Greek (the double negative *ou mē* with the aorist subjunctive). This is not a hypothetical but a real commitment: Paul would permanently surrender his own freedom rather than damage a fellow believer. The verb *skandalizō* ('to cause to stumble, to cause to fall into sin') frames the issue as causing another person's spiritual ruin, not merely offending their sensibilities.

9

Summary: *Paul uses himself as an example of voluntarily surrendering rights for the gospel's sake. He defends his apostleship and his right to financial support, citing Scripture, common practice, and the Lord's command. Yet he has not used any of these rights — he preaches the gospel free of charge. He becomes 'all things to all people' to save some. The chapter closes with athletic imagery: Paul disciplines his body like a runner training for a prize, lest after preaching to others he himself be disqualified.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter is Paul's most extended defense of apostolic rights, but its purpose is paradoxical — he lists his rights only to show he has waived them. The 'all things to all people' statement (v. 22) has been both celebrated and criticized throughout church history. The athletic imagery (vv. 24-27) draws on the Isthmian Games held near Corinth, making the metaphor locally resonant.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'a sister, a wife' (*adelphēn gynaika*, v. 5) is debated — does Paul claim the right to bring a believing wife on his journeys, or a 'sister-wife' (celibate female companion)? The traditional reading of a believing spouse is most natural. The word *adokimos* (v. 27, 'disqualified') has generated debate about whether Paul feared loss of salvation or loss of reward.*

Connections: *The ox quotation (v. 9) from Deuteronomy 25:4 anticipates Paul's hermeneutical method in 1 Timothy 5:18. The 'all things to all people' ethic connects to Romans 14-15 and the weak/strong discussion. The athletic imagery was common in Greco-Roman moral philosophy (Epictetus, Seneca) and connects to Philippians 3:12-14 and 2 Timothy 4:7-8.*

¹Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? ²If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you, for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. ³This is my defense to those who would examine me. ⁴Do we not have the right to eat and drink? ⁵Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? ⁶Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? ⁷Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its fruit? Who tends a flock and does not drink the milk? ⁸Am I saying this merely on human authority? Does not the Law say the same thing? ⁹For it is written in the Law of Moses: "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is God concerned about oxen? ¹⁰Or does he speak entirely for our sake? It was indeed written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope, and the thresher should thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. ¹¹If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? ¹²If others share this right over you, do we not even more? But we have not made use of this right. Instead, we endure everything so that we may not put any obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. ¹³Do you not know that those who serve in the temple eat food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? ¹⁴In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living from the gospel. ¹⁵But I have not used any of these rights, nor am I writing this so that it may be done for me. For I would rather die than — no one will deprive me of my ground for boasting! ¹⁶For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting, since an obligation is laid on me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this willingly, I have a reward. But if unwillingly, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. ¹⁸What then is my reward? That in my preaching I

may offer the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel. ¹⁹For though I am free from all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. ²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law — though I myself am not under the law — so that I might win those under the law. ²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law — not being outside God's law but under Christ's law — so that I might win those outside the law. ²²To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings. ²⁴Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. ²⁵Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. ²⁶So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. ²⁷But I discipline my body and bring it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Four rapid rhetorical questions, all expecting 'yes.' The SBLGNT order places 'free' before 'apostle,' connecting this chapter to the freedom discussion of chapter 8. The claim to have seen the Lord (heōraka Iēsoun ton kyrion hēmōn) refers to the Damascus road encounter (Acts 9; cf. 1 Corinthians 15:8) — the qualification for apostleship. The Corinthians themselves are Paul's proof: they are his ergon ('work, product') in the Lord.
2. The word sphragis ('seal') was a mark of authentication — like a wax seal on a document. The Corinthians' very existence as a church validates Paul's apostolic ministry. The concessive 'if I am not an apostle to others' suggests some questioned his credentials.
3. The word apologia ('defense') is a legal term for a courtroom defense speech. The verb anakrinousin ('examine, investigate') is the same judicial language from 2:14-15 and 4:3. Paul is under trial by some in Corinth; the following verses are his evidence.
4. The word exousia ('right, authority, power') — the same word from 8:9 — now applies to Paul himself. 'Eating and drinking' refers to being materially supported by the churches, not merely having food.
5. The phrase adelphēn gynaika ('a sister-wife,' i.e., a believing wife) indicates that the other apostles, Jesus's brothers (including James), and Cephas (Peter) all traveled with their wives at church expense. This verse is significant evidence that Peter was married and that Jesus's brothers held leadership roles. Paul mentions this right but does not exercise it — he apparently remained unmarried or traveled without a wife.
6. The mention of Barnabas suggests he, like Paul, supported himself through manual labor. This may reflect a Corinthian critique: because Paul works with his hands (an un-apostolic practice in their view), he must not be a real apostle. Paul reframes it: he works by choice, not necessity.
7. Three analogies from common life — soldier, farmer, shepherd — all make the same point: workers are entitled to benefit from their labor. The opsoinia ('wages, rations') of a soldier was expected; the karpos ('fruit') of a vineyard belonged to the farmer; the gala ('milk') of a flock belonged to the shepherd. Paul argues from universal human practice.
8. Paul escalates his argument from common sense (kata anthrōpon, 'according to human reasoning') to Scripture (ho nomos, 'the Law'). If even human practice supports the worker's right to compensation, how much more does divine revelation?
9. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 25:4. The original command protected working animals from cruel treatment. Paul's rhetorical question mē tōn boōn melei tō theō ('Is God not concerned about oxen?') does not deny God's care for animals but argues that the principle extends beyond the literal ox to human workers — a hermeneutical move common in Jewish interpretation.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 25:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Paul's hermeneutical claim — di' hēmas gar egraphē ('it was written for our sake') — asserts that Scripture's deeper intention applies to apostolic workers. The principle: workers (whether plowing or threshing) should labor with a reasonable expectation of benefiting from their work. Paul applies this to gospel ministry.
11. The contrast between ta pneumatika ('spiritual things') and ta sarkika ('fleshly/material things') frames financial support as a trivially small return on the spiritual investment Paul made in founding the church. The implication: the Corinthians are getting the better deal.
12. The 'others' (alloi) who receive financial support are probably Apollos or other traveling teachers. Paul's waiver of rights — ouk echrēsametha tē exousia tautē ('we have not used this right') — is the point of the entire chapter. The verb stegomen ('we endure, we cover, we bear') and the purpose clause hina mē tina enkopēn dōmen ('so that we may not give any hindrance') reveal his motivation: nothing must obstruct the gospel.
13. Paul cites temple practice — whether the Jerusalem temple or pagan temples (both practiced priestly sustenance from offerings). The principle is universal: those who perform sacred service are sustained by it. The parallel between temple service and gospel ministry elevates the status of apostolic work.
14. Paul cites a command of the Lord (ho kyrios dietaxen) — referencing Jesus's instruction to the disciples in Luke 10:7 ('the laborer deserves his wages') and Matthew 10:10. This is the highest authority Paul can invoke: a direct dominical command. Yet even this command Paul chooses not to exercise.

15. The sentence breaks mid-thought — Paul starts to say 'I would rather die than have anyone empty my boast' but interrupts himself with the emphatic declaration to *kauchēma mou oudeis kenōsei* ('no one will empty/void my boast'). The anacoluthon (broken sentence) reveals raw emotion. His 'boast' is that he preaches the gospel free of charge. This is his singular distinction, and he guards it fiercely.
16. Preaching is not Paul's choice but his compulsion — *anankē gar moi epikeitai* ('for necessity is placed upon me'). The Damascus road call was not an invitation but a commission. The exclamation *ouai gar moi estin* ('for woe to me!') echoes prophetic language — Paul sees himself in the tradition of the Hebrew prophets who spoke under divine compulsion (cf. Jeremiah 20:9, Amos 3:8).
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 20:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Amos 3:8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The logic: if Paul chose to preach, he would deserve wages (*misthos*). But since he preaches under divine compulsion (*akōn*, 'unwillingly' in the sense of having no choice), he has been entrusted with an *oikonomia* ('stewardship, management') — the responsibility of a household manager (*oikonomos*, cf. 4:1-2). The reward he claims is not payment but the privilege of offering the gospel free of charge.
18. Paul's 'reward' (*misthos*) is paradoxical — it is the opportunity to give up reward. His compensation is the freedom to offer the gospel *adapanon* ('without cost, free of charge'). The phrase *mē katachrēsasthai* ('not to make full use of') echoes 7:31 — restraint in exercising rights is a mark of eschatological wisdom.
19. The paradox of freedom: Paul is *eleutheros* ('free') from all people, owing nothing to anyone, yet he voluntarily enslaves himself (*emauton edoulōsa*, 'I enslaved myself') to all. The verb *kerdēsō* ('I might gain, I might win') is commercial language — Paul 'profits' people for the gospel. This verse introduces the 'all things to all people' passage (vv. 19-23).
20. Paul's cultural flexibility is extraordinary for a Pharisee: he observes Jewish customs when among Jews (cf. Acts 16:3, where he circumcises Timothy; Acts 21:26, where he takes a Nazirite vow) even though he considers himself no longer 'under the law' (*mē ōn autos hypo nomon*). The distinction between 'Jews' and 'those under the law' may separate ethnic identity from legal observance.
21. The parenthetical qualification is crucial: *mē ōn anomos theou* all' *ennomos Christou* ('not being lawless toward God but in-lawed to Christ'). Paul's cultural flexibility is not moral relativism — he lives under 'Christ's law' (*ennomos Christou*), a law of love (cf. Galatians 6:2, 'the law of Christ'). His adaptability has ethical boundaries.
22. The climactic statement *tois pasin gegona panta* ('to all I have become all things') summarizes Paul's missionary strategy: radical cultural adaptation in service of the gospel. The word 'some' (*tinas*) is realistic — not all will respond, but some will. The purpose clause *hina pantōs tinas sōsō* ('so that by all means I might save some') reveals Paul's motivation: salvation of people, not preservation of cultural identity.
23. The word *synkoinōnos* ('co-sharer, fellow participant') connects to *koinōnia* (1:9). Paul is not merely a messenger of the gospel but a participant in its benefits. His sacrifice is not self-punishment but investment in a shared reality.
24. The Isthmian Games were held every two years near Corinth — this metaphor would have been vivid and local. The word *stadion* ('stadium, racecourse') and *brabeion* ('prize') come directly from athletic competition. Paul does not mean only one Christian will be saved but urges the kind of total commitment that an athlete brings to competition.
25. The verb *agōnizomenos* ('competing, striving') gives us 'agonize.' The *enkrateuetai* ('exercises self-control') refers to the strict training regimen athletes followed — diet, sleep, abstinence. The Isthmian Games prize was a pine wreath (*stephanos*), which would quickly wither. Paul contrasts this *phtharton* ('perishable') crown with the *aphtharton* ('imperishable') crown believers receive.
26. Paul switches from running to boxing (*pykteuo*, 'I box, I fight with fists'). The phrase *ouk adēlōs* ('not aimlessly, not without clear direction') and *ouk aera derōn* ('not beating the air') describe focused, purposeful effort — every punch lands, every step counts. This is not exercise but combat with a real opponent.
27. The verb *hypōpiázō* (literally 'I strike under the eye, I give a black eye') is boxing language — Paul treats his body as a sparring partner that must be subdued. The verb *doulagōgō* ('I make a slave of, I bring into servitude') echoes the slavery language of verse 19, now applied to his own physical desires. The word *adokimos* ('disqualified, failing the test, rejected') is an athletic term for failing to meet competition standards. Whether Paul fears loss of salvation or loss of reward is debated, but the severity of the warning is unmistakable.

10

Summary: *Paul uses Israel's wilderness experience as a warning: the Israelites all enjoyed spiritual privileges (passing through the sea, eating manna, drinking from the rock) yet most were destroyed because of idolatry, sexual immorality, testing God, and grumbling. He warns the Corinthians that they cannot participate in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. The chapter concludes with practical guidelines: eat whatever is sold in the market without asking questions, accept dinner invitations freely, but if someone specifically identifies food as idol-offered, abstain for the sake of the other's conscience. Do everything for the glory of God.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's typological reading of the Exodus narrative (vv. 1-4) is one of his most sophisticated hermeneutical passages. The identification of the 'spiritual rock' that followed Israel with Christ (v. 4) is a stunning christological claim. The principle 'God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability' (v. 13) has become one of the most quoted Pauline texts. The practical distinction between marketplace meat, dinner invitations, and explicitly identified idol-food (vv. 25-30) provides a nuanced ethical framework.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'spiritual food' and 'spiritual drink' (vv. 3-4) has been interpreted both sacramentally (as types of the Eucharist) and more broadly (as divine provision). The 'rock was Christ' identification (v. 4) draws on Jewish traditions about a mobile well that followed Israel. The command to 'flee from idolatry' (v. 14) stands in tension with the permission to eat marketplace meat (v. 25) — Paul distinguishes between direct participation in idol worship and incidental contact with idol-associated food.*

Connections: *The wilderness narrative draws on Exodus 13-17, Numbers 11, 14, 21, 25, and Psalm 78. The 'cup of blessing' and 'bread' language (v. 16) connects to the Last Supper traditions (11:23-26) and the Passover meal. The 'table of demons' concept (v. 21) draws on Deuteronomy 32:17. The 'do everything for the glory of God' principle (v. 31) anticipates Romans 14:6-8 and Colossians 3:17.*

¹For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ²They were all united with Moses through baptism in the cloud and in the sea. ³Did all consume the same spiritual meat. ⁴Did all partake of the same the identical supernatural drink — since they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. ⁵Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness. ⁶Now these things took place as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil things as they did. ⁷Do not be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to revel." ⁸We must not engage in sexual immorality, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. ⁹We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. ¹⁰And do not grumble, as some of them grumbled, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹Now these things happened to them as examples, and they were written down for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹²So let the one who thinks they stand take care lest they fall. ¹³No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to humanity. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, so that you may be able to endure it. ¹⁴The refore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵I speak to you as sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? ¹⁷Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. ¹⁸Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? ¹⁹What am I saying then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰No, but what they sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. ²¹You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. ²²Are we trying to provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? ²³"All things are lawful," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. ²⁴Let no one seek their own good, but the good of the other person. ²⁵Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, ²⁶Because the world is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. ²⁷If an unbeliever invites you to a meal

and you want to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising questions of conscience. ²⁸But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience — ²⁹I mean the other person's conscience, not your own. For why should my freedom be judged by someone else's conscience? ³⁰If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something for which I give thanks? ³¹So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. ³²Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, ³³Indeed as I as well please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of numerous, that they may be saved.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *ou thelō hymas agnoein* ('I do not want you to be ignorant') is a standard Pauline disclosure formula. The 'cloud' (*nephēlē*) is the pillar of cloud from Exodus 13:21-22. Paul says 'our ancestors' (*hoi pateres hēmōn*) even though most Corinthians were Gentiles — he identifies the church with Israel's story. The fivefold repetition of *pantes* ('all') in verses 1-4 is emphatic: everyone received the blessings, yet most fell.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 13:21-22. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. Paul reads the Red Sea crossing typologically as a 'baptism' — immersion into a new identity under Moses's leadership, just as Christian baptism brings immersion into Christ. The passive *ebaptisanto* ('were baptized') can also be read as middle voice ('baptized themselves'). The phrase *eis ton Mōusēn* ('into Moses') parallels 'into Christ' in Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27.
3. The 'spiritual food' (*pneumatikon brōma*) is the manna of Exodus 16. Paul calls it 'spiritual' not because it was immaterial but because it came from the Spirit's provision. The parallel with the Lord's Supper is likely intentional.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The claim *hē petra de ēn ho Christos* ('the rock was Christ') identifies the pre-incarnate Christ as the source of Israel's sustenance in the wilderness. The 'rock that followed' (*akolouthousēs petras*) draws on a Jewish rabbinic tradition (found in *Tosefta Sukkah* 3:11 and later sources) that the well of Miriam (based on Numbers 20:1-11 and 21:16-18) traveled with Israel through the desert. Paul christianizes this tradition by identifying the rock with Christ.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 20:1-11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The understatement *ouk en tois pleiosin* ('not with most of them') is darkly ironic — of the entire Exodus generation, only Joshua and Caleb entered the promised land (Numbers 14:29-30). The verb *katestrōthēsan* ('they were spread out, laid low') pictures corpses scattered across the desert floor (Numbers 14:29).
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 14:29-30 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The word *typoi* ('types, examples, patterns') establishes Paul's hermeneutical method: Old Testament events are typological patterns that prefigure and instruct the church. The reference to 'desiring evil things' (*epithumētas kakōn*) echoes Numbers 11:4-34, where Israel's craving for meat brought divine punishment.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 11:4-34. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Paul quotes Exodus 32:6, the golden calf incident. The verb *paizein* ('to play, to revel') in context implies both feasting and sexual activity associated with the idol worship. The connection to the Corinthian situation is direct: participating in temple meals (8:10) is the same pattern of idolatrous feasting that destroyed Israel.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 32:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The reference is to the Baal Peor incident (Numbers 25:1-9), where Israelite men had sexual relations with Moabite women and worshiped their gods. Numbers 25:9 gives the death toll as 24,000; Paul says 23,000, possibly distinguishing those who died 'in one day' from the total, or following a different tradition.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 25:1-9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The SBLGNT reads 'Christ' (*ton Christon*) rather than 'the Lord' — Paul identifies the pre-incarnate Christ as the one Israel tested in the wilderness (cf. v. 4, 'the rock was Christ'). The reference is to Numbers 21:5-6, where Israel's complaints about food and water resulted in venomous serpent attacks.

9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 21:5-6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The verb *gongyzō* ('to grumble, to murmur') is onomatopoeic — it sounds like what it describes. The 'destroyer' (*olothreutēs*) may refer to the angel of death from Exodus 12:23 or to the plague of Numbers 16:41-50. The reference is probably to Korah's rebellion and its aftermath (Numbers 16-17), where grumbling against God's appointed leaders brought deadly consequences — directly relevant to the Corinthians' disrespect of Paul.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 12:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 16:41-50 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 16-17 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The phrase *eis hous ta telē tōn aiōnōn katēntēken* ('upon whom the ends of the ages have arrived') reveals Paul's eschatological framework: the church lives at the climax of history, the point toward which all previous ages were directed. The 'ends' (*telē*) is plural — multiple ages converge in the present eschatological moment.
12. A single, devastating sentence aimed at Corinthian overconfidence. The person who 'thinks they stand' (*ho dokōn hestanaī*) — who considers themselves spiritually secure — is precisely the one most at risk. Israel thought their spiritual privileges guaranteed safety; they were wrong.
13. The word *peirasmos* can mean 'temptation' (enticement to sin) or 'trial/testing' (hardship that tests faith). The declaration *pistos de ho theos* ('but God is faithful') echoes 1:9. God's faithfulness guarantees three things: temptation will not exceed capacity, an escape route (*ekbasis*, literally 'a way out') will be provided, and endurance (*hypenekenin*, 'to bear up under') will be possible. Note: the promise is endurance, not removal of the temptation.
14. The address *agapētoi mou* ('my beloved') softens the command with affection. The imperative *pheugete* ('flee!') — the same urgent command as 6:18 regarding sexual immorality — demands immediate, decisive separation. Paul does not say 'be careful around idolatry' but 'run from it.'
15. The phrase *hōs phronimois legō* ('I speak as to sensible/prudent people') may be mildly ironic — the Corinthians pride themselves on wisdom, so Paul appeals to that self-image. The imperative *krinate* ('judge, evaluate') invites their own assessment of his argument.
16. The phrase to *potērion tēs eulogias* ('the cup of blessing') is a technical term from the Jewish Passover meal — the third cup, over which a blessing was pronounced. The word *koinōnia* ('participation, communion, sharing') from 1:9 now describes the believers' relationship to Christ's blood and body through the Lord's Supper. This is not merely a memorial but genuine participation in Christ's sacrifice. Paul mentions the cup before the bread, which may reflect Corinthian liturgical order.
17. The logic moves from Eucharistic participation to ecclesial unity: shared bread creates shared body. The plural *hoi polloi* ('the many') becoming *hen sōma* ('one body') is the Eucharistic foundation of Paul's body-of-Christ theology (developed further in chapter 12).
18. The phrase *ton Israēl kata sarka* ('Israel according to the flesh') means ethnic/historical Israel. Paul draws on the principle that eating sacrificial food creates *koinōnia* with the altar — and by extension, with the deity worshiped there. This establishes the analogy for idol-feasts in the next verses.
19. Paul anticipates the objection: 'Are you contradicting chapter 8, where you said idols are nothing?' He is not. The idol is indeed nothing (8:4), but that does not mean idol-worship is harmless.
20. Paul draws on Deuteronomy 32:17 (LXX): 'They sacrificed to demons (*daimoniois*) and not to God.' While idols themselves are nothing, the spiritual reality behind pagan worship is demonic. Participation in temple feasts creates *koinōnia* with these demonic powers — the same kind of real participation that the Lord's Supper creates with Christ.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 32:17 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The parallel structure — *potērion kyriou* / *potērion daimoniōn*, *trapezēs kyriou* / *trapezēs daimoniōn* — makes the incompatibility absolute. The 'table of the Lord' (*trapezēs kyriou*) echoes Malachi 1:7, 12, where it refers to the altar. Paul draws a direct equivalence between the Lord's Supper and temple meals: both create real spiritual bonds, and the two bonds are mutually exclusive.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Malachi 1:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The verb *parazēlōmen* ('to provoke to jealousy') echoes Deuteronomy 32:21, where Israel provoked God's jealousy through idol worship. The final question — *mē ischyroteroi autou esmen* ('are we stronger than he?') — is chilling: do you really want to compete with God?
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 32:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. Paul returns to the Corinthian slogan from 6:12, now with a new second qualifier: *ou panta oikodomei* ('not all things build up'). The criterion shifts from personal freedom to community edification. The verb *oikodomeō* ('to build up') has been a key word since 3:9-17 — the question is always: does this action build the community or damage it?

- 24.** This concise principle — *mēdeis to heautou zēteitō alla to tou heterou* ('let no one seek their own but that of the other') — summarizes the entire ethical argument of chapters 8-10. Rights yield to love; freedom serves the neighbor.
- 25.** The Greek *makellon* (from Latin *macellum*) is the public meat market. Archaeological remains of the *macellum* have been found in Corinth. Paul's practical ruling: buy and eat marketplace meat freely — do not investigate whether it was previously offered to an idol. The phrase *mēden anakrinontes* ('not examining, not investigating') uses the judicial verb from 2:14-15, here meaning 'don't interrogate the meat's history.'
- 26.** Paul quotes Psalm 24:1 (23:1 LXX). The theological principle: since everything belongs to the Lord, no food is inherently contaminated. God's ownership of all creation provides the basis for Christian freedom in dietary matters.
- 26.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 24:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 27.** Second practical scenario: a dinner invitation from a pagan. Paul permits acceptance (*kai thelete poreuesthai*, 'and you wish to go' — attendance is optional, not required). The same rule applies: eat without investigating. Social meals with pagans are not forbidden — Paul does not advocate separation from the wider culture.
- 28.** Third scenario: someone at the meal explicitly identifies the food as *hierothyton* ('offered in sacrifice' — a more neutral term than *eidōlothyton*, 'idol-offered'). The speaker might be a pagan host who thinks the religious origin adds value, or a weak believer troubled by the association. Either way, Paul says abstain — not because the food is inherently contaminated but *di' ekeinon* ('for the sake of that person').
- 29.** Paul clarifies: it is the other person's conscience (*tēn tou heterou*) that matters in this situation, not your own. The rhetorical question about freedom being judged by another's conscience (vv. 29b-30) may voice the Corinthians' own objection, which Paul has been anticipating.
- 30.** This continues the Corinthian objection: 'If I pray over the food and eat with gratitude, why should anyone criticize me?' Paul allows the objection to stand but redirects the conversation to the overriding principle in the next verse.
- 31.** This verse provides the supreme criterion that resolves all the cases: *panta eis doxan theou poieite* ('do everything for the glory of God'). The word *doxa* ('glory') corresponds to the Hebrew *kavod* — to glorify God is to treat God as the weightiest reality in every decision. Eating, drinking, and all of life become acts of worship when oriented toward God's glory.
- 32.** The adjective *aproskopoi* ('blameless, giving no offense, not causing to stumble') extends the principle to three audiences: Jews, Greeks, and the church. Paul envisions a life so shaped by love that it creates no unnecessary obstacles for anyone — the same missionary flexibility described in 9:19-23.
- 33.** Paul's final appeal points back to his own example (chapter 9): he seeks to *tou sympheron* ('the advantage') of *tōn pollōn* ('the many') rather than his own. The purpose clause *hina sōthōsin* ('so that they may be saved') reveals the ultimate motivation behind all of Paul's ethical teaching on food, freedom, and rights: the salvation of people.

11

Summary: *Paul addresses two worship-related issues. First, he discusses head coverings during prayer and prophecy (vv. 2-16), arguing from creation, nature, and church practice that women should have a covering on their heads when praying or prophesying. Second, he rebukes the Corinthians' practice of the Lord's Supper (vv. 17-34), which has degenerated into a meal that reinforces social divisions — the wealthy eat and drink to excess while the poor go hungry. Paul recites the words of institution ('This is my body... this cup is the new covenant in my blood') and warns that eating and drinking without discerning the body brings judgment.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Lord's Supper tradition (vv. 23-26) is the earliest written account of the institution, predating even the Gospels. Paul claims to have 'received from the Lord' this tradition, placing it in the chain of authoritative teaching. The phrase 'new covenant in my blood' (v. 25) explicitly connects Jesus's death to Jeremiah's new covenant prophecy (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The head covering passage assumes women are actively praying and prophesying in the assembly — Paul does not silence them but regulates how they participate.*

Translation Friction: *The head covering passage (vv. 2-16) is among the most debated in Paul's letters. The Greek *kephalē* ('head') may mean 'authority over' or 'source/origin' — the choice dramatically affects interpretation. The word *exousia* ('authority') in verse 10 is also debated: is it the woman's own authority or a sign of being under authority? We render the Greek and note the options. The Lord's Supper section has fewer textual difficulties but raises profound theological questions about 'discerning the body' (v. 29).*

Connections: The creation argument (vv. 7-9) draws on Genesis 1:26-27 and 2:18-23. The Lord's Supper words connect to Exodus 24:8 (blood of the covenant), Jeremiah 31:31-34 (new covenant), and the Synoptic institution narratives (Mark 14:22-25, Matthew 26:26-29, Luke 22:14-20). The warning about judgment (vv. 29-32) anticipates the final judgment themes of chapter 15.

¹Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. ²Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I delivered them to you. ³But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God. ⁴Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. ⁵But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for it is the same as if her head were shaved. ⁶For if a woman will not cover her head, she should cut her hair short. But if it is disgraceful for a woman to cut off her hair or shave her head, let her cover her head. ⁷A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man. ⁸For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. ⁹Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. ¹⁰For this reason a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. ¹¹Nevertheless, in the Lord, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. ¹²For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman. But all things come from God. ¹³Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is a disgrace to him, ¹⁵However, if a lady possess long hair, it is a glory to her — for her hair is given her for a covering. ¹⁶If anyone is inclined to be contentious, we have no such practice — nor do the churches of God. ¹⁷But in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸For, in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and I believe it in part. ¹⁹Indeed, there must be factions among you, so that those who are genuine may be recognized among you. ²⁰When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat. ²¹For when the time comes to eat, each one goes ahead with his own meal. One goes hungry while another gets drunk. ²²Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you in this? I will not commend you. ²³For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴Indeed, following he had given thanks, he brake it, and stated, Take, eat — this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. ²⁵In the same way he also took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. ²⁷Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸Let a person examine himself, and then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹For the one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. ³¹But if we judged ourselves properly, we would not be judged. ³²But when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world. ³³So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. ³⁴If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. The other matters I will address when I come.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. This verse likely concludes the argument of chapter 10 (chapter divisions are later additions). Paul's call to imitation is now explicitly grounded: *mimētai mou gines̄the kathōs kagō Christou* ('imitate me as I imitate Christ'). The chain of imitation — Christ Paul Corinthians — prevents both hero worship (Paul is not the ultimate model) and autonomy (the Corinthians cannot claim to follow Christ while ignoring apostolic example).
2. The word *parados̄eis* ('traditions, teachings handed down') is technical language for authoritative tradition passed from teacher to student. Paul praises their general faithfulness before addressing the specific problems. The verb *paredōka* ('I delivered, I handed over') will recur in verse 23 for the Lord's Supper tradition.
3. The Greek *kephalē* ('head') is the crux of this passage. It can mean 'authority over' (as in most traditional readings) or 'source/origin' (as some scholars argue from its usage in Greek literature). The order — Christ/man, man/woman, God/Christ — is not hierarchical (God is mentioned last, not first) but likely traces the 'source' relationship. The Greek *anēr* can mean 'man' or 'husband,' and *gynē* can mean 'woman' or 'wife' — in this

context about married couples at worship, 'husband' and 'wife' are likely.

4. The phrase *kata kephalēs echōn* ('having [something] down from the head') likely refers to a cloth draped over the head. Roman men of high status sometimes covered their heads during religious rituals (*capite velato*), so Paul may be opposing a specific Roman practice rather than giving a universal rule. The double meaning of 'head' — the man's physical head and Christ as his metaphorical head — creates deliberate ambiguity.
5. Crucially, Paul assumes women pray and prophesy in the assembly — the issue is not whether they participate but how. The word *akatakalyptō* ('uncovered, unveiled') describes the absence of a head covering. Paul equates an uncovered head with a shaved head (*exurēmēnē*) — in the ancient world, a shaved female head was associated with shame, mourning, or the punishment of adulteresses.
6. Paul uses a *reductio ad absurdum*: if being uncovered is acceptable, then so is being shorn (*keirasthō*) or shaved (*xyrasthai*). But since the Corinthians agree that a shaved/shorn woman is shameful (*aischron*), they should agree that covering is appropriate. The argument assumes shared cultural values about female appearance.
7. Paul draws on Genesis 1:26-27. The statement that man is *eikōn kai doxa theou* ('image and glory of God') reflects Genesis 1:27. That woman is *doxa andros* ('glory of man') does not deny she bears God's image (Genesis 1:27 includes both male and female) but adds a relational dimension from the Genesis 2 narrative. The word *doxa* ('glory') here may mean 'that which reflects the glory of' — as the moon reflects the sun's light.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 1:26-27. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Paul references Genesis 2:21-22 (woman created from man's rib/side). The preposition *ek* ('from, out of') emphasizes origin. Note that Paul will qualify this in verse 12: 'as woman came from man, so man comes through woman' — the dependency is mutual.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 2:21-22 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Paul references Genesis 2:18 ('It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make a helper suitable for him'). The phrase *dia ton andra* ('for the sake of the man') echoes the 'helper' (*ezer*) concept. In Hebrew, *ezer* does not imply subordination — God himself is called Israel's *ezer* (Psalm 33:20, 70:5).
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 2:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 33:20. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. This verse is notoriously difficult. The Greek *exousian echein epi tēs kephalēs* ('to have authority on the head') could mean: (1) a sign of being under authority (traditional reading, requiring 'symbol of' as an interpretive addition), (2) the woman's own authority to pray and prophesy (the covering as her authorization), or (3) authority over her own head (the right to decide about covering). The phrase *dia tous angelous* ('because of the angels') may reference angels as guardians of worship order, or the Genesis 6:1-4 tradition, or angelic presence in the assembly. The ambiguity is genuine.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 6:1-4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The qualifier *en kyriō* ('in the Lord') is crucial — whatever hierarchical or source-relationship Paul has established, it is mutual in Christ. The double negative *oute...chōris...oute...chōris* ('neither without...nor without') creates complete interdependence. This verse significantly qualifies verses 7-9.
12. Paul balances his earlier creation argument: if woman originated from man (Genesis 2), every man since has been born through (*dia*) a woman. The final clause *ta de panta ek tou theou* ('but all things are from God') places both sexes under divine sovereignty, preventing either from claiming ultimacy over the other.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Paul appeals to the Corinthians' own sense of propriety (*prepon*, 'fitting, proper, appropriate'). This is an argument from cultural sensibility, not from divine command — a weaker form of argumentation that suggests Paul recognizes the cultural specificity of the practice.
14. The appeal to *physis* ('nature') is an argument from what seems natural or customary. The claim that long hair on men is *atimia* ('disgrace, dishonor') reflects Greco-Roman cultural norms, not universal biology — many ancient Near Eastern men wore long hair (Nazirites, Spartans). Paul is arguing from cultural convention, which weakens the argument's universal applicability.
15. The statement that long hair is given (*dedotai*, divine passive — given by God) as a *peribolaion* ('covering, wrap') creates a potential problem for Paul's argument: if long hair is a natural covering, why require an additional artificial covering? Some scholars argue Paul is saying long hair is the only covering needed; others that the natural covering teaches the principle of covering, which should be honored with an additional veil.
16. Paul's final argument is from church practice: *hēmeis toiautēn synētheian ouk echomen* ('we have no such custom'). The ambiguity is whether 'no such custom' means 'no custom of women being uncovered' or 'no custom of being contentious about it.' The appeal to universal church practice (*hai ekklesiāi tou theou*) serves as Paul's trump card when other arguments may not persuade.
17. The shift from praise (v. 2, 'I commend you') to criticism (*ouk epainō*, 'I do not commend you') signals a more serious problem. The Corinthians' assemblies are actually making things worse (*eis to hēsson*) rather than better (*eis to kreisson*) — their worship is counter-productive.

18. The word *schismata* ('divisions') recurs from 1:10. The phrase *meros ti pisteuō* ('I partly believe') is diplomatically restrained — Paul does not dismiss the reports entirely but also does not accept every detail uncritically. The 'first of all' (*prōton men*) implies a list, but the second item is never explicitly stated (it may be the spiritual gifts discussion in chapters 12-14).
19. The word *haireseis* ('factions, parties, sects' — the origin of 'heresies') in this context means party divisions, not formal theological heresy. Paul's statement that factions 'must' (*dei*) exist is not endorsement but recognition of a divine purpose: divisions reveal who is *dokimoi* ('tested, approved, genuine'). The furnace of conflict refines character.
20. The phrase *kyriakon deipnon* ('the Lord's Supper') appears only here in the New Testament — Paul may have coined the term. The adjective *kyriakos* ('belonging to the Lord') marks this meal as distinct from ordinary dining. Paul's judgment is blunt: what they do when they gather is not the Lord's Supper at all. Their behavior has invalidated the meal.
21. The verb *prolambanei* ('takes beforehand, goes ahead with') indicates that wealthier members, who could arrive earlier and bring better food, were eating before the poorer members arrived (slaves and laborers who could not leave work early). The result: *hos men peina hos de methyei* ('one hungers, another is drunk'). The Lord's Supper, which was supposed to enact equality in Christ, was instead reinforcing Corinthian social stratification.
22. Paul's indignation builds through four questions. The key accusation: *kataphroneite tēs ekklēσίας tou theou* ('you despise the church of God') and *kataischynete tous mē echontas* ('you humiliate those who do not have'). The 'have-nots' (*tous mē echontas*) are poor members who arrive with little or no food. The wealthy are not merely eating their own food but humiliating the poor by creating a two-tier meal that mirrors the social hierarchy the gospel was supposed to dissolve.
23. The technical language *parelabon...paredōka* ('I received...I delivered') is the standard terminology for transmitting authoritative tradition in both Jewish and early Christian circles. Paul claims to have received this tradition *apo tou kyriou* ('from the Lord') — whether through a direct revelation or through a chain of tradition originating from Jesus is debated. The phrase *en tē nykti hē paredideto* ('on the night he was being handed over/betrayed') uses *paredideto*, which can mean 'betrayed' (by Judas) or 'handed over' (by God — cf. Romans 8:32). The ambiguity may be intentional.
24. The verb *eucharistēsas* ('having given thanks') is the origin of 'Eucharist.' The words *touto mou estin to sōma* to *hyper hymōn* ('this is my body which is for you') are among the most debated in Christian history — 'is' (*estin*) has been interpreted as literal identity, symbolic representation, spiritual presence, and more. The SBLGNT does not include 'broken' (*klōmenon*), which appears in later manuscripts. The command *touto poieite* ('do this') establishes the meal as a repeated practice, not a one-time event. The word *anamnēsis* ('remembrance') is more than mere memory — in Jewish Passover theology, it means making the past event present and effective.
25. The phrase *meta to deipnēsai* ('after supper') indicates the cup came after the meal, not during it — the original context was a full Passover meal. The declaration *touto to potērion hē kainē diathēkē estin en tō emō haimati* ('this cup is the new covenant in my blood') explicitly invokes Jeremiah 31:31-34, where God promises a new covenant to replace the Sinai covenant. Jesus's blood is the ratifying sacrifice of this new covenant, just as the blood of Exodus 24:8 ratified the old.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 24:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. Paul adds his own interpretive comment to the tradition. The verb *katangallete* ('you proclaim, you announce publicly') means the Lord's Supper is a proclamation — every celebration is a sermon in action. The temporal marker *achri hou elthē* ('until he comes') gives the meal an eschatological horizon: it looks backward to the cross and forward to the return. The meal exists in the tension between 'already' (Christ has died) and 'not yet' (Christ has not yet returned).
27. The adverb *anaxiōs* ('unworthily, in an unworthy manner') modifies the manner of eating, not the worthiness of the eater. In context, 'unworthily' means eating in a way that perpetuates social divisions (vv. 21-22). The word *enochos* ('guilty, liable, answerable for') is a legal term — eating without regard for others makes one liable for the very body and blood the meal commemorates.
28. The verb *dokimazatō* ('let him test, let him examine') is from the metallurgical testing vocabulary — test yourself as you would test metal for quality. The self-examination is not a general inventory of sins but specifically: am I participating in a way that honors the body of Christ (both the crucified body and the community)?
29. The phrase *mē diakrinōn to sōma* ('not discerning the body') is ambiguous: 'the body' could mean Christ's body in the bread, the church as Christ's body, or both. Given the context of social divisions at the meal, 'the body' most likely refers to the community — failing to recognize the gathered church as Christ's body leads to judgment. The SBLGNT does not include 'unworthily' or 'of the Lord' in this verse, following the earliest manuscripts.
30. Paul attributes actual physical illness and death in the Corinthian community to their abuse of the Lord's Supper. The verb *koimōntai* ('sleep') is the Christian euphemism for death (cf. 7:39; 15:6, 18, 20, 51). Whether Paul means divine punishment, natural consequences of social dysfunction, or a spiritual-physical connection is debated, but the severity of the statement is unmistakable.

- 31.** The wordplay between *diekrinomen* ('we were judging/discerning ourselves') and *ekrinometha* ('we would be judged') connects back to verse 29's *diakrinōn* ('discerning'). Self-examination prevents divine judgment — the discipline is restorative, not retributive.
- 32.** The verb *paideuometha* ('we are disciplined, educated, trained') uses the vocabulary of parental correction — God's judgment on the community is disciplinary (corrective) not condemnatory (destructive). The purpose clause *hina mē syn tō kosmō katakrithōmen* ('so that we may not be condemned with the world') distinguishes between divine discipline within the family and final condemnation.
- 33.** The practical solution is remarkably simple: *allēlous ekdechesthe* ('wait for one another'). The entire problem — rich eating before poor arrive, social stratification at the Lord's table — is solved by the basic act of waiting. The verb *ekdechesthe* means 'welcome, receive, wait for' — it implies hospitality, not mere delay.
- 34.** Paul's second practical instruction: if you cannot wait, eat at home (*en oikō esthietō*). The purpose clause *hina mē eis krima synerchēsthe* ('so that you may not come together for judgment') reframes their gatherings as potentially judicial events — assemblies that should bring blessing can instead bring *krima* ('judgment'). The closing phrase *ta de loipa* ('the remaining matters') indicates Paul has more to say but will handle it in person.

12

Summary: *Paul addresses 'spiritual things' (pneumatika) — the gifts of the Spirit and their proper use in the community. He establishes that the fundamental confession 'Jesus is Lord' is the Spirit's work, then describes the diversity of gifts given by the one Spirit, one Lord, and one God. Using the extended metaphor of the human body, Paul argues that every member is necessary, that no one can claim superiority or independence, and that God has specially honored the weaker members. The chapter closes with a list of roles God has appointed in the church and a series of rhetorical questions emphasizing that no one has all gifts.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The body-of-Christ metaphor is Paul's most developed ecclesiological image. The emphasis on the 'weaker' and 'less honorable' members receiving greater honor (vv. 22-25) directly addresses Corinthian social stratification. The triad of 'Spirit, Lord, God' in verses 4-6 is one of the earliest trinitarian patterns in Christian literature. The nine gifts listed in verses 8-10 have shaped charismatic theology for centuries.*

Translation Friction: *The distinction between pneumatika ('spiritual things') and charismata ('grace-gifts') in this chapter is debated — Paul may use them interchangeably or may distinguish them. The gift list is not exhaustive (cf. Romans 12:6-8 for a different list). The phrase 'varieties of tongues' (*genē glōssōn*) and 'interpretation of tongues' (*hermēneia glōssōn*) will be further discussed in chapter 14. Whether the 'body of Christ' is metaphor or ontological reality is a perennial theological question.*

Connections: *The body metaphor was common in Greco-Roman political rhetoric (e.g., Livy's fable of the belly) but Paul transforms it christologically. The gift lists parallel Romans 12:6-8 and Ephesians 4:11. The 'weaker members' theme connects to the weak-conscience discussion of chapters 8-10. The chapter leads directly into the love hymn of chapter 13, which provides the governing principle for all gift use.*

¹Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ²You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led. ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says "Jesus is cursed," and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit. ⁴But the same spirit, and now there are diversities of gifts. ⁵There are various kinds of administrations, but the same Lord. ⁶There are different kinds of working, but the same God is at work in all of them and in everyone. ⁷To each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another person faith by that same Spirit, and to yet another gifts of healing by that one Spirit. ¹⁰To another performing miracles. To another prophecy. To another distinguishing between spirits. To another speaking in various languages. To another interpreting those languages: ¹¹All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who distributes to each person individually as the Spirit wills. ¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body — so it is with Christ. ¹³For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all given one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴For the body does not consist of one member but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that

does not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that does not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many members but one body. ²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²²On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³The parts of the body that seem less important we treat with special honor, and our less presentable parts receive a dignity that our more attractive parts do not need. ²⁴For our comely parts possess no need — but God has tempered the body as one, possessing granted more abundant honour to that part which lacked:. ²⁵so that there would be no division in the body, but instead every part would show equal concern for the others. ²⁶If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. ²⁷Now you are the body of Christ, and individually members of it. ²⁸And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, and various kinds of tongues. ²⁹Is everyone an apostle? Is everyone a prophet? Is everyone a teacher? Does everyone perform miracles? ³⁰Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? ³¹But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *peri de* ('now concerning') marks another response to the Corinthians' letter. The Greek *pneumatikōn* could be neuter ('spiritual things/gifts') or masculine ('spiritual people'). Most translations take it as neuter, referring to the gifts, though Paul may intentionally leave it ambiguous. The disclosure formula *ou thelō hymas agnoein* ('I do not want you to be ignorant') signals an important correction of misunderstanding.
2. Paul reminds the Corinthians of their pre-Christian experience with idolatry. The adjective *aphōna* ('mute, voiceless, speechless') contrasts the silent idols with the speaking Spirit. The phrase *hōs an ēgesthe apagomenoi* ('however you were being led away') describes the directionless, passive experience of pagan religion — they were dragged along by forces they did not understand.
3. Paul provides the foundational test for authentic spiritual experience: the confession *kyrios Iēsous* ('Jesus is Lord'). The phrase *anathema Iēsous* ('Jesus is cursed') may reflect actual occurrences in Corinthian worship where ecstatic speakers uttered shocking statements, or it may be a hypothetical extreme. The declaration that only the Holy Spirit enables the lordship confession establishes the Spirit as the source of all genuine Christian experience. This is the christological criterion for evaluating spiritual claims.
4. The word *diakrisis* ('varieties, distributions, apportionments') emphasizes diversity within unity. The *charismata* ('gifts of grace') — from *charis* ('grace') — are the Spirit's concrete manifestations in the community. The trinitarian pattern begins: one Spirit distributes diverse gifts.
5. The word *diakoniōn* ('services, ministries') shifts from gifts to their expression in service. The 'same Lord' (*ho autos kyrios*) is Christ, continuing the trinitarian pattern: Spirit gifts, Lord service.
6. The word *energēmatōn* ('workings, activities, effects') and the verb *energōn* ('working, empowering') share the root from which English 'energy' derives. The trinitarian pattern completes: Spirit/gifts, Lord/service, God/empowerment. The phrase *ta panta en pasin* ('all things in all') emphasizes God's comprehensive activity — every genuine spiritual manifestation in every person traces back to the one God.
7. Two crucial points: first, *hekastō* ('to each one') — every believer receives a manifestation, not just an elite spiritual class. Second, *pros to sympheron* ('for the benefit, for what is advantageous') — the purpose is corporate benefit, not individual prestige. The word *phanerōsis* ('manifestation, disclosure, making visible') means the Spirit becomes visible through the gifts.
8. The gift list begins with *logos sophias* ('word/utterance of wisdom') and *logos gnōseōs* ('word/utterance of knowledge'). These are not general qualities but specific Spirit-enabled capacities for speaking wisdom and knowledge in the assembly. The distinction between them is not entirely clear — wisdom may be more practical/applied while knowledge may be more revelatory/doctrinal.
9. The 'faith' (*pistis*) mentioned here is not saving faith (which all believers share) but a special gift of extraordinary trust — the kind that moves mountains (13:2). The plural *charismata iamatōn* ('gifts of healings') is doubly plural, suggesting diverse types of healing for diverse conditions, not a single blanket ability.
10. Five more gifts complete the list of nine. *Energēmata dynamēōn* ('workings of powers/miracles') overlaps with healing but may include non-medical supernatural acts. *Prophēteia* ('prophecy') is Spirit-inspired speech that builds up the community (14:3). *Diakrisis pneumatōn* ('discernments of spirits') is the ability to evaluate whether a spiritual manifestation is genuinely from God. *Genē glōssōn* ('kinds of tongues') refers to Spirit-inspired speech in languages unknown to the speaker. *Hermēneia glōssōn* ('interpretation of tongues') makes tongue-speech intelligible to the community. Tongues and interpretation are placed last — possibly reflecting Paul's assessment of their relative importance in the assembly.

11. The summary statement reaffirms unity in diversity: *to hen kai to auto pneuma* ('the one and the same Spirit') is the single source of all gifts. The phrase *kathōs bouletai* ('as he wills') assigns sovereignty to the Spirit — gifts are not earned, chosen, or competed for but distributed according to the Spirit's own decision. This directly undercuts any Corinthian hierarchy of gifts.
12. The body metaphor was familiar in Greco-Roman rhetoric, but Paul's conclusion is startling: instead of saying 'so it is with the church,' he says *houtōs kai ho Christos* ('so also is Christ'). The church does not merely resemble a body — it is Christ's body. The identification is ontological, not merely illustrative.
13. Baptism by the Spirit creates the one body, transcending the most fundamental social divisions of the ancient world: ethnic (Jews/Greeks) and status (slaves/free). The verb *epotisthēmen* ('we were given to drink, we were drenched') may refer to the Spirit's infilling as a baptismal experience (being immersed) or to the ongoing experience of the Spirit as spiritual drink (echoing 10:4, drinking from the spiritual rock). Both images — baptism and drinking — convey saturation in the Spirit.
14. This simple statement introduces the extended body analogy (vv. 14-26). A body that was only one part would not be a body at all. The implication: a church where everyone has the same gift or speaks in tongues is not truly functioning as Christ's body.
15. Paul personifies body parts to address those who feel excluded because their gifts seem less impressive. The foot's self-exclusion ('I am not a hand') is absurd — one's identity as a body member does not depend on having a particular function. This addresses believers who feel inferior because they do not speak in tongues or exercise more visible gifts.
16. The second example reinforces the point with a different pair: ear and eye. The logic is the same — difference of function does not diminish membership.
17. Paul uses absurdist humor: a body that was entirely an eye could see everything but hear nothing. The Corinthians' obsession with one spectacular gift (likely tongues) would produce a monstrously dysfunctional body. Diversity is not a concession to weakness but a design requirement.
18. The verb *etheto* ('placed, arranged, appointed') assigns the body's design to God's deliberate choice (*kathōs ēthelēsen*, 'as he wished'). No member chose its own placement, and no member can claim its position is accidental. This parallels the Spirit's sovereignty in distributing gifts (v. 11).
19. The question is rhetorical — a body that is all one part is not a body. Uniformity destroys the very thing it claims to perfect.
20. The summary statement: *polla men melē, hen de sōma* ('many members, one body'). Unity and diversity are not in tension — they are the two essential characteristics of a body.
21. Paul now addresses the opposite problem: not those who feel excluded but those who exclude others. The 'eye' and 'head' — presumably the more prominent members who possess impressive gifts — cannot dismiss the 'hand' and 'feet' as unnecessary. If verses 15-16 address inferiority, verses 21-25 address superiority.
22. The word *asthenestera* ('weaker') echoes the 'weak' members of chapters 8-10. Paul now makes a counterintuitive claim: the *ta dokounta melē* ('the members that seem') weaker are actually *anankaia* ('necessary, indispensable'). Internal organs — invisible and seemingly fragile — are more essential to survival than external, visible parts.
23. The metaphor extends to how we treat body parts: those considered 'less honorable' (*atimōtera*) receive more covering and attention — we clothe them with greater honor (*timēn perissoterein*). The 'unpresentable parts' (*ta aschēmona*) are given *euschēmosynēn* ('presentability, propriety'). Paul implies the community should operate the same way: those with less visible gifts should receive greater honor.
24. The verb *synekerasen* ('composed, blended, combined') describes God as the master designer who deliberately structured the body so that the less honored receive more. This is divine social engineering against hierarchy — God's own design favors the disadvantaged.
25. The purpose of God's design: *hina mē ē schisma en tō sōmati* ('so that there may be no schism/division in the body'). The word *schisma* returns from 1:10 and 11:18 — the body metaphor is Paul's answer to the division problem that has plagued the entire letter. The positive counterpart: *hyper allēlōn merimnōsin* ('they may care for one another equally').
26. The body's interdependence manifests in shared experience: sympathy (*sympaschei*, 'suffer with') and shared joy (*synchairei*, 'rejoice with'). The prefix *syn-* ('with, together') appears in both verbs, emphasizing solidarity. A church where some celebrate while others suffer is as dysfunctional as a body where one hand is healthy while the other is paralyzed.
27. The application is direct: *hymeis de este sōma Christou* ('you are Christ's body'). The phrase *melē ek merous* ('members from a part,' i.e., 'individually members') preserves both the corporate identity (you are the body) and individual significance (each person is a member). The Corinthians are not merely like a body — they are Christ's actual body in Corinth.
28. This second list is ordered with numerical markers (*prōton, deuteron, triton* — 'first, second, third'), suggesting a ranking by importance. Apostles, prophets, and teachers are foundational roles. Then come miracles and healing (gifts from vv. 9-10), followed by two new items: *antilēmpseis* ('acts of helping, forms of assistance') and *kybernēseis* ('acts of guidance, forms of leadership/administration' — from the word for steering a ship). Tongues appear last — pointedly, given the Corinthians' apparent elevation of this gift.
29. Seven rhetorical questions, all introduced by *mē* (expecting a 'no' answer). The point is inescapable: no one has all gifts, and not everyone has the same gift. The Corinthian assumption that everyone should speak in tongues is demolished.

30. The final three questions specifically target the gifts the Corinthians most prized: healing, tongues, and interpretation. The implied answer to each is emphatically 'no.' The diversity that Paul has celebrated is not optional but divinely mandated.
31. The imperative *zēloute* ('earnestly desire, strive for') could also be indicative ('you are striving for') — if indicative, Paul is observing their behavior rather than commanding it. The phrase *kath' hyperbolēn hodon* ('a way beyond all comparison') introduces chapter 13 — the 'more excellent way' is the way of love. This is one of the most celebrated transitions in all of Paul's letters: from the gifts of the Spirit to the supremacy of love.

13

Summary: *1 Corinthians 13 is Paul's celebrated exposition on love (agape), set within his larger argument about spiritual gifts. After listing the gifts in chapter 12 and before returning to their regulation in chapter 14, Paul inserts this passage to demonstrate that love is the indispensable context for all spiritual gifts. Without love, even the most spectacular abilities — tongues, prophecy, mountain-moving faith — are empty. Paul personifies love with fifteen characteristics (vv. 4-7), then argues that love alone endures when all other gifts pass away. The chapter closes with the triad of faith, hope, and love, declaring love the greatest.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter is often read in isolation at weddings and funerals, but its original context is a rebuke. The Corinthians were using spiritual gifts competitively, and Paul's praise of love is simultaneously an indictment of their lovelessness. The fifteen attributes of love in verses 4-7 are all verbs in Greek — love is defined by what it does, not what it feels. Several of the negative descriptions ('love does not envy, does not boast, is not arrogant') directly mirror the Corinthian problems catalogued elsewhere in the letter. The 'mirror' image in verse 12 refers to the polished bronze mirrors of Corinth, famously manufactured there but yielding only dim reflections.*

Translation Friction: *The Greek agape is rendered 'love' throughout, not the KJV's 'charity' (which reflected Latin caritas via the Vulgate). While 'charity' in 1611 could mean 'love,' in modern English it means 'almsgiving,' which distorts Paul's meaning. The verb forms in verses 4-7 resist smooth English translation; we preserve the verbal character as much as possible.*

Connections: *This chapter bridges chapters 12 and 14, which together form Paul's extended treatment of spiritual gifts. The eschatological vision of 'seeing face to face' (v. 12) echoes Moses's face-to-face encounter with God (Exodus 33:11, Numbers 12:8). The triad of faith, hope, and love appears also in 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 5:8, and Colossians 1:4-5.*

¹If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²And if I have prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³And if I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. ⁴Love is patient, love is kind, love does not envy. Love does not boast, it is not arrogant. ⁵It does not act dishonorably, it does not seek its own interests, it is not provoked, it does not keep a record of wrongs. ⁶It does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices together with the truth. ⁷It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸Love never falls. But if there are prophecies, they will be set aside; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be set aside. ⁹Since we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰However, when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part will be done away. ¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I set aside childish things. ¹²For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, just as I have been fully known. ¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul begins with an extreme case: even angelic speech without love is mere noise. The Greek *chalkos echon* ('sounding bronze') and *kumbalon alalazon* ('wailing cymbal') evoke the percussion instruments of pagan worship in Corinth — the sound is loud but meaningless. The KJV's 'tinkling' is too gentle; *alalazon* means 'wailing, clashing.'

2. Paul escalates: prophecy, comprehensive knowledge, and miracle-working faith — all gifts the Corinthians prized — count for nothing without love. The mountain-moving faith echoes Jesus's teaching (Mark 11:23). The blunt 'I am nothing' (outhen eimi) is a deliberate shock, deflating the Corinthian fascination with spectacular gifts.
3. The SBLGNT reads kauchesomai ('that I may boast') rather than kauthesomia ('to be burned'), which is a variant reading reflected in the KJV. The critical text suggests that even martyrdom motivated by self-glory rather than love is worthless. The verb psomiso ('I feed by hand, I dole out') emphasizes the laborious, hands-on nature of the giving — and still it profits nothing without love.
4. Paul now defines love with fifteen verbs — love is described by what it does, not by what it feels. The first two are positive (patient, kind), then a cascade of negatives follows. The Greek perpereuesthai ('to boast, brag') occurs only here in the New Testament. The word physioutai ('is puffed up') echoes 4:6, 18, 19 and 8:1, targeting the Corinthians' specific vice.
5. The phrase ou zetei ta heautēs ('does not seek its own') directly echoes 10:24 and 10:33, where Paul made the same point about himself. The verb logizetai ('reckon, calculate') is an accounting term — love does not maintain a ledger of offenses. The KJV adds 'easily' before 'provoked,' softening what in Greek is absolute: love is not provoked.
6. The prefix syn- in synchairei ('rejoices with/together') suggests communal celebration — love joins in the truth's triumph rather than savoring another's failure. The contrast between adikia ('wrongdoing, injustice') and aletheia ('truth') pairs moral and intellectual integrity.
7. The fourfold panta ('all things') creates a powerful rhetorical climax. The verb stegei can mean 'covers' (as a roof covers a house) or 'bears' (as in bearing a load) — both senses apply. The sequence moves from passive endurance (bears) through trust and hope to active persistence (endures). Love's coverage is total.
8. The verb piptei ('falls') means 'collapses, fails' — love never loses its structural integrity. Paul now contrasts love's permanence with the temporary nature of gifts the Corinthians most valued. The verb katargeo ('to abolish, set aside, render inoperative') indicates that prophecy and knowledge serve a purpose that will be completed, after which they are no longer needed. Tongues 'will cease' (pausontai) uses a different verb, but Paul is not making a theological distinction between different modes of cessation.
9. The phrase ek merous ('from a part, partially') frames all present knowledge and prophecy as incomplete. This is not false or wrong but fragmentary — we see truly but not fully.
10. The Greek to teleion ('the complete, the perfect, the mature') is neuter, referring to a state or condition rather than a person. In context, this refers to the eschatological consummation when face-to-face knowledge replaces partial knowledge (v. 12). We render it 'the complete' rather than 'the perfect' to avoid confusion with moral perfection.
11. The analogy does not demean childhood but illustrates the natural supersession of one stage by another. The three verbs — speaking, thinking, reasoning — correspond loosely to the three gifts mentioned in verse 8 (tongues, prophecy, knowledge). The word aner ('adult male, man') is rendered 'adult' here since the contrast is maturity versus immaturity, not gender.
12. The Greek esoptron ('mirror') refers to the polished bronze mirrors for which Corinth was famous — clear enough to show a reflection but never as sharp as direct sight. The phrase en ainigmati ('in a riddle, dimly') echoes Numbers 12:8 (LXX), where God speaks to Moses 'not in riddles' but face to face — the very vision Paul anticipates for all believers at the consummation. The shift from ginosko ('I know') to epiginosko ('I will fully know') marks the difference between partial and complete knowledge.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 12:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The triad of faith, hope, and love is a Pauline signature (cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 5:8). The verb menei ('remains, abides') contrasts with the passing away of gifts in verse 8. Why love is greatest is debated: perhaps because God himself is love (1 John 4:8), or because love alone continues unchanged into eternity while faith becomes sight and hope becomes possession. The declaration 'the greatest of these is love' is the climax of the entire three-chapter argument on spiritual gifts.

14

Summary: 1 Corinthians 14 applies the love principle of chapter 13 to the specific question of tongues and prophecy in corporate worship. Paul argues consistently that prophecy is superior to uninterpreted tongues because prophecy builds up the whole congregation, while unintelligible speech edifies only the speaker. He establishes practical regulations: tongues must be interpreted, prophets must speak in order, and everything must be done for building up. The chapter culminates in a call for orderly worship, grounded in the character of God, who is a God of peace, not confusion.

What Makes This Remarkable: Paul's insistence on intelligibility over ecstatic experience was counter-cultural in Corinth, where pagan worship at temples of Dionysus and Apollo featured frenzied, unintelligible utterances. His argument that uninterpreted tongues make the speaker a 'foreigner' (barbaros, v. 11) to fellow worshipers inverts the Corinthian pride in this gift. The Old Testament quotation from Isaiah 28:11-12 (v. 21) is used in a surprising way — tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, and a negative sign at that, signaling judgment rather than blessing.

Translation Friction: Verses 34-35, which command women to be silent in the churches, stand in tension with 11:5, where Paul assumes women pray and prophesy in the assembly. Proposals include: (a) Paul is quoting a Corinthian slogan he will then refute, (b) the silence concerns only the evaluation of prophecy, (c) the verses are a later interpolation (some manuscripts place them after v. 40). We render the SBLGNT text as given and note the interpretive difficulty.

Connections: This chapter completes the spiritual gifts discussion begun in chapter 12 and framed by chapter 13. The Isaiah 28 quotation connects Corinthian tongue-speaking to the prophetic tradition of judgment oracles. The worship regulations parallel those in 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22. The closing principle 'God is not a God of disorder but of peace' (v. 33) grounds liturgical practice in theology proper.

¹Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. ²For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God, for no one understands, but he speaks mysteries in the Spirit. ³But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their building up, encouragement, and consolation. ⁴The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. ⁵Now I want all of you to speak in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be built up. ⁶Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? ⁷Even lifeless instruments that produce sound, whether flute or harp — if they do not produce distinct notes, how will anyone recognize the tune being played on the flute or the harp? ⁸And if the trumpet produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare for battle? ⁹So it is with you. Unless you produce intelligible speech with your tongue, how will anyone know what is being said? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰There are doubtless many different kinds of languages in the world, and none is without meaning. ¹¹So if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker will be a foreigner to me. ¹²So with you. Since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. ¹³Therefore, let the one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵What then? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will also sing praise with my mind. ¹⁶Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can the outsider say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not built up. ¹⁸I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹But in the church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. ²⁰Brothers and sisters, do not be children in your thinking. In evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. ²¹In the Law it is written: "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." ²²So then, tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. ²³So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? ²⁴But if all prophecy and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is examined by all, ²⁵Thus are the secrets of his inner self fashioned manifest. And so falling below on his face he will bow down before God, and report that God is in you of a truth. ²⁶What then, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. ²⁷If anyone speaks in a tongue, let it be two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. ²⁸But if there is no interpreter, let him be silent in the church and speak to himself and to God. ²⁹Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others evaluate what is said. ³⁰If a revelation is given to another person sitting there, let the first be silent. ³¹For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be encouraged. ³²The prophets have control over their own prophetic spirits. ³³For God is not a God of disorder but

of peace. As in all the churches of the saints, ³⁴Indeed, let your women keep silence in the churches — since it is not permitted to them to speak. Yet they are commanded to be under obedience, as also says the law. ³⁵If they want to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church. ³⁶Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached? ³⁷If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, he should recognize that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. ³⁸But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. ³⁹So, my brothers and sisters, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰But let all things be done properly and in order.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The imperative *diokete* ('pursue, chase') is aggressive — love must be actively hunted, not passively awaited. The transition from chapter 13 is seamless: love is supreme, but gifts still matter. Paul's preference for prophecy over tongues will dominate the chapter.
2. The KJV adds 'unknown' before 'tongue,' which is not in the Greek. Paul's point is not that tongues are bad but that they are vertically directed (to God) and therefore unintelligible to the horizontal audience without interpretation. The word *mysteria* ('mysteries') carries positive connotation — genuine spiritual content that lacks a human audience.
3. Three purposes of prophecy are named: *oikodome* ('building up,' from the construction metaphor Paul favors), *paraklesis* ('encouragement, exhortation'), and *paramythia* ('consolation, comfort'). Prophecy serves the community; tongues without interpretation do not.
4. Paul concedes that tongues do edify the individual speaker — this is not dismissed. But the standard for worship is communal edification. The verb *oikodomei* ('builds up') is used for both, but the object shifts from 'himself' to 'the church.'
5. Paul does not forbid or denigrate tongues — he wishes all spoke in tongues. But he ranks prophecy higher because of its communal benefit. The exception clause is critical: if tongues are interpreted, they become functionally equivalent to prophecy for building up the church.
6. Paul uses himself as an example. Four forms of intelligible speech are listed as alternatives to uninterpreted tongues: revelation, knowledge, prophecy, and teaching. All four communicate understandable content to the audience.
7. Paul draws an analogy from music. The word *diastole* ('distinction, difference') refers to the intervals between notes that create melody. Without distinguishable intervals, music becomes noise — precisely what unintelligible tongues are in worship.
8. The military analogy intensifies the point: an unclear trumpet call is not merely unhelpful but dangerous. In the Roman military context familiar to Corinth, different trumpet calls signaled advance, retreat, and various formations. An ambiguous signal could be fatal.
9. The phrase *eis aera lalountes* ('speaking into the air') is vivid — the words dissipate like breath in wind, reaching no one. The Greek *eusemon* ('clear, intelligible') literally means 'well-signed' or 'well-marked.'
10. The word *phone* can mean 'voice,' 'sound,' or 'language.' Paul's point is that every language, however foreign, carries meaning to its native speakers. The problem with uninterpreted tongues is not that they lack meaning but that their meaning is inaccessible.
11. The Greek *barbaros* ('barbarian, foreigner') was onomatopoeic — it mimicked the 'bar-bar' sound that foreign languages seemed to make to Greek ears. Paul's use is ironic: the Corinthians prized tongues as a spiritual achievement, but the practical effect is mutual incomprehension — they become barbarians to one another.
12. Paul redirects their zeal rather than quenching it. The word *pneumatōn* ('of spirits') is unusual — most translations supply 'spiritual gifts,' but the word may refer to spiritual manifestations more broadly. The imperative is clear: channel your enthusiasm toward what builds the community.
13. The connection between tongue-speaking and interpretation is presented as a matter of prayer. The tongue-speaker himself should seek the gift of interpretation, ensuring that his own utterance can serve the community.
14. Paul distinguishes between *pneuma* ('spirit') and *nous* ('mind'). In tongues-prayer, the human spirit engages God but the cognitive faculty (*nous*) produces no intelligible fruit for others. Paul does not dismiss spirit-prayer but insists that mind-engagement is also necessary in corporate settings.
15. Paul models the balanced approach: both spirit and mind are engaged. The verb *psalō* ('I will sing, I will make music') originally meant 'to pluck a stringed instrument' and came to mean 'to sing psalms or hymns.' Both prayer and singing should engage the full person.
16. The Greek *idiotes* ('outsider, layperson, uninstructed person') does not mean 'idiot' but refers to someone who lacks the specialized knowledge to understand — in this case, the unintelligible tongue. The congregational 'Amen' was a crucial element of early Christian worship (cf. Justin Martyr, First Apology 65), requiring comprehension of what was said.
17. Again Paul affirms that tongues-prayer is genuine thanksgiving — 'well enough' (*kalos*) is not sarcastic. The problem is not quality but accessibility. Individual spiritual experience, however authentic, must serve the community in corporate worship.
18. Paul establishes his authority to regulate tongues by revealing that he himself exercises this gift abundantly. He cannot be accused of envying a gift he lacks. The claim 'more than all of you' is remarkable and may be hyperbolic, but it prevents the Corinthians from dismissing his instructions as sour grapes.

19. The ratio is staggering: five intelligible words outweigh ten thousand unintelligible ones. The Greek *myrioi* ('ten thousand') is the largest number Greek had a single word for — it represents an overwhelming quantity. The verb *katecheso* ('I might instruct') is the root of 'catechism' — teaching that produces understanding.
20. Paul calls the Corinthians' obsession with tongues childish. The wordplay is sharp: be babies (*nepiazo*) in evil but adults (*teleioi*, 'mature, complete') in thinking. The word *phresin* ('in understanding/thinking') refers to practical judgment, not abstract intellect.
21. Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11-12, calling it 'the Law' (a common Jewish usage for the entire Old Testament). In Isaiah's original context, the 'strange tongues' were the Assyrian invaders — unintelligible speech was a sign of God's judgment on disobedient Israel. Paul applies this typologically to the Corinthian situation.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 28:11-12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. This verse is notoriously difficult because the scenario in verses 23-25 seems to reverse the logic. If tongues are for unbelievers, why do unbelievers react negatively to tongues (v. 23)? The resolution may be that tongues are a negative sign (of judgment, as in the Isaiah passage) for unbelievers, while prophecy positively builds up believers.
23. The verb *mainesthe* ('you are mad, you are raving') was commonly used for the frenzied ecstasies of pagan worship. Paul warns that a worship service dominated by unintelligible tongues will look indistinguishable from pagan mania to visitors. The early church gathered in homes open to passersby, making this a real concern.
24. The verbs *elenchetai* ('is convicted, exposed') and *anakrinetai* ('is examined, investigated') describe prophetic speech penetrating to the conscience. Prophecy functions as a spiritual mirror, revealing what the visitor did not know about himself.
25. The phrase 'God is truly among you' (*Ontos ho theos en hymin estin*) echoes Isaiah 45:14 and Zechariah 8:23, where Gentiles recognize God's presence among Israel. The entire sequence — conviction, exposure, prostration, worship, confession — describes a conversion event triggered by intelligible prophetic speech.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 45:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 8:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. This verse provides a rare window into early Christian worship: it was participatory, with multiple members contributing different elements. The diversity of contributions — psalm, teaching, revelation, tongue, interpretation — suggests a dynamic, Spirit-led gathering. The governing principle is *oikodome* ('building up'): every contribution must serve the community.
27. Paul imposes three regulations on tongues: (1) a maximum of three speakers per gathering, (2) they must speak sequentially (*ana meros*, 'in turn'), not simultaneously, and (3) interpretation is mandatory. These rules balance freedom with order.
28. Without an interpreter, the tongue-speaker must be silent in the assembly — but may continue praying privately. The phrase *heauto laleitō kai tō theō* ('let him speak to himself and to God') dignifies private tongue-prayer while limiting its public exercise.
29. Prophecy is also regulated: two or three per gathering, with communal evaluation (*diakrinetōsan*, 'let them discern, judge, evaluate'). The 'others' who evaluate may be other prophets or the congregation as a whole. This prevents any individual from claiming unquestionable prophetic authority.
30. The prophetic gift is not an uncontrollable ecstatic seizure — the first prophet can and must yield to another. This implies that prophetic speech is under the speaker's control, a point Paul will make explicitly in verse 32.
31. The 'one by one' (*kath' hena*) reinforces orderly sequence. The dual purpose — learning and encouragement — restates the communal focus. The word 'all' (*pantes*) appears three times, emphasizing the universal scope of both participation and benefit.
32. This principle is foundational: the prophetic spirit does not overpower the prophet's will. Unlike pagan ecstasy, where the deity supposedly seized control of the human vessel, Christian prophecy operates within the prophet's conscious self-control. This makes the regulations of verses 27-31 enforceable.
33. The theological grounding of worship order: God's own character is peace (*eirene*), not confusion (*akatastasia*, 'instability, disorder, tumult'). The phrase 'as in all the churches of the saints' may begin the next sentence (connecting to vv. 34-35) or conclude this one. The SBLGNT punctuation connects it forward.
34. This passage is among the most debated in Paul's letters. It appears to contradict 11:5, where women pray and prophesy in the assembly. Major proposals: (1) the silence concerns only the evaluation of prophecy (v. 29), not all speech; (2) Paul is quoting a Corinthian position he will then refute in v. 36; (3) the verses are a later scribal interpolation (some manuscripts place them after v. 40). We render the SBLGNT text without resolving the tension, noting that Paul's own practice included women co-workers who prophesied and taught.
35. The word *aischron* ('shameful, disgraceful') is strong. If this represents Paul's own view, it must be reconciled with his practice of partnering with women like Priscilla, Phoebe, and Junia in ministry. If it is a Corinthian quotation, verse 36 becomes the rebuttal. The instruction 'ask their own husbands at home' may address a specific disruption pattern in Corinth rather than establishing a universal rule.

36. Paul's rhetorical questions deflate any claim to exclusive authority. If vv. 34-35 are a Corinthian quotation, this verse is Paul's sharp rebuttal: 'You did not invent the gospel, and you are not its sole recipients.' The questions challenge Corinthian arrogance regardless of how one reads the preceding verses.
37. Paul asserts apostolic authority as a test of prophetic genuineness: a true prophet will recognize Paul's instructions as carrying the Lord's authority. The singular 'command' (entole) rather than plural suggests Paul has a specific regulation in mind — likely the worship order guidelines of the entire chapter.
38. The wordplay on agnoei ('does not know/recognize') and agnoeitai ('is not known/recognized') is untranslatable in its full force. Some manuscripts read agnoeito ('let him be ignorant'), a dismissive imperative. The SBLGNT's passive agnoeitai is more pointed: the person who refuses to acknowledge Paul's apostolic authority forfeits recognition in the community.
39. Paul's conclusion maintains the balance he has struck throughout: prophecy is preferred but tongues are not prohibited. The imperative zelōte ('earnestly desire') for prophecy is positive; the prohibition me kōluete ('do not forbid') for tongues is protective. Both gifts have their place when properly ordered.
40. The final summary: euschemonos ('properly, with good form, decently') and kata taxin ('according to arrangement, in order'). The word taxis was used for military formation and civic procedure — worship should reflect the ordered character of the God who is worshiped (v. 33). This verse has become a foundational text for all subsequent Christian reflection on liturgical order.

15

Summary: *1 Corinthians 15 is Paul's most extensive treatment of resurrection. He begins by reciting the earliest Christian creed (vv. 3-8), grounding the resurrection in eyewitness testimony. He then argues that denying the future resurrection of believers logically entails denying Christ's resurrection, which would unravel the entire gospel (vv. 12-19). The chapter traces the cosmic scope of resurrection: Christ as firstfruits, then believers at his coming, culminating in the defeat of death itself and the Son's handing over the kingdom to the Father (vv. 20-28). Paul addresses the nature of the resurrection body — not a resuscitated corpse but a transformed, imperishable body suited for the age to come (vv. 35-49). The chapter climaxes with the mystery of final transformation and a triumphant declaration that death has been swallowed up in victory (vv. 50-57).*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verses 3-7 constitute the earliest surviving Christian creed, likely formulated within five years of the crucifixion. The appearance list includes over five hundred witnesses, most of whom Paul says are still alive and could be consulted. The Adam-Christ typology (vv. 21-22, 45-49) establishes a framework that Paul develops further in Romans 5. The phrase 'if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile' (v. 17) is the most direct statement in Scripture that Christianity stands or falls with the bodily resurrection. The 'mystery' of verse 51 — that not all will die but all will be changed — introduces an eschatological surprise not found in prior Jewish expectation.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'baptized on behalf of the dead' (v. 29) remains one of the most obscure statements in Paul's letters; over forty interpretations have been proposed. We render the Greek literally and note the difficulty. The meaning of 'he handed over the kingdom' (v. 24) and the Son's subjection to the Father (v. 28) raises complex Trinitarian questions we do not attempt to resolve. The 'spiritual body' (soma pneumatikon) of verse 44 is frequently misunderstood as 'immaterial body,' but Paul means a body animated and governed by the Spirit.*

Connections: *The creed of vv. 3-5 connects to the Gospel passion and resurrection narratives. The Adam-Christ typology links to Genesis 2-3 and Romans 5:12-21. The 'firstfruits' language echoes Leviticus 23:10-11. The defeat of death draws on Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14. The transformation imagery anticipates Philippians 3:20-21 and 2 Corinthians 5:1-5.*

¹Now I make known to you, brothers and sisters, the gospel that I proclaimed to you, which you also received, in which you also stand, ²Indeed, by which also you are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached to you, unless you have believed in vain. ³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴That he was buried, and that he rose again the third day in keeping with to the scriptures:. ⁵He appeared to Peter, and then to the twelve apostles. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as

to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹Because I persecuted the church of God, for I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle. ¹⁰But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than all of them — yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. ¹¹Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you believed. ¹²Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴And if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is empty and your faith is empty. ¹⁵We are even found to be false witnesses about God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ — whom he did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. ²⁰But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. ²²For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says "all things are put in subjection," it is clear that the one who subjected all things to him is excepted. ²⁸When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all. ²⁹Otherwise, what will those do who are baptized on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on behalf of them? ³⁰Why are we in danger every hour? ³¹I die every day! I swear it by my boasting in you, brothers and sisters, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord. ³²If merely from a human perspective I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." ³³Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good character." ³⁴Come to your senses as you should and stop sinning, for some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. ³⁵But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶Foolish one! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷And what you sow — you do not sow the body that will be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹Not all flesh is the same flesh; rather, there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another kind. ⁴¹There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. ⁴²So also is the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³It is sown in dishonour. It is raised in glory — it is sown in weakness. It is raised in authority. ⁴⁴It is sown a natural body. It is raised a spiritual body. And there is a spiritual body, and there is a natural body. ⁴⁵So also it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶But the spiritual does not come first; rather, the natural comes first, then the spiritual. ⁴⁷The first man was from the earth, made of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹And just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven. ⁵⁰Now I say this, brothers and sisters: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Listen, I tell you a mystery: we will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, ⁵²Indeed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet — for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. ⁵³For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴When this perishable body puts on imperishability and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" ⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷But thanks be to God, which gives us the victory by way of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁵⁸Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul reintroduces the gospel he originally preached to Corinth. The three verbs trace the gospel's trajectory: proclaimed (euangelisamen), received (parelabete), and now stand firm in (hestekate). The perfect tense of hestekate indicates a settled, ongoing stance.
2. The present tense sozesthe ('you are being saved') presents salvation as an ongoing process, not merely a past event. The conditional 'if you hold fast' (ei katechete) introduces a note of warning that prepares for the chapter's argument against resurrection deniers.
3. The transmission language (paredoka/parelabon) matches 11:23 — Paul is passing on authoritative tradition, not inventing doctrine. The phrase en protois ('among the first things, as of first importance') indicates priority of content, not merely chronology. The creed that follows (vv. 3b-5) is widely recognized as pre-Pauline, likely dating to the early 30s AD.
4. Four clauses form the creed: died, buried, raised, appeared. The burial confirms the reality of death; the appearances confirm the reality of resurrection. The perfect tense egegetai ('has been raised') indicates a past event with continuing effects — Christ was raised and remains risen. 'According to the Scriptures' likely refers to Hosea 6:2 and/or Jonah 1:17 (cf. Matthew 12:40), though no single Old Testament text explicitly predicts a third-day resurrection.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Hosea 6:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jonah 1:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The verb ophthe ('appeared, was seen') is a divine appearance term in the Septuagint (cf. Genesis 12:7, Exodus 3:2). Cephas is the Aramaic name for Peter — Paul uses the Aramaic form, suggesting this creed originated in the Aramaic-speaking Jerusalem church. 'The Twelve' functions as a title for the apostolic group even after Judas's departure.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 12:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 3:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Paul's note that most of the five hundred are still alive functions as an implicit challenge: these witnesses can be consulted. This is the earliest form of historical evidence appeal in Christian literature. The appearance to five hundred simultaneously is not recorded in the Gospels.
7. This James is almost certainly James the brother of Jesus (cf. Galatians 1:19), who became the leader of the Jerusalem church. He was apparently not a follower during Jesus's ministry (cf. John 7:5), making the resurrection appearance a conversion experience. 'All the apostles' appears to be a broader group than 'the Twelve' of verse 5.
8. The word ektroma ('miscarriage, abortion, untimely birth') is shockingly self-deprecating. Paul sees his apostleship as abnormal — born violently and prematurely through the Damascus road encounter rather than through the normal process of following the earthly Jesus. The phrase 'last of all' (eschaton panton) may indicate Paul believes his was the final resurrection appearance.
9. Paul's self-assessment is not false humility — he genuinely regards his persecution of the church as disqualifying. The phrase ten ekklesian tou theou ('the church of God') uses the most elevated designation for the community, heightening the gravity of his offense.
10. The phrase chariti theou eimi ho eimi ('by the grace of God I am what I am') is one of Paul's most concentrated theological statements. The self-correction 'not I, but the grace of God' prevents boasting while still claiming the reality of his labor. Grace does not eliminate human effort but transforms and empowers it.
11. Paul closes the credal section by emphasizing apostolic unity: regardless of which apostle preached, the message was the same — Christ died, was buried, was raised. This common proclamation is the foundation for the argument that follows.
12. Paul reveals the problem: some Corinthians deny the resurrection of the dead. They likely accepted Christ's resurrection as a unique divine act but denied that ordinary believers would be bodily raised. This may reflect Greek philosophical contempt for the body (cf. Acts 17:32). Paul will show that the two resurrections stand or fall together.
13. The logic is tight: if resurrection is categorically impossible, then Christ's resurrection is also impossible. Paul refuses to make Christ's resurrection an exception to a general rule — it is instead the first instance of a general resurrection.
14. The word kenon ('empty, hollow, without content') is devastating: without resurrection, the entire Christian message collapses into an empty shell. Both the apostolic proclamation and the Corinthian response to it become meaningless.
15. The phrase pseudomartyres tou theou ('false witnesses of God') is a serious charge — the apostles would not merely be mistaken but guilty of bearing false testimony about God's actions. The preposition kata ('against') suggests testifying against God by attributing to him an act he did not perform.
16. Paul restates the premise of verse 13 for emphasis before drawing the most devastating consequence in verse 17.
17. The word mataia ('futile, useless, pointless') is stronger than kenon in verse 14 — not merely empty but worthless. The consequence 'still in your sins' means that without resurrection, Christ's death accomplished nothing. Atonement and resurrection are inseparable in Paul's theology.
18. The word apolonto ('have perished, are destroyed') stands in brutal contrast to 'fallen asleep in Christ.' If there is no resurrection, the euphemism of sleep is a cruel lie — the dead are simply gone.

19. The superlative *eleenoteroi* ('most pitiable, most to be pitied') is the climax of the *reductio ad absurdum*. Christians who have suffered persecution, social ostracism, and material loss for a false hope would be the most deluded people on earth. Paul's argument assumes that following Christ involves real worldly cost.
20. The emphatic *nyni de* ('but now, but in fact') signals the dramatic reversal from the hypothetical despair of vv. 12-19 to the triumphant reality. The word *aparche* ('firstfruits') is a Levitical term (Leviticus 23:10) — the first sheaf of the harvest, offered to God as a guarantee that the full harvest will follow. Christ's resurrection guarantees the resurrection of all who belong to him.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 23:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The Adam-Christ typology is introduced: the same channel through which death entered (a human being) is the channel through which resurrection comes. The parallelism demands a real, bodily human — not an angel or divine being acting apart from humanity.
22. The two 'all' (*pantes*) statements are symmetrical but not necessarily identical in scope. 'In Adam all die' is universal — physical death touches every human. Whether 'in Christ all will be made alive' is equally universal (all humanity) or limited to 'all who are in Christ' is debated. The context of verses 23-24 suggests the latter, as Paul specifies 'those who belong to Christ.'
23. The word *tagma* ('order, rank, division') is a military term for a unit in formation. The resurrection occurs in stages, not all at once: Christ first, then believers at the *parousia* ('coming, arrival, presence'). The *parousia* is the expected return of Christ.
24. The 'end' (to *telos*) is the consummation of all things. Christ's mediatorial reign ends when all hostile powers are defeated and the kingdom is handed over to the Father. The three terms — *arche*, *exousia*, *dynamis* ('ruler, authority, power') — encompass all forms of opposition to God, whether spiritual or political.
25. Paul alludes to Psalm 110:1, the most frequently quoted Old Testament text in the New Testament. The divine necessity (*dei*, 'it is necessary, he must') indicates this is God's predetermined plan. The reign is not yet complete — enemies remain — but the outcome is certain.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 110:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. Death is personified as an enemy — the final enemy. The passive *katargeitai* ('is being destroyed, is abolished') may be a prophetic present, treating the future event as already underway because Christ's resurrection has already begun death's defeat. Death is not merely an unfortunate reality but a hostile power that will be defeated.
27. Paul quotes Psalm 8:6 and adds a logical clarification: when the psalm says 'all things,' the Father who does the subjecting is obviously not included. This prevents the absurd conclusion that the Father is subject to the Son.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 8:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The Son's voluntary subjection to the Father is the final cosmic act. The phrase 'God may be all in all' (*ho theos ta panta en pasin*) envisions a reality where God's presence and authority are fully realized in every dimension of existence. This is the *telos* of the entire biblical narrative — God's unmediated presence filling all things.
29. This is one of the most obscure verses in the Pauline corpus. The phrase *baptizomenoi hyper ton nekron* ('being baptized on behalf of the dead') has generated over forty scholarly interpretations. The most straightforward reading is that some Corinthians practiced vicarious baptism for deceased persons — Paul neither endorses nor condemns the practice but uses it as an argument: their own behavior presupposes resurrection. We render the Greek literally without resolving the interpretive question.
30. Paul shifts from the Corinthians' practice (v. 29) to his own experience. If there is no resurrection, the constant danger of apostolic ministry is pointless. The phrase *pasan horan* ('every hour') emphasizes the unrelenting nature of the risk.
31. The oath formula *ne* ('I swear by') is rare in Paul and indicates the intensity of his claim. 'I die every day' (*kath' hemeran apothnesko*) describes the constant mortal danger of his apostolic work. Paul's daily dying is meaningless without the hope of resurrection.
32. Whether Paul literally fought animals in the Ephesian arena or speaks metaphorically of fierce human opposition is debated. The quotation 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die' comes from Isaiah 22:13, where it describes fatalistic hedonism in the face of judgment. Without resurrection, this becomes the only rational philosophy.
32. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 22:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
33. Paul quotes a line attributed to the Greek poet Menander (Thais, fragment 218). The Greek *ethē chresta* ('good character/morals') and *homiliai kakai* ('bad company/associations') form a proverbial warning. Paul's use of a pagan poet to make a moral point parallels his quotation of Aratus in Acts 17:28.
34. The verb *eknepsate* ('sober up, come to your senses') suggests the Corinthians have been drunk on their own theological confusion. The phrase *agnosian theou* ('ignorance of God') is a stinging rebuke — despite their intellectual pride, some Corinthians lack basic knowledge of God's character and purposes.

35. Paul now addresses the 'how' question. The objection assumes that resurrection means resuscitation of the same physical body — an idea many found absurd. Paul will show that the resurrection body is real but transformed.
36. The sharp address *aphron* ('fool, senseless one') echoes Jesus's parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:20). The seed analogy answers the 'how' question: just as a seed must die to produce a plant, the mortal body must die to produce the resurrection body. Continuity and transformation coexist.
37. The point is crucial: the seed and the plant are continuous (it is the same organism) but radically different in form. No one mistakes a wheat kernel for a stalk of wheat. Likewise, the resurrection body will be continuous with but transformed from the present body.
38. The resurrection body is God's gift and God's design — not a natural process but a divine creative act. The phrase 'as he has chosen' (*kathos ethelesen*) emphasizes divine sovereignty over the form of the resurrection body.
39. Paul expands the analogy: God already creates diverse kinds of bodies in the natural world. The diversity of earthly bodies demonstrates God's creative capacity to produce bodies suited for different environments — including the environment of the age to come.
40. The word *doxa* ('glory, radiance, splendor') refers to the visible splendor appropriate to each type of body. Heavenly bodies (sun, moon, stars) have a different kind of glory than earthly bodies — both are real, but they differ in mode of existence and splendor.
41. Even within the category of heavenly bodies, diversity of glory exists. The point is cumulative: God's creation already displays an enormous range of bodily forms and degrees of glory. The resurrection body will be yet another form — different from anything now known but no less real.
42. Paul now applies the analogies. Four contrasts follow (vv. 42-44), each using the sown/raised pattern. The first: *phthora* ('decay, perishability') versus *aphtharsia* ('imperishability, incorruption'). The mortal body decays; the resurrection body cannot.
43. Two more contrasts: dishonor versus glory, weakness versus power. The burial of a corpse is an act involving shame and frailty; the resurrection body possesses divine radiance and supernatural vitality. Each pair moves from the negative experience of death to the positive reality of resurrection.
44. The crucial fourth contrast: *soma psychikon* ('natural/soul-ish body') versus *soma pneumatikon* ('spiritual body'). The 'spiritual body' is not immaterial — it is still a *soma* ('body'). The adjective *pneumatikon* means 'animated by/oriented to the Spirit,' just as *psychikon* means 'animated by/oriented to the soul.' The resurrection body is a real, physical body fully governed by the Holy Spirit.
45. Paul quotes Genesis 2:7 for the first Adam and adds his own christological counterpart. The first Adam received life (*psyche zosan*, 'a living soul/being'); the last Adam gives life (*pneuma zoopoion*, 'a life-giving spirit'). Christ is not merely alive but the source of resurrection life for all who belong to him.
45. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 2:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
46. Paul insists on the sequence: natural before spiritual, Adam before Christ. This may counter a Corinthian belief that they had already attained the spiritual state and had no need of future bodily resurrection.
47. The adjective *choikos* ('dusty, earthy, made of soil') echoes Genesis 2:7, where God forms Adam from the dust of the ground. The second man — Christ — is 'from heaven' (*ex ouranou*), indicating his heavenly origin. The SBLGNT omits 'the Lord' after 'second man,' which appears in some manuscripts.
47. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 2:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
48. The representative principle: we share the nature of our representative head. Those united to Adam share his dusty, mortal nature; those united to Christ will share his heavenly, imperishable nature.
49. The SBLGNT reads the subjunctive *phoresomen* ('let us bear'), but many manuscripts read the future *phoresomen* ('we will bear'). The meaning is similar: just as our present bodies reflect Adam's dust-nature, our resurrection bodies will reflect Christ's heavenly nature. The word *eikon* ('image') connects to Genesis 1:26-27 — the image of God, marred in Adam, will be fully restored in the resurrection.
49. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 1:26-27. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
50. The phrase 'flesh and blood' (*sarx kai haima*) refers to the present mortal human condition, not to physicality as such. The resurrection body will be physical but not 'flesh and blood' in this mortal sense. Transformation is necessary — the present body cannot enter the kingdom as-is.
51. The word *mysterion* ('mystery') in Paul means a truth previously hidden but now revealed by God. The 'mystery' is that not all believers will die before Christ returns — some will be alive at the *parousia*. But all, whether dead or living, must be transformed. This addresses a question left open by the preceding argument.
52. The Greek *atomō* ('indivisible instant') is the word from which 'atom' derives — the smallest possible unit of time. The 'last trumpet' (*eschate salpingi*) echoes the shofar traditions of Jewish apocalyptic expectation (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Matthew 24:31). The transformation is instantaneous and universal.
53. The clothing metaphor (*endysasthai*, 'to put on, to clothe oneself with') suggests that the resurrection is not the discarding of the body but its being clothed with new qualities. The mortal puts on immortality as a garment — transformation, not replacement. The divine necessity (*dei*, 'must') indicates this is God's determined plan.

54. Paul quotes Isaiah 25:8 ('he will swallow up death forever'), adapting it to read 'Death has been swallowed up in victory' (eis nikos). The prophetic promise will be fulfilled at the moment of resurrection transformation. The passive 'has been swallowed' indicates that death is not merely defeated but consumed — it ceases to exist.
54. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 25:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
55. Paul taunts death with a loose quotation of Hosea 13:14. The SBLGNT reads 'death' (thanate) in both lines rather than the KJV's 'grave' (hades) in the second. The word kentron ('sting, goad') evokes a scorpion's or bee's sting — death's weapon. In the resurrection, death is disarmed and mocked.
55. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Hosea 13:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
56. Paul inserts a compressed theological explanation: death's weapon is sin (without sin, death would have no power), and sin's power comes through the law (which defines transgression and pronounces the curse). This compressed argument anticipates the fuller treatment in Romans 5-7.
57. The present tense didonti ('who gives, who is giving') presents the victory as an ongoing gift, not merely a future event. The victory over death is secured by Christ's resurrection and appropriated by believers through union with him. The chapter's argument culminates in doxology.
58. The chapter ends not with speculation but with exhortation to faithful action. The adjectives hedraioi ('steadfast, firmly seated') and ametakinetoι ('immovable, not to be shifted') contrast with the instability of those who deny the resurrection. The final word kenos ('empty, vain') echoes verses 10, 14, and 17 — unlike a faithless gospel, labor done 'in the Lord' is never empty.

16

Summary: *First Corinthians 16 transitions from theological instruction to practical matters: the collection for the saints in Jerusalem, Paul's travel plans, commendations of co-workers, and final exhortations. Paul instructs the Corinthians to set aside money on the first day of each week so that no collection will be needed when he arrives. He outlines his intended route through Macedonia and expresses hope for an extended stay in Corinth. The chapter closes with commendations of Timothy, Apollos, and the household of Stephanas, and includes the Aramaic prayer-cry 'Maranatha' — 'Our Lord, come!' — embedded in a Greek letter as a witness to the earliest Aramaic-speaking church's expectation of Christ's return.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Aramaic word 'Maranatha' (v. 22) is one of the most significant linguistic fossils in the New Testament. Its preservation untranslated in a Greek letter to a Greek-speaking church demonstrates that this prayer-cry was so ancient and well-known that it needed no translation. It witnesses to the earliest post-resurrection community's worship of Jesus as Lord (maran) and their expectation of his imminent return. The conditional curse formula in verse 22 ('If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed') followed immediately by 'Maranatha' creates a jarring juxtaposition of judgment and hope that reflects the eschatological tension of early Christian worship.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'anathema' (v. 22) is a strong term meaning 'devoted to destruction' or 'cursed,' borrowed from the Septuagint's rendering of the Hebrew cherem. We render it as 'accursed' to preserve its severity. The 'holy kiss' (v. 20) was a standard early Christian liturgical greeting, not a cultural peculiarity. Paul's note about writing 'with my own hand' (v. 21) indicates that an amanuensis wrote the rest of the letter and Paul added the closing personally as authentication.*

Connections: *The collection for Jerusalem connects to Paul's broader theology of Gentile-Jewish unity (Romans 15:25-27; 2 Corinthians 8-9). The travel plans anticipate the situation described in 2 Corinthians. The mention of Pentecost (v. 8) provides one of the few chronological anchors in Paul's correspondence. Stephanas is mentioned as the 'firstfruits of Achaia' (v. 15), connecting to the earlier reference in 1:16 where Paul baptized his household.*

¹Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. ²On the first day of every week, each of you is to set something aside and save, in keeping with how he has prospered, so that no collections will need to be made when I come. ³And when I arrive, I will send those whom you approve with letters to carry your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴And if it seems worthwhile for me to go as well, they will travel with me. ⁵I will come to you after I pass through Macedonia, for I intend to pass through Macedonia. ⁶And perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I go. ⁷For I do not want to see you just in passing. I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹For a remarkable door and effectual is opened to me, and

there are numerous adversaries. ¹⁰When Timothy comes, see that he has nothing to fear among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord, just as I am. ¹¹So let no one despise him. Send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me, for I am expecting him with the brothers. ¹²Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the brothers, but it was not at all his will to come now. He will come when he has the opportunity. ¹³Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act with courage, be strong. ¹⁴Let all that you do be done in love. ¹⁵Now I urge you, brothers — you know that the household of Stephanas were the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints — ¹⁶That you place yourselves under the guidance of to such, and to every one that helps with us, and labors. ¹⁷I rejoice at the arrival of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence. ¹⁸For they refreshed my spirit and yours. So give recognition to such people. ¹⁹The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. ²⁰All the brothers and sisters greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. ²¹This greeting is in my own hand — Paul. ²²If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed. Maranatha! ²³The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. ²⁴My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *logeia* ('collection') is a term from the papyri associated with religious contributions. This collection for the Jerusalem church was a major project spanning several years of Paul's ministry, reflecting his commitment to unity between Gentile and Jewish believers.
2. The phrase *kata mian sabbatou* ('on the first day of the week') is an early witness to Christian assembly on Sunday rather than the Jewish Sabbath. The verb *euodotai* ('has prospered') is in the passive, implying God as the source of prosperity — the KJV makes this explicit, though it is only implied in the Greek.
3. The word *charin* ('gift, grace') is used here for the monetary contribution — Paul consistently elevates the collection by using theological vocabulary for it. The letters of commendation were standard practice for ensuring the integrity of financial transfers in the ancient world.
4. Paul leaves open the possibility that the collection may be large enough to warrant his personal delivery to Jerusalem — a journey that would eventually lead to his arrest (Acts 21).
5. Paul's travel plans here differ from what he later describes in 2 Corinthians 1:15-16, where he had originally planned to visit Corinth first. This change of plans became a point of contention that Paul addresses in the opening chapters of 2 Corinthians.
6. The verb *propempsete* ('send on my way') implies providing material support and traveling companions for the next leg of a journey — a common early Christian practice of hospitality. Winter travel by sea was considered dangerous and was generally avoided.
7. The conditional 'if the Lord permits' (*ean ho kyrios epitrepsee*) reflects Paul's characteristic submission of his plans to divine sovereignty, similar to James 4:15.
8. This verse provides a rare chronological anchor: Paul writes from Ephesus before the Jewish feast of Pentecost (*Shavuot*), placing the letter in the spring. The continued use of the Jewish calendar by Paul, even when writing to Gentile believers, shows the Jewish framework of early Christian life.
9. The metaphor of an 'open door' for ministry opportunity appears also in 2 Corinthians 2:12 and Colossians 4:3. The juxtaposition of great opportunity and many adversaries captures a characteristic Pauline tension — the advance of the gospel generates opposition.
10. The concern that Timothy might face intimidation suggests the Corinthians' contentious spirit could extend to mistreating Paul's delegates. Timothy's mission was mentioned in 4:17. The phrase 'the work of the Lord' (*to ergon kyriou*) elevates Timothy's ministry to the same level as Paul's own.
11. The verb *exouthenēsē* ('despise, treat with contempt') is strong language, suggesting a real risk that the Corinthians might dismiss Timothy due to his youth or because he lacked Paul's authority. Compare 1 Timothy 4:12, 'Let no one despise your youth.'
12. This verse is remarkable for what it reveals about the relationship between Paul and Apollos. Despite the factionalism in Corinth ('I follow Paul... I follow Apollos,' 1:12), Paul actively encourages Apollos to visit. The phrase 'it was not at all his will' (*pantos ouk en thelema*) is ambiguous — it could refer to Apollos's will or God's will. Most interpreters read it as Apollos's personal decision.
13. Four imperatives in rapid succession create a martial rhythm. The verb *andrizesthe* (literally 'act like men, be courageous') echoes the Septuagint of Joshua 1:6-9 and Psalm 31:24 (LXX 30:25). We render it 'act with courage' to capture the semantic force without the gendered idiom. The KJV's 'quit you like men' is archaic.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Joshua 1:6-9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 31:24 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

14. This single sentence summarizes the entire practical section of the letter. After the extended discussion of love in chapter 13, Paul returns to *agapē* as the governing principle for all community life. The placement after the martial imperatives of verse 13 is deliberate — strength and courage must be exercised in love.
15. Stephanas was mentioned in 1:16 as one whom Paul personally baptized. The term *aparchē* ('firstfruits') means they were the first converts in the province of Achaia (southern Greece). Their self-appointed service (*etaxan heautous*) to the saints demonstrates voluntary leadership in the early church.
16. The verb *hypotassēthe* ('submit') here describes voluntary deference to recognized leaders, not hierarchical subordination. The criteria for recognition are service and labor, not office or title — a significant window into early church leadership structures.
17. These three likely carried the Corinthians' letter to Paul (cf. 7:1, 'Now concerning the matters about which you wrote'). The phrase 'made up for your absence' (to *hymeteron hysterēma aneplērōsan*) is diplomatic — their presence compensates for the fact that the whole church could not come.
18. The verb *anepausan* ('refreshed, gave rest to') suggests that the delegation brought not only the letter but also encouraging news or personal comfort to Paul. The imperative *epiginōskete* ('recognize, acknowledge') calls the community to honor faithful servants.
19. Paul uses the formal name 'Prisca' rather than the diminutive 'Priscilla' found in Acts. This couple had previously been in Corinth (Acts 18:2) and now hosted a house church in Ephesus. The phrase *kat' oikon ekklēsia* ('church in their house') is one of the earliest references to the house-church model that characterized Christianity for its first three centuries.
20. The 'holy kiss' (*philēmati hagiō*) was a liturgical practice in the early church (cf. Romans 16:16; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26). It expressed familial bond and unity within the believing community. The adjective 'holy' distinguishes it from an erotic or merely social greeting.
21. Paul takes the pen from his *amanuensis* (secretary) to write the closing personally. This practice authenticated the letter as genuinely from Paul (cf. Galatians 6:11; Colossians 4:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:17). The shift to Paul's own handwriting would have been visually obvious to the original recipients.
22. The Greek *anathema* translates the Hebrew *cherem* — something devoted to God for destruction (cf. Joshua 6:17-18). The Aramaic *marana tha* can be divided two ways: *maran atha* ('our Lord has come') or *marana tha* ('our Lord, come!'). The latter is more likely given the eschatological context and its parallel in Revelation 22:20. This Aramaic phrase preserved in a Greek letter is a remarkable linguistic fossil, demonstrating that the earliest Aramaic-speaking Christians worshipped Jesus as 'Lord' (*maran*) — a divine title.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Joshua 6:17-18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The SBLGNT reads 'the Lord Jesus' without 'Christ,' a shorter reading preferred by the critical text. This grace benediction is Paul's standard letter-closing formula, though its exact wording varies across his letters.
24. This personal declaration of love is unique among Paul's letter closings and is especially striking given the severity of much of this letter. After confronting division, immorality, lawsuits, and doctrinal error, Paul closes not with a final rebuke but with an expression of genuine affection. The SBLGNT omits the 'Amen' found in some manuscripts and in the KJV.

2 Corinthians

1

Summary: *Second Corinthians opens with Paul's standard greeting from Paul and Timothy to the church at Corinth and all the saints in Achaia. Paul then launches into a deeply personal passage about affliction and comfort, recounting severe suffering he experienced in Asia that brought him to the brink of death. He frames this suffering theologically: God comforts the afflicted so they can comfort others, and the God who raises the dead is the one who delivered Paul and will deliver him again. The chapter closes with Paul defending his change of travel plans, insisting his word is not 'yes and no' but grounded in the faithfulness of God, whose promises in Christ are always 'Yes' and 'Amen.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The theological density of verses 19-22 is extraordinary. In defending himself against the charge of fickleness, Paul articulates a profound theology of divine faithfulness: all God's promises find their 'Yes' in Christ, believers say 'Amen' through him, and God has sealed believers with the Holy Spirit as a guarantee (arrabōn). This Trinitarian passage — involving God the Father, Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit — emerges not from systematic theology but from Paul's self-defense. The suffering passage (vv. 3-11) introduces the letter's central paradox: weakness and affliction are the means through which God's power and comfort are displayed.*

Translation Friction: *The exact nature of Paul's affliction in Asia (v. 8) is debated — possibilities include a severe illness, a mob attack (Acts 19:23-41), or imprisonment. We translate the Greek without specifying what Paul himself leaves unspecified. The phrase 'sentence of death' (v. 9, apokrima tou thanatou) is difficult; apokrima may mean 'sentence, verdict, response' and appears only here in the New Testament. The identity of the 'brother' co-author Timothy and his role in the letter's composition is unclear.*

Connections: *The comfort language (paraklēsis) connects to Jesus's Beatitude ('Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted,' Matthew 5:4) and to the Holy Spirit as Paraclete in John 14-16. Paul's near-death experience in Asia connects to the hardship catalogs later in the letter (4:7-12; 6:4-10; 11:23-33). The 'Yes and Amen' passage connects to Revelation 3:14, where Christ is called 'the Amen.' The arrabōn ('guarantee') of the Spirit appears again in 5:5 and Ephesians 1:14.*

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia: ²And from the lord Jesus christ, and grace be to you and peace from God our Father. ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴Who

comforts us in all our suffering, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any trouble, by the comfort by that we ourselves are receives comfort from God. ⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ overflow to us, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. ⁶If we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective as you patiently endure the same sufferings that we also suffer. ⁷And our hope for you is firm, because we know that as you share in the sufferings, so also you share in the comfort. ⁸For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. We were burdened utterly beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life itself. ⁹Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death, so that we would not rely on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. ¹⁰He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. In him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again, ¹¹You also helping together by petition for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of numerous persons thanks may be given by numerous on our behalf. ¹²For this is our boast: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by worldly wisdom but by the grace of God — and especially toward you. ¹³For we are not writing anything to you other than what you can read and understand, and I hope you will fully understand, ¹⁴As as well you possess acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, not even as you as well are ours in the time of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁵And because of this confidence, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace, ¹⁶I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia, then return from Macedonia to you, and have you send me on my way to Judea. ¹⁷Was I being fickle when I intended this? Or do I make my plans according to the flesh, so that with me it is 'Yes, yes' and 'No, no' at the same time? ¹⁸But as God is faithful, our word to you has not been 'Yes' and 'No.' ¹⁹For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you — Silvanus, Timothy, and I — was not 'Yes' and 'No,' but in him it has always been 'Yes.' ²⁰For all the promises of God find their 'Yes' in him. That is why it is through him that we say our 'Amen' to God for his glory. ²¹And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²²Who has as well sealed us, and granted the earnest of the Inner life in our hearts. ²³But I call God as witness against my soul, that it was to spare you that I did not come again to Corinth. ²⁴Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work together for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT reads 'Christ Jesus' (Christou Iēsou) rather than the KJV's 'Jesus Christ,' placing the title first. Timothy is named as co-sender but called 'the brother' (ho adelphos), not co-apostle. The address extends beyond Corinth to 'all Achaia' (the Roman province of southern Greece), suggesting a circular intent.
2. Paul's standard greeting fuses the Greek salutation (chairein, modified to charis, 'grace') with the Hebrew shalom ('peace'). The coordination of 'God our Father' and 'the Lord Jesus Christ' as joint source of grace and peace reflects the high Christology operative in Paul's earliest letters.
3. The opening eulogētos ('blessed') echoes the Jewish berakah (blessing formula) found in Psalms (e.g., Psalm 41:13; 72:18). The twin titles 'Father of mercies' (patēr tōn oiktirmōn) and 'God of all comfort' (theos pasēs paraklēseōs) establish the theological framework for the entire chapter. The noun paraklēsis and its cognates appear ten times in verses 3-7.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 41:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The cascade of paraklēsis vocabulary in this verse creates a deliberate rhetorical effect: comfort received becomes comfort given. The Greek thlipsis ('affliction, tribulation, pressure') carries the literal sense of being crushed or pressed, which Paul will develop through the letter (4:8, 'afflicted in every way but not crushed').
5. The verb perisseuei ('overflows, abounds') creates a proportional equation: suffering and comfort are both measured in terms of overflow. 'The sufferings of Christ' (ta pathēmata tou Christou) likely means sufferings endured for Christ's sake or in union with Christ, not a participation in Christ's atoning suffering.
6. Paul's suffering is not private but vicarious — it serves the Corinthians' comfort and salvation. The participle energoumenēs ('being made effective, working') suggests that comfort produces endurance as an active, dynamic process, not merely passive consolation.
7. The word koinōnoi ('partners, sharers') implies active participation, not mere sympathy. Paul's confidence (elpis bebaia, 'firm hope') rests on the theological principle that participation in suffering guarantees participation in comfort — a pattern that mirrors the death-and-resurrection logic of the gospel.

8. The phrase *kath' hyperbolēn hyper dynamin* ('utterly beyond our strength') piles prepositions to convey extremity. The verb *exaporēthēnai* ('to be utterly at a loss, to despair') is an intensified form found only in Paul. The exact nature of this affliction in the Roman province of Asia remains debated — possibilities include the Ephesian riot (Acts 19), an illness, or imprisonment.
9. The word *apokrima* ('sentence, verdict, response') appears only here in the New Testament. Paul interprets his brush with death teleologically — its purpose (*hina*, 'so that') was to redirect his trust from himself to God. The title 'God who raises the dead' (*tō theō tō egeironti tous nekrous*) echoes the second benediction of the Jewish Amidah prayer, connecting Paul's personal deliverance to the God of resurrection.
10. The threefold repetition of *rhysetai* ('he will deliver') creates a past-present-future framework of divine rescue: God delivered, delivers, and will deliver. This triple temporal structure mirrors Paul's understanding of salvation as already-accomplished, presently-experienced, and not-yet-completed.
11. The compound verb *synpourgoyntōn* ('joining together in helping') emphasizes communal participation in prayer. Paul envisions a theological circuit: many pray, God grants favor (*charisma*), and many give thanks — creating a chain of intercession and gratitude.
12. The word *kauchēsis* ('boast') is a key term in 2 Corinthians, appearing frequently as Paul defends his ministry. The SBLGNT reads *haplotēti* ('simplicity, sincerity') rather than the variant *hagiotēti* ('holiness'). The contrast between 'worldly wisdom' (*sophia sarkikē*) and 'the grace of God' echoes the argument of 1 Corinthians 1-2.
13. There is a wordplay between *anaginōskete* ('read') and *epiginōskete* ('understand, recognize') that cannot be fully captured in English. Paul is responding to accusations of hidden agendas or double-meaning in his letters. His correspondence says exactly what it means.
14. The phrase *apo merous* ('in part, partially') is a candid admission that the Corinthians' understanding of Paul is incomplete. 'The day of the Lord Jesus' refers to the eschatological judgment when all relationships and ministries will be evaluated. Mutual boasting at the final judgment is a remarkable expression of apostolic confidence.
15. The word *charin* ('grace, benefit, gift') here refers to the blessing of an apostolic visit. Paul's original plan was to visit Corinth twice — once on the way to Macedonia and once on the return. This plan changed, prompting the accusations of fickleness that Paul addresses in the following verses.
16. This double-visit plan differs from the single visit described in 1 Corinthians 16:5-7, where Paul planned to come only after passing through Macedonia. The verb *propemphthēnai* ('to be sent on one's way') implies material provision and accompaniment for travel.
17. Paul quotes his critics' accusation: that his changed plans reveal unreliability (*elaphria*, 'lightness, fickleness'). The phrase 'according to the flesh' (*kata sarka*) means making decisions by merely human calculation rather than divine guidance. The rhetorical questions expect negative answers.
18. Paul grounds the reliability of his word in the faithfulness of God (*pistos ho theos*). This is not merely an oath formula but a theological claim: Paul's integrity as an apostle derives from the God who sent him. The shift from defending travel plans to affirming divine faithfulness is characteristic of Paul's theological method.
19. Silvanus (the Latinized form of Silas) was Paul's companion on the founding mission to Corinth (Acts 18:5). The argument moves from Paul's personal reliability to Christ's cosmic reliability: if the message proclaimed is consistently 'Yes,' the messenger cannot be 'Yes and No.' Christ himself is the guarantee of Paul's truthfulness.
20. This verse is one of the most theologically compressed statements in the Pauline corpus. Every divine promise (*epangelia*) reaches its fulfillment ('Yes') in Christ. The Hebrew 'Amen' ('so be it, it is certain') is the believer's response to God's 'Yes' in Christ. The liturgical setting is evident: the congregation says 'Amen' through Christ, and this corporate response glorifies God.
21. There is a wordplay between *Christon* ('Christ, Anointed One') and *chrisas* ('having anointed'). God establishes believers 'into Christ' and 'anoints' them — believers participate in the anointing that defines Christ himself. This verse begins a Trinitarian sequence: God (the Father) anoints, seals, and gives the Spirit.
22. The word *arrabōn* ('guarantee, down payment, pledge') is a commercial term borrowed from Semitic languages (Hebrew 'eravon'), referring to a first installment that guarantees full payment to come. The Holy Spirit is God's down payment on the believer's full inheritance. The sealing (*sphragisamenos*) metaphor draws from the ancient practice of stamping a seal on property to mark ownership.
23. Paul now reveals the real reason for his changed plans: he wanted to spare the Corinthians a painful confrontation. The oath formula 'I call God as witness against my soul' is the most solemn form of self-imprecation available — Paul invokes divine judgment on himself if he is lying. The verb *pheidomenos* ('sparing') reveals pastoral concern behind what appeared to be fickleness.
24. Paul immediately qualifies his authority: sparing them was not an act of domination (*kyrieuomen*, 'lord it over') but of partnership (*synergoi*, 'co-workers, fellow laborers'). The final clause — 'for you stand firm in your faith' — affirms the Corinthians' spiritual maturity even as Paul exercises apostolic care. This balance between authority and partnership runs throughout 2 Corinthians.

2

Summary: *Paul continues explaining his delayed visit: he chose not to come in sorrow but wrote a painful letter instead, so that when he finally arrived, his joy would not be replaced by grief. He urges the Corinthians to forgive and restore the offender who had been disciplined by the majority, lest Satan exploit the situation through excessive punishment. Paul then recounts his journey to Troas, where an open door for the gospel awaited him, but his anxiety over Titus's absence drove him onward to Macedonia. The chapter closes with a magnificent metaphor: God leads believers in a triumphal procession, and through them spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ everywhere — a fragrance of life to those being saved and of death to those perishing.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The triumphal procession imagery (vv. 14-16) draws from the Roman triumphus, in which a conquering general paraded through the streets with incense burning, captives in chains, and soldiers celebrating. Paul casts himself not as the general but as one led in the procession — a captive of Christ. The incense in a Roman triumph signaled life to the victors and death to the condemned captives. Paul applies this dual significance to the gospel itself: the same message that saves some condemns others. The closing rhetorical question, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' introduces the theme of apostolic sufficiency that dominates chapters 3-6.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the offender (v. 5) is much debated. Earlier interpreters identified him with the incestuous man of 1 Corinthians 5, but most modern scholars believe this is a different individual who personally wronged Paul, perhaps during an unrecorded 'painful visit.' The 'letter of tears' (v. 4) is likely a lost letter, distinct from 1 Corinthians. We translate the text without imposing either identification.*

Connections: *The forgiveness passage connects to Jesus's teaching on forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-35) and Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 5. The triumphal procession imagery connects to Colossians 2:15. The 'open door' in Troas echoes 1 Corinthians 16:9. The fragrance metaphor draws on Old Testament incense offerings (Exodus 30:34-38) and anticipates the 'aroma of Christ' language in Ephesians 5:2.*

¹For I made up my mind not to come to you again in sorrow. ²For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? ³And I wrote as I did so that when I came I would not be pained by those who should have made me rejoice, for I am confident about all of you that my joy is the joy of you all. ⁴For I wrote to you out of great affliction and anguish of heart, with many tears — not to cause you pain, but so that you might know the overflowing love I have for you. ⁵Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me but in some measure — not to exaggerate — to all of you. ⁶For such a person, this punishment by the majority is sufficient, ⁷so that contrariwise you anything rather to pardon him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. ⁸So I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. ⁹For this is why I wrote: to test you and to know whether you are obedient in everything. ¹⁰Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven — if there was anything to forgive — I have forgiven in the presence of Christ for your sake, ¹¹Indeed, lest Satan should get an advantage of us — since we are not ignorant of his devices. ¹²When I came to Troas to proclaim the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, ¹³I had no rest in my spirit, because I discovered not Titus my brother — but taking my leave of them, I traveled from thence into Macedonia. ¹⁴But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him in every place. ¹⁵For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing — ¹⁶To the one we are the savour of execution to execution. And to the other the savour of life to life. And who is sufficient for these things? ¹⁷For we are not, like so many, peddlers of the word of God, but as persons of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God, we speak in Christ.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word palin ('again') implies a previous sorrowful visit — this is the so-called 'painful visit' that is not recorded in Acts but is implied throughout 2 Corinthians. Paul's decision was deliberate (ekrina emautō, 'I judged for myself') rather than circumstantial.

2. Paul's reasoning reveals the depth of his emotional bond with the Corinthians: if he grieves them, he grieves his own source of joy. The logic is circular by design — the mutual dependence between apostle and community is the point.
3. The 'letter' Paul refers to is probably the so-called 'severe letter' or 'letter of tears' mentioned in verse 4, not 1 Corinthians itself. Paul's confidence (pepoithōs) that his joy and theirs are identical reveals his assumption of deep spiritual solidarity between apostle and church.
4. This verse gives the emotional background of the lost 'severe letter.' The phrase synochēs kardias ('anguish of heart') pairs psychological distress with the tears to emphasize that the letter was written in love, not anger. Paul's pastoral method combines confrontation with deep affection.
5. Paul deflects the personal offense away from himself and onto the community: the offender has grieved the whole church, not merely Paul. The phrase apo merous ('in part, to some degree') and hina mē epibarō ('so as not to overstate it') show Paul's reluctance to exaggerate the harm.
6. The word epitimia ('punishment, censure') appears only here in the New Testament. The phrase hypo tōn pleionōn ('by the majority') indicates that the disciplinary action was decided by a congregational vote, not unanimously — some may have dissented. Paul considers the punishment adequate and now calls for its end.
7. The verb charisasthai ('to forgive, to show grace') is related to charis ('grace'). The metaphor katapothē ('be swallowed up, overwhelmed') suggests that excessive punishment can destroy the person it was meant to correct. Paul's concern shifts from justice to pastoral care.
8. The verb kyrōsai ('to ratify, confirm, make legally valid') is a legal term — Paul asks the community to formally reinstate the offender through a public act of love, just as they had formally enacted the discipline.
9. The word dokimēn ('tested character, proof') implies that the entire episode — the offense, the letter, the discipline — served as a test of the Corinthians' willingness to follow apostolic guidance. Paul now reveals that their obedience, not just the punishment of the offender, was the goal.
10. The phrase en prosōpō Christou ('in the presence of Christ' or 'in the person of Christ') is striking — Paul's act of forgiveness is performed before Christ as witness, or as Christ's representative. The tentative 'if there was anything to forgive' downplays the personal offense to focus on the community's healing.
11. The verb pleonektēthōmen ('be taken advantage of, be outwitted, be defrauded') suggests that both excessive leniency and excessive severity can serve Satan's purposes. The noēmata ('schemes, designs, thoughts') of Satan include exploiting unforgiveness to divide the community. Paul identifies unresolved church conflict as a strategic opportunity for the adversary.
12. Troas (Alexandria Troas) was a major port city in northwest Asia Minor. The 'open door' metaphor for ministry opportunity echoes 1 Corinthians 16:9. The concessive force — 'even though a door was opened' — makes Paul's departure all the more striking: he left an open door because of his anxiety about Corinth.
13. Paul's anxiety about Titus — whom he had sent to Corinth with the severe letter — was so great that it overrode the missionary opportunity in Troas. This raw emotional disclosure is characteristic of 2 Corinthians. The resolution of this anxiety does not come until 7:5-7, creating a long narrative interruption filled with theological reflection (2:14-7:4).
14. The verb thriambeuonti ('leads in triumphal procession') does not mean 'causes us to triumph' (as the KJV implies) but 'leads us as captives in a victory parade.' In a Roman triumphus, the general led conquered enemies and his own soldiers through the streets while incense burned. Paul is the captive, not the conqueror — Christ is the triumphant general. The fragrance (osmē) of incense in the procession carried different implications for the victors (life, celebration) and the condemned (death).
15. The phrase euōdia Christou ('aroma of Christ') evokes the Old Testament burnt offering that produced a 'pleasing aroma to the LORD' (Genesis 8:21; Leviticus 1:9). The present participles sōzomenois ('being saved') and apollymenois ('perishing') indicate ongoing processes, not settled states — salvation and destruction are presented as present realities being worked out.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 8:21 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 1:9 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The doubling — 'from death to death' and 'from life to life' — intensifies the effect: the gospel does not merely describe death and life but produces them. The rhetorical question 'who is sufficient?' (tis hikanos) is not defeatist but prepares for the answer in 3:5-6: 'our sufficiency is from God.' The word hikanos ('sufficient, adequate, competent') becomes a key term in the following chapters.
17. The verb kapēleuontes ('peddling, hawking, adulterating for profit') is a marketplace term for merchants who diluted wine for extra profit. Paul contrasts himself with traveling teachers who commercialized their message. The triple qualification — 'of sincerity,' 'from God,' 'in the sight of God' — establishes the integrity of his ministry against implicit charges of self-serving rhetoric.

3

Summary: *Paul contrasts the ministry of the old covenant with the ministry of the new covenant. He begins by declaring that the Corinthians themselves are his letter of recommendation, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on stone tablets but on human hearts. Paul then develops an extended midrash on Exodus 34, where Moses veiled his face after encountering God's glory. The ministry of the old covenant, though glorious, was a ministry of death and condemnation written in letters on stone; the ministry of the new covenant, written by the Spirit, is a ministry of righteousness and life with surpassing glory. The veil that covered Moses's face now covers the hearts of those who read the old covenant without Christ, but when anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. The chapter culminates in the declaration that all believers, with unveiled faces, are being transformed into the Lord's image from one degree of glory to another.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's reading of Exodus 34 is one of the most creative and theologically consequential interpretive moves in the New Testament. He transforms Moses's veil from a concealment of fading glory into a metaphor for spiritual blindness that persists wherever the old covenant is read apart from Christ. The statement 'the Lord is the Spirit' (v. 17) is one of the most debated phrases in Pauline theology — it does not collapse the persons of the Trinity but identifies the risen Lord as the one who operates through the Spirit in the new covenant. The final verse (v. 18) presents the Christian life as ongoing transformation (metamorphoumetha, the same word used for the Transfiguration) into Christ's image.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'the Lord is the Spirit' (v. 17) is theologically complex and we render the Greek without systematic-theological paraphrase. Paul's contrast between old and new covenants has historically been used to denigrate Judaism; the text itself contrasts the modes of covenant administration (letter vs. Spirit, stone vs. heart), not the God who stands behind both. The 'fading glory' interpretation of Moses's face (vv. 7, 13) goes beyond the Exodus narrative, which does not say the glory faded — this is Paul's interpretive addition.*

Connections: *The 'tablets of the heart' language echoes Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Ezekiel 36:26-27 (the new covenant and heart-of-flesh promises). The veil imagery connects to Isaiah 25:7 (the shroud over all peoples). The transformation 'from glory to glory' anticipates Romans 8:29 (conformed to the image of the Son) and 1 Corinthians 15:49 (bearing the image of the heavenly man). The Spirit-letter contrast echoes Romans 2:29 and 7:6.*

¹Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? ²You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone, ³Forasmuch as you are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. Not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. ⁴Such is the confidence we have through Christ before God. ⁵Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, ⁶Who as well has fashioned us able ministers of the new testament. Not of the letter, but of the inner life — for the letter killeth, but the inner life gives life. ⁷Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses's face because of its glory, which was being set aside, ⁸How will not the ministration of the spirit be instead glorious? ⁹For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, how much more does the ministry of righteousness overflow with glory! ¹⁰Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. ¹¹For if what was being set aside came through glory, how much more does what remains come in glory! ¹²Since we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, ¹³Not as Moses, which placed a vail over his face, that genuine offspring of Israel could not steadfastly pay attention to the end of that which is abolished:. ¹⁴But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, the same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it removed. ¹⁵Indeed, to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts. ¹⁶But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And we all, with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Letters of recommendation (systatikōn epistolōn) were standard practice in the ancient world for traveling teachers and missionaries. Paul's opponents in Corinth apparently carried such letters; Paul's rhetorical question implies that his relationship with the Corinthians makes such documentation unnecessary.
2. Paul transforms the metaphor: the Corinthian believers themselves are his letter of recommendation, and they are written not on paper but on the apostle's heart. The wordplay between ginōskomenē ('known') and anaginōskomenē ('read') creates an elegant pairing in Greek.
3. The contrast between stone tablets and hearts of flesh directly evokes Ezekiel 36:26 ('I will remove the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh') and Jeremiah 31:33 ('I will write my law on their hearts'). Paul fuses the new covenant prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel with the Sinai narrative to distinguish his ministry from that of Moses. The phrase 'letter of Christ' (epistolē Christou) makes Christ the author and the Corinthians the document.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 36:26 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 31:33 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The word pepoiḥēsis ('confidence, trust') is directed 'through Christ toward God' — Paul's confidence in his ministry is not self-generated but mediated by Christ and directed toward God as its ultimate ground.
5. This answers the question of 2:16, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' The word hikanotēs ('sufficiency, competence, adequacy') is emphatically sourced in God (ek tou theou), not in the apostle's own ability. Paul's ministry operates by divine enablement, not human qualification.
6. The phrase kainēs diathēkēs ('new covenant') directly echoes Jeremiah 31:31 (LXX 38:31). The contrast between gramma ('letter') and pneuma ('Spirit') is not between literal and allegorical interpretation, nor between Old Testament and New, but between the mode of the old covenant (external law that exposes sin and condemns) and the mode of the new (the Spirit who transforms from within). The verb zōopoiei ('gives life, makes alive') is the same used for resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15:22.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 31:31. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Paul calls the Sinai covenant the 'ministry of death' (diakonia tou thanatou) — not because the law is evil, but because when the law encounters human sin, it can only condemn (cf. Romans 7:10). The participle katargoumenēn ('being set aside, being brought to nothing') indicates that the glory of the old covenant was transitory by design, not that it was invalid. Paul is interpreting, not denigrating, the Mosaic ministry.
8. Paul argues from the lesser to the greater (qal vahomer in rabbinic terminology): if the ministry that brought death was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings the Spirit? The logic assumes that both ministries are genuinely glorious — the new does not negate the old but surpasses it.
9. A second qal vahomer argument, now using different terms: 'condemnation' (katakrisis) versus 'righteousness' (dikaioσynē). The verb perisseuei ('overflows, abounds') indicates not merely a comparative but a qualitative superiority of the new covenant's glory.
10. Paul uses a startling paradox: the old covenant's glory is so outshone by the new that it appears gloryless by comparison — like stars that are invisible at sunrise, not because they have ceased to exist, but because a greater light overwhelms them.
11. The contrast is between to katargoumenon ('what is being set aside') and to menon ('what remains, what endures'). The old covenant was temporary by divine design; the new covenant is permanent. Both come in glory, but permanence confers greater glory.
12. The word parrēsia ('boldness, openness, confidence, freedom of speech') is a key political and philosophical term in the Greek world, denoting the citizen's right to speak freely. Paul contrasts his parrēsia with Moses's veil: the new covenant minister speaks openly because the glory he mediates does not fade.
13. Paul's interpretation goes beyond Exodus 34:33-35, where Moses veils his face after speaking with Israel, apparently to shield them from the residual glory. Paul reinterprets the veil's purpose: it prevented Israel from seeing the telos ('end, outcome, goal') of the fading glory. The word telos can mean both 'end' (cessation) and 'goal' (fulfillment), and Paul may intend both — the old covenant's glory was pointing toward Christ as its fulfillment.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 34:33-35 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The verb epōrōthē ('were hardened, were made dull') shifts the veil from Moses's face to the minds of his hearers. Paul transfers the image across time: what happened at Sinai continues 'to this day' whenever the old covenant is read without recognizing Christ as its fulfillment. The phrase palaia diathēkē ('old covenant') is the earliest use of this term for the Hebrew Scriptures, though Paul means the Sinai covenant specifically, not the entire Old Testament.

15. The shift from 'minds' (v. 14) to 'hearts' (kardia) deepens the diagnosis: the problem is not merely intellectual but affects the core of the person. 'Moses' is used by metonymy for the Torah or the entire old covenant scripture read in synagogue.
16. Paul alludes to Exodus 34:34, where Moses removed the veil when he entered the LORD's presence. Paul universalizes this: whenever anyone (not just Moses) turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. The verb *periaireitai* ('is removed') is in the present tense — this is not a future eschatological event but a present reality available to any who turn to Christ.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 34:34. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. This is one of the most debated sentences in Paul. 'The Lord is the Spirit' does not mean that the second and third persons of the Trinity are identical, but that in the experience of the new covenant, the risen Lord encounters believers through the Spirit. The 'Lord' whom Moses approached (Exodus 34:34) is now encountered as 'the Spirit' who transforms. The freedom (*eleutheria*) is freedom from the veil, from the letter that kills, and from condemnation.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 34:34. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verb *katoptrizomenoi* can mean 'beholding as in a mirror' or 'reflecting.' Either sense works: believers see Christ's glory and, in seeing it, are transformed. The verb *metamorphoumetha* ('are being transformed') is the same word used for the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2) and for Romans 12:2. The present tense indicates an ongoing process. The phrase *apo doxēs eis doxan* ('from glory to glory') describes progressive transformation, and the source is identified as *kyriou pneumatos* ('the Lord who is the Spirit').

4

Summary: *Paul continues defending his ministry by insisting on transparency and rejecting shameful, underhanded methods. The gospel is veiled only to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded. Paul proclaims not himself but Christ Jesus as Lord, for the same God who said 'Let light shine out of darkness' has shone in the hearts of believers to give the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Christ. This treasure, however, is held in 'jars of clay,' so that the surpassing power belongs to God, not to the apostles. Paul catalogs his afflictions — pressed but not crushed, struck down but not destroyed — always carrying the death of Jesus in his body so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed. The chapter closes with the contrast between the outer self wasting away and the inner self being renewed daily, and between the momentary lightness of affliction and the eternal weight of glory.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The 'jars of clay' metaphor (v. 7) is one of Paul's most enduring images. Clay pots were the cheapest, most fragile, most disposable containers in the ancient world — they held oil for lamps, stored provisions, and were easily shattered. Paul insists that the fragility of the human vessel is not a liability but the very means by which God's power is displayed. The paradoxes of verses 8-9 ('afflicted but not crushed, perplexed but not despairing, persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed') form one of the great catalogs of apostolic endurance. The closing contrast between momentary affliction and eternal glory (v. 17) uses the language of weight: the 'light' burden of suffering is contrasted with the 'weight' (*baros*) of glory — the Hebrew word for glory (*kavod*) derives from the root meaning 'heavy.'*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'the god of this age' (v. 4) is the only place in the New Testament where Satan is given this title, though the concept appears elsewhere (John 12:31; Ephesians 2:2). Some patristic interpreters took 'god' as a reference to the true God who blinded unbelievers in judgment, but the context strongly favors Satan as the referent. The phrase 'always carrying in the body the death of Jesus' (v. 10) is distinct from Paul's usual 'dying with Christ' language and may refer to the physical toll of apostolic ministry.*

Connections: *The creation-light imagery (v. 6) echoes Genesis 1:3 and Isaiah 9:2. The 'jars of clay' connects to the potter-clay imagery of Isaiah 29:16, 45:9, and Jeremiah 18. The death-life paradox anticipates the extended treatment in chapter 5. The 'eternal weight of glory' echoes the Hebrew *kavod* theology of the Old Testament. The catalog of sufferings connects to the longer lists in 6:4-10 and 11:23-33.*

¹Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy we received, we do not lose heart. ²But we have renounced shameful, hidden things, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the open display of the truth commending ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴In their

case, the god of this age has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For what we proclaim is not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus's sake. ⁶To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of god in the face of Jesus Christ, for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts. ⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay, so that the surpassing power may be of God and not from us. ⁸We are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, ⁹We are hunted down but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down but never destroyed. ¹⁰At all times bearing concerning in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. ¹¹For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus's sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal flesh. ¹²So death is at work in us, but life in you. ¹³Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written — "I believed, and so I spoke" — we also believe, and so we also speak, ¹⁴Being aware that he which raised up the Lord Jesus will raise up us also by Jesus, and will present us with you. ¹⁵For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people, it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. ¹⁶So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For this momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸While we pay attention not at the matters which are seen, but at the matters which are not seen — for the matters which are seen are temporal. But the matters which are not seen are eternal.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *engkakoumen* ('lose heart, become discouraged, grow weary') is the letter's refrain (also in v. 16). Paul's perseverance is grounded not in personal resilience but in divine mercy (*eleēthēmen*, 'we were shown mercy' — a divine passive).
2. The verb *dolountes* ('adulterating, falsifying, corrupting') recalls the 'peddlers' of 2:17 and the wine-merchant metaphor. Paul contrasts hidden deception with open manifestation (*phanērōsis*) — the transparency theme of chapter 3 continues. The phrase 'in the sight of God' (*enōpion tou theou*) places all ministry under divine scrutiny.
3. Paul takes up the veil imagery from chapter 3 and applies it to the gospel itself. The perfect participle *kekalymmenon* ('having been veiled') indicates a settled state. The present participle *apollymenois* ('perishing') echoes 2:15 and indicates an ongoing condition, not a final verdict.
4. The title 'the god of this age' (*ho theos tou aiōnos toutou*) refers to Satan, who exercises a usurped authority over the present evil age. Christ is called 'the image of God' (*eikōn tou theou*), a title with profound theological implications — it echoes Genesis 1:26-27 (humanity made in God's image) and anticipates Colossians 1:15. What was lost in Adam is perfectly realized in Christ.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 1:26-27. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The double self-reference creates a deliberate contrast: Paul does not preach himself (as subject of the message) but presents himself as a servant (*doulos*, 'slave') of the Corinthians. The confession 'Jesus Christ as Lord' (*Iēsou Christon kyriōn*) is the earliest Christian creed (cf. Romans 10:9; Philippians 2:11).
6. Paul connects creation (Genesis 1:3) to conversion: the same God who spoke light into being at creation has illuminated the believer's heart. The phrase 'in the face of Jesus Christ' (*en prosōpō Iēsou Christou*) circles back to Moses's veiled face (3:7, 13) — what was hidden behind Moses's veil is now openly revealed in Christ's face. The chain of genitives ('the light of the knowledge of the glory of God') is theologically dense: God's glory is known and that knowledge illuminates.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 1:3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The 'treasure' (*thēsauros*) is the gospel, the light of verse 6. The 'jars of clay' (*ostrakinois skeuesin*) were the cheapest containers in the ancient world — fragile, disposable, and utterly ordinary. The purpose clause (*hina*) reveals that human fragility is by divine design: the weakness of the vessel makes the power of God unmistakable. This is the thesis statement of 2 Corinthians' theology of weakness.
8. The first pair of paradoxes begins the catalog. The verbs *thlibomenoi* ('pressed, afflicted') and *stenochoroumenoi* ('crushed, hemmed in, confined') share a physical-pressure metaphor — squeezed but not compressed to the breaking point. The second pair uses *aporoumenoi* ('at a loss, perplexed') and *exaporoumenoi* ('utterly at a loss, in despair') — the same root intensified with the prefix *ex-*.
9. The third pair — 'persecuted but not forsaken' (*diōkomenoi all' ouk engkataleipomenoi*) — echoes Psalm 22:1 (LXX 21:2), where the psalmist cries out to a God who has not forsaken him. The fourth — 'struck down but not destroyed' — uses military imagery. Each pair insists on the same point: suffering is real but never final.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 22:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

10. The word *nekrōsin* ('death, dying, putting to death') is stronger than 'dying' — it denotes the state of death itself. Paul's physical body bears the marks of Jesus's death (through persecution and suffering), and this very participation in Christ's death becomes the means through which Christ's resurrection life is manifested. The logic is profoundly incarnational: the gospel is displayed through the apostle's body.
11. Paul restates verse 10 with greater specificity: 'we who are alive' (*hēmeis hoi zōntes*) emphasizes the paradox — they are living people constantly handed over to death. The phrase 'mortal flesh' (*thnētē sarki*) emphasizes the vulnerability of the body through which divine life is displayed.
12. This compressed sentence captures the vicarious logic of apostolic ministry: Paul's dying produces the Corinthians' living. The verb *energeitai* ('is at work, is operative') treats death as an active force, not a passive condition. The exchange — death in the apostle, life in the church — mirrors the pattern of Christ's own death-for-others.
13. Paul quotes Psalm 116:10 (LXX 115:1), a psalm of thanksgiving for deliverance from death. The 'spirit of faith' connects the psalmist's experience to Paul's own: both believed in the midst of suffering and therefore spoke. Faith compels proclamation, not silence.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 116:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The resurrection of Jesus is the ground of Paul's confidence: the same God who raised Jesus will raise his servants. The verb *parastēsei* ('will present, will bring before') suggests a formal presentation before God — the eschatological counterpart to the present suffering. The phrase 'with you' (*syn hymin*) includes the Corinthians in this future hope.
15. Paul envisions a cascade: grace reaches more people, who give more thanks, which increases God's glory. The verb *pleonasasa* ('having increased, having extended') and *perisseuē* ('may overflow, may abound') are both words of surplus and abundance, characteristic of Paul's theology of grace.
16. The refrain 'we do not lose heart' (*ouk engkakoumen*) echoes verse 1, forming an *inclusio*. The contrast between the 'outer person' (*exō anthrōpos*) and the 'inner person' (*esō anthrōpos*) is not a Platonic body-soul dualism but a distinction between the visible, mortal dimension of existence and the Spirit-renewed core that is being transformed (3:18). The phrase 'day by day' (*hēmera kai hēmera*) emphasizes the dailiness of renewal.
17. The phrase *kath' hyperbolēn eis hyperbolēn* ('beyond all measure to beyond all measure') piles superlatives to describe the incomparability of future glory. The word *baros* ('weight, heaviness') is deliberately contrasted with *elaphron* ('light') — affliction is light, but glory is heavy. This is a theological wordplay rooted in the Hebrew *kavod* ('glory'), which derives from the root *kaved* ('heavy'). The verb *katergazetai* ('is producing, is working out') indicates that present suffering actively generates future glory.
18. The paradox of 'looking at what is unseen' is intentional: Paul inverts normal epistemology. The verb *skopountōn* ('looking at, fixing attention on, aiming at') implies deliberate focus, not passive sight. The visible world (suffering, decay, death) is *proskaira* ('temporary, for a season'), while the invisible world (glory, resurrection, God's presence) is *aiōnia* ('eternal'). This is not Platonic idealism but eschatological realism — the unseen things are more real because they endure.

5

Summary: *Paul extends his meditation on mortality and resurrection. He compares the earthly body to a tent that is being dismantled, and the resurrection body to a building from God, eternal in the heavens. While in this body, believers groan — not to be stripped naked (disembodied) but to be clothed with the heavenly dwelling so that mortality is swallowed up by life. God has given the Spirit as a guarantee of this future. Therefore, believers walk by faith, not by sight, and whether at home in the body or away from the body, they aim to please the Lord. Paul then declares that all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. The chapter reaches its theological climax with the proclamation that if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old has passed away, the new has come. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and has entrusted to the apostles the ministry and message of reconciliation. Paul closes with the stunning exchange formula: God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter contains two of the most quoted verses in the Pauline corpus. 'If anyone is in Christ — new creation!' (v. 17) is a declaration so compressed that its syntax is virtually exclamatory; the Greek has no verb, just the predicate 'new creation' (*kainē ktisis*). The reconciliation passage (vv. 18-21) is the fullest statement of atonement theology in Paul's letters, culminating in the 'great exchange' of verse 21 — a verse that has shaped atonement doctrine across every major Christian tradition. The phrase 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself' (v. 19) can be parsed in multiple ways, each with different theological implications, and we render the Greek without forcing a single reading.*

Translation Friction: The tent-and-building metaphor (vv. 1-5) is debated: does the 'building from God' refer to the resurrection body, to an intermediate heavenly state, or to Christ's body (the church)? Paul's language about preferring to be 'away from the body and at home with the Lord' (v. 8) suggests some form of conscious intermediate state, though Paul does not systematize this. The 'judgment seat of Christ' (v. 10) refers to the bēma, the Roman magistrate's tribunal, applied here to Christ as eschatological judge. Verse 21 ('made him to be sin') is among the most theologically dense statements in Scripture; we render the Greek without interpretive paraphrase.

Connections: The tent metaphor connects to the tabernacle language of the Old Testament and to 2 Peter 1:13-14. The 'new creation' declaration echoes Isaiah 43:18-19 and 65:17. The reconciliation theology connects to Romans 5:10-11. The judgment seat of Christ connects to Romans 14:10. The 'great exchange' of verse 21 connects to Isaiah 53 (the suffering servant who bears iniquity) and to Galatians 3:13 (Christ became a curse for us).

¹For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling. ³If so be that being clothed we will not be discovered naked. ⁴For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened — not that we want to be unclothed, but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. ⁵He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. ⁶So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷Since we walk through faith, not by sight. ⁸Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. ¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. But what we are is known to God, and I hope it is also known to your conscience. ¹²We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may have an answer for those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart. ¹³For if we are out of our mind, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For the love of Christ compels us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died. ¹⁵And he died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who died and was raised for them. ¹⁶From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ — new creation! The old has passed away; look, the new has come! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation — ¹⁹The point is this: God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. He did not count people's sins against them, and he entrusted to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word skēnos ('tent') is used in Greek literature for the body as a temporary dwelling. The contrast is between the fragile tent (earthly body) and the permanent building (oikodomē, 'construction, edifice') from God. The adjective acheiropoiēton ('not made with hands') is used elsewhere for the resurrected Christ's body as the new temple (Mark 14:58) and for the heavenly reality behind the earthly tabernacle (Hebrews 9:11, 24).
2. The verb stenazomen ('we groan') is not complaint but the deep yearning of creation itself (Romans 8:22-23). The verb endysasthai ('to put on over, to be clothed upon') suggests putting on the heavenly body over the earthly one — not exchange but overlay, so that mortality is absorbed rather than merely discarded.
3. The fear of being found 'naked' (gymnoi) likely reflects the Jewish hope for bodily resurrection rather than Greek-style disembodied immortality. Paul does not want to be a bodiless soul but to be re-clothed with a resurrection body. Some manuscripts read ekdysamenoi ('having taken off') instead of endysamenoi ('having put on'), which would mean 'even though we have taken off the body, we will not be found naked' — the SBLGNT reads endysamenoi.
4. The phrase katapothē to thnēton hypo tēs zōēs ('mortality may be swallowed up by life') echoes Isaiah 25:8 ('he will swallow up death forever') and anticipates 1 Corinthians 15:54. Paul's hope is not escape from the body but the transformation of the mortal into the immortal — not subtraction but addition.

4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 25:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The verb *katergasamenos* ('having prepared, having fashioned, having worked out') indicates that God has been actively shaping believers for resurrection. The *arrabōn* ('guarantee, down payment') of the Spirit repeats from 1:22 — the Holy Spirit is the first installment of the resurrection life, already operative in the present.
6. The verbs *endēmoutēs* ('being at home, residing') and *ekdēmoumen* ('being away from home, abroad') create a spatial metaphor for the believer's present condition: physically present in the body but not yet in the Lord's immediate presence. This implies a distinction between the present experience of Christ through faith and the future experience of Christ face to face.
7. The word *eidos* ('sight, appearance, visible form') contrasts with *pistis* ('faith, trust'). The present tense *peripatoumen* ('we walk, we conduct our lives') indicates that faith-based living is the ongoing mode of Christian existence in the present age. This is not a deficiency but the divinely appointed mode of the 'already-not yet.'
8. Paul expresses a preference (*eudokoumen mallon*, 'we prefer rather') for departure from the body and presence with the Lord, similar to Philippians 1:23 ('to depart and be with Christ, which is far better'). This verse has been taken as evidence for a conscious intermediate state between death and resurrection, though Paul does not elaborate on its nature.
9. The verb *philotimoumetha* ('we aspire, we make it our ambition, we strive eagerly') carries connotations of honor-seeking — Paul redirects the competitive Corinthian culture toward the goal of pleasing Christ. The either-or construction (*eite... eite*) covers both present earthly life and the post-mortem state: the goal remains constant regardless of location.
10. The *bēma* ('judgment seat, tribunal') was the raised platform where a Roman magistrate sat to render verdicts. Paul applies this image to Christ as eschatological judge. The verb *phanerōthēnai* ('to be made manifest, to be revealed') suggests not merely appearance but exposure — all will be laid bare. The evaluation covers deeds done 'through the body' (*dia tou sōmatos*), emphasizing that embodied life has eternal consequences.
11. The 'fear of the Lord' (*ton phobon tou kyriou*) here is not generalized piety but specific awareness of standing before Christ's judgment seat. The verb *peithomen* ('we persuade') indicates that apostolic ministry is persuasion, not coercion. Paul's transparency before God (*pephanerōmetha*, 'we have been made manifest') and his hope for transparency before the Corinthians' consciences continue the openness theme of 2:17 and 4:2.
12. Paul distinguishes between self-commendation and providing ammunition for the Corinthians' defense of his ministry. The opponents boast 'in face' (*en prosōpō*) — that is, in externals like credentials, eloquence, and physical presence — rather than 'in heart' (*en kardia*). This contrast anticipates the 'fool's boast' of chapters 10-12.
13. The verb *exestēmen* ('we were beside ourselves, we were out of our mind') likely refers to Paul's ecstatic spiritual experiences (cf. 12:1-4), which his opponents may have criticized or questioned. Paul's response is that both his ecstatic moments (directed toward God) and his sober teaching (directed toward the Corinthians) serve legitimate purposes.
14. The verb *synechei* ('constrains, compels, controls, holds together') can mean either 'urges forward' or 'holds in check.' Both senses may be intended: Christ's love both drives Paul forward and prevents him from self-serving ministry. The logic of the atonement statement is participatory: because Christ died for all, all have died in him — his death is their death.
15. The purpose (*hina*) of Christ's death is not merely forgiveness but transformation of the direction of life: from self-oriented to Christ-oriented. The pairing of 'died and was raised' (*apothanōnti kai egerthēnti*) is the irreducible core of the gospel — death without resurrection would be tragedy, not salvation.
16. The phrase *kata sarka* ('according to the flesh') does not mean 'in a physical body' but 'by worldly standards.' Paul is not denying the historical, incarnate Jesus but saying that the categories by which people (including Christ) are evaluated have been transformed by the cross and resurrection. The old criteria — social status, ethnicity, power — are obsolete in the new creation.
17. The Greek has no verb and no article: the exclamatory *kainē ktisis* ('new creation!') is a declaration, not a description. The phrase echoes Isaiah 43:18-19 ('I am doing a new thing') and Isaiah 65:17 ('new heavens and a new earth'). Paul applies cosmic-renewal language to the individual believer 'in Christ' — each conversion is an act of new creation. The perfect tense *parēlthen* ('has passed away') and *gegonen* ('has come into being') indicate that the new creation is an accomplished reality, not merely a future hope.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 43:18-19. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 65:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verb *katallaxantos* ('having reconciled') is an aorist participle indicating a completed action: reconciliation is something God has already accomplished through Christ. The 'ministry of reconciliation' (*diakonia tēs katallagēs*) is both the content of Paul's message and the nature of his vocation. God is consistently the subject — he reconciles; humanity is the object that is reconciled.
19. The Greek word order allows multiple readings: 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world' or 'God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ.' Both are theologically valid; the first emphasizes the incarnation, the second emphasizes the instrumental role of Christ. The phrase *mē logizomenos* ('not counting, not reckoning') uses accounting language — God refuses to enter the world's sins on the ledger. The *logos tēs katallagēs* ('message of reconciliation') is both the gospel content and the apostolic commission.

- 20.** The word *presbeuomen* ('we serve as ambassadors') is a diplomatic term — an ambassador represents the sovereign who sent him and speaks with the sovereign's authority. The appeal 'be reconciled to God' (*katallagēte tō theō*) is in the passive voice: 'let yourselves be reconciled,' 'accept the reconciliation God offers.' God has done the reconciling; the human response is to receive it.
- 21.** This verse is among the most theologically consequential sentences Paul ever wrote. The 'great exchange' operates on a double identification: Christ is made sin (*hamartian epoiēsen* — not 'a sinner' but 'sin' itself), and believers become 'the righteousness of God' (*dikaioynē theou*) in him. The phrase 'knew no sin' (*mē gnōnta hamartian*) affirms Christ's sinlessness. How Christ was 'made sin' has been interpreted as bearing the penalty of sin, becoming a sin offering (the Hebrew *chatta't* means both 'sin' and 'sin offering'), or being identified with sinful humanity. We render the Greek without choosing among these interpretations.

6

Summary: *Paul continues his appeal as God's ambassador, urging the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain. He quotes Isaiah 49:8 about the 'acceptable time' and 'day of salvation,' declaring that now is the favorable time. He then catalogs the marks of his authentic ministry: endurance through afflictions, hardships, sleepless nights, and beatings, as well as the weapons of righteousness. In a series of paradoxes, Paul describes himself as unknown yet well known, dying yet alive, sorrowful yet always rejoicing, poor yet making many rich, having nothing yet possessing everything. He then appeals with open heart for the Corinthians to open their hearts in return. The chapter concludes with a call to separate from unbelievers, citing a catena of Old Testament texts about God's dwelling with his people and the call to holiness.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The hardship catalog (vv. 4-10) is one of the most powerful passages in the Pauline corpus. It moves through three registers: circumstances of suffering (vv. 4-5), qualities of character (vv. 6-7), and paradoxes of existence (vv. 8-10). The final series of antitheses — 'as dying and look, we live; as sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet making many rich; as having nothing yet possessing everything' — is not rhetorical flourish but a theological claim: the cross-shaped life is the pattern of authentic ministry. The Old Testament catena in verses 16-18 weaves together texts from Leviticus, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and 2 Samuel to construct a theology of holy separation grounded in God's covenant presence.*

Translation Friction: *The separation passage (vv. 14-18) has been much debated regarding its context. Many scholars consider it an interpolation from a separate Pauline letter (the 'previous letter' of 1 Corinthians 5:9), since it interrupts the emotional appeal of 6:11-13 that resumes in 7:2. We render the text as it stands in the SBLGNT without rearrangement. The call to 'not be unequally yoked with unbelievers' has been applied to various situations (marriage, business partnerships, religious syncretism); the original context likely addresses participation in pagan temple worship.*

Connections: *The Isaiah 49:8 quotation connects to the Servant Songs and Paul's self-understanding as fulfilling an Isaianic vocation. The hardship catalog connects to the lists in 4:8-9 and 11:23-33. The separation passage echoes Leviticus 26:11-12 (God dwelling among his people), Isaiah 52:11 (departing from uncleanness), Ezekiel 37:27 (the new covenant temple), and 2 Samuel 7:14 (the father-son relationship).*

¹Working together with him, then, we also appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I helped you." Look, now is the favorable time; look, now is the day of salvation! ³We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴However, in all matters approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, ⁵Through beatings, imprisonments, riots, hard work, sleepless nights, and times of fasting; ⁶Indeed, by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by love unfeigned, ⁷By the message of truth, by the authority of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the departed, ⁸By honour and dishonour, by wickedness report and good report — as deceivers, and yet true. ⁹As unknown, and yet well known. As dying, and, take notice, we live. As chastened, and not killed; ¹⁰Indeed, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. As poor, yet making numerous rich. As having nothing, and yet possessing all things. ¹¹We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open. ¹²You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. ¹³In return — I speak as to children — widen your hearts also. ¹⁴Do not be

unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵What harmony is there between Christ and Beliar? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? ¹⁶What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." ¹⁷"Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them," says the Lord, "and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, ¹⁸Will I be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The participle synergountes ('working together') most naturally takes God as the implied partner: Paul is God's co-worker (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:9). To receive grace 'in vain' (eis kenon, 'into emptiness') means to receive it without allowing it to transform one's life. The appeal is urgent: grace demands response.
2. Paul quotes Isaiah 49:8, a passage addressed to the Servant of the LORD. By applying it to the present moment, Paul declares that the prophesied day of salvation has arrived in the gospel era. The emphatic nyn ('now') repeated twice transforms prophetic future into realized present.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 49:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The word proskopēn ('stumbling block, cause of offense, obstacle') indicates Paul's concern that personal conduct could undermine the credibility of the gospel message. The passive mōmēthē ('be blamed, be found fault with') indicates that it is the ministry itself, not merely Paul, that is at stake.
4. The hardship catalog begins with three general terms for suffering: thlipseis ('afflictions, pressures'), anangkais ('hardships, necessities, compulsions'), and stenochōriais ('distresses, tight places'). The word hypomonē ('endurance, patient steadfastness') heads the list as the governing virtue — not mere passive endurance but active perseverance under pressure.
5. The list moves from externally imposed sufferings (beatings, imprisonments, riots) to self-imposed disciplines (labors, sleepless nights, hunger). The word akatastasiais ('riots, disorders, tumults') refers to the social upheaval that followed Paul's preaching. The nēsteiais ('fastings, hunger') may refer to involuntary hunger from poverty rather than voluntary fasting.
6. The list shifts from circumstances of suffering to qualities of character. The inclusion of 'the Holy Spirit' (pneumati hagiō) among personal virtues is striking — the Spirit is not merely a quality Paul exercises but the divine source empowering all the other qualities. The phrase agapē anypokritos ('genuine love, love without hypocrisy') echoes Romans 12:9.
7. The 'weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left' (hoplōn tēs dikaiosynēs tōn dexiōn kai aristerōn) is a military image: the right hand held the offensive weapon (sword), the left held the defensive weapon (shield). Paul is armed for both attack and defense, but his weapons are righteousness, not worldly power.
8. The paradoxes begin. Each pair contrasts how the world perceives the apostle with the deeper reality. 'Impostors' (planoi, 'deceivers, wanderers, misleaders') is the charge leveled against Paul by his opponents; 'true' (alētheis) is the divine verdict. The series moves between external reputation and internal reality.
9. The exclamatory 'and look, we live!' (kai idou zōmen) breaks the rhythmic pattern to express astonishment at survival. The paradox of being 'unknown yet well known' describes Paul's marginal social status (unknown by worldly standards) contrasted with his recognition by God and the churches. 'Punished' (paideuomenoi, 'disciplined, chastened') carries the connotation of parental correction, not merely punitive suffering.
10. The climactic triad reaches its peak: 'having nothing yet possessing everything.' Paul's poverty is real (he worked with his hands, 1 Corinthians 4:12), but his spiritual wealth enriches others. The paradox echoes the Beatitudes and anticipates the description of Christ in 8:9 ('though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor'). The word katechontes ('possessing, holding fast') is stronger than merely 'having' — it implies firm, permanent possession.
11. Paul addresses the Corinthians by name — a rare and emotionally charged gesture in his letters (cf. Galatians 3:1; Philippians 4:15). The 'wide open heart' (peplatyntai, 'has been enlarged, expanded') is a Hebrew idiom for generosity and emotional openness (cf. Psalm 119:32). Paul has held nothing back.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 119:32. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The verb stenochōreisthe ('you are restricted, confined, cramped') creates a spatial metaphor: Paul's heart is wide open (v. 11), but the Corinthians' hearts are cramped. The 'bowels' (splachnois, 'viscera, gut, deepest affections') was the ancient locus of emotion, roughly equivalent to the modern 'heart.' The problem is not Paul's lack of openness but the Corinthians' withholding of affection.
13. The word antimisthian ('return, recompense, fair exchange') frames the request as reciprocity: Paul has opened his heart; now he asks the Corinthians to open theirs. The parenthetical 'as to children' (hōs teknois) reveals the paternal affection underlying the appeal and explains Paul's boldness.

14. The verb heterozygountes ('being yoked with a different kind') alludes to Deuteronomy 22:10, which prohibits yoking an ox and a donkey together. The five rhetorical questions (vv. 14-16) each expect the answer 'none' and establish absolute incompatibility between opposing principles. The context most likely addresses participation in pagan temple practices rather than all social contact with non-believers (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:9-10).
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 22:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. Beliar (or Belial) is a name for Satan found in Jewish intertestamental literature (especially Jubilees and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs). The Hebrew beliya'al ('worthlessness') was used in the Old Testament for wickedness and eventually became a personal name for the chief adversary. The pairing of Christ and Beliar personalizes the cosmic conflict between light and darkness.
16. The declaration 'we are the temple of the living God' (naos theou esmen zōntos) parallels 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19, where the church and the individual body are called God's temple. The quotation combines Leviticus 26:11-12 and Ezekiel 37:27, both covenant-presence texts. The verb emperipatēsō ('I will walk among them') is extraordinarily intimate — God does not merely dwell in the temple but walks about among his people.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 26:12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 37:27. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. Paul quotes Isaiah 52:11, originally addressed to the exiles leaving Babylon. The call to 'go out' and 'be separate' is reapplied to the Corinthian situation: the new exodus is separation from pagan worship and idolatrous practices. The promise 'I will welcome you' (eisdexomai hymas) adds a positive dimension — separation from uncleanness leads to reception by God.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 52:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. This quotation adapts 2 Samuel 7:14 (the Davidic covenant promise, 'I will be his father, and he shall be my son') and universalizes it: the father-child relationship promised to David's heir is now extended to all believers, including 'daughters' (thygateras) — an expansion not in the original text. The title pantokrator ('Almighty, ruler of all') translates the Hebrew Shaddai or Tsevaot and appears primarily in the Septuagint and Revelation.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Samuel 7:14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

7

Summary: Paul resumes the personal appeal interrupted by 6:14-7:1, urging the Corinthians to make room for him in their hearts. He assures them he speaks not to condemn but out of deep affection. Paul then recounts his arrival in Macedonia, where he found no rest until Titus arrived with the good news that the Corinthians had responded to his severe letter with sorrow, longing, and zeal. Paul distinguishes between godly sorrow that produces repentance leading to salvation and worldly sorrow that produces death. The Corinthians' response demonstrated genuine repentance through their earnestness, eagerness, indignation, fear, longing, zeal, and justice. Paul concludes by expressing his complete confidence in the Corinthians and his overflowing joy.

What Makes This Remarkable: Paul's distinction between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow (vv. 9-11) is one of the most pastorally significant passages in his letters. Godly sorrow (kata theon lypē) produces metanoia — a genuine change of mind and direction — that leads to salvation without regret. Worldly sorrow produces death: it is the remorse that spirals into despair rather than transformation. The seven marks of genuine repentance listed in verse 11 (earnestness, eagerness to clear themselves, indignation, fear, longing, zeal, punishment of wrong) form a comprehensive portrait of what true repentance looks like in a community. The resolution of the Titus narrative (begun in 2:13) in verses 5-7 reveals the emotional vulnerability of the apostle in a way that is unmatched in ancient literature.

Translation Friction: The relationship between 7:2 ('Make room for us in your hearts') and 6:13 ('Widen your hearts also') suggests that 6:14-7:1 may interrupt an originally continuous appeal. We render the text as it stands without rearrangement. The identity of the offender (v. 12) remains debated, as in chapter 2.

Connections: The Titus narrative resumes from 2:13 and completes the suspense created there. The godly sorrow passage connects to Jesus's teaching on repentance and Paul's theology of transformation. Paul's comfort in the midst of affliction echoes the comfort theology of 1:3-7. The expression of confidence anticipates the collection appeal in chapters 8-9.

¹Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. ²Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have ruined no one, we have taken advantage of no one. ³I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. ⁴I have great confidence in you; I have great pride in you. I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction. ⁵For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn — conflicts without, fears within. ⁶But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the arrival of Titus, ⁷Not by his coming only, but by the encouragement by which he was comforted in you, when he informed us your earnest desire, your mourning, your passionate concern toward me. So that I rejoiced the more. ⁸For even if I grieved you with my letter, I do not regret it — though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. ⁹As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. ¹⁰For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death. ¹¹For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you — what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment of wrong! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in this matter. ¹²So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God. ¹³Therefore we are comforted. And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. ¹⁴For if I made any boast to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved to be true. ¹⁵And his affection for you is even greater, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. This verse concludes the separation appeal of 6:14-18. The promises (epangelias) are those quoted in 6:16-18 — God's dwelling, fatherhood, and welcome. Holiness is not merely negative (cleansing from defilement) but positive (epitelountes, 'completing, perfecting'). The phrase 'fear of God' (phobō theou) provides the motivational context for holy living.
2. The imperative chōrēsate ('make room, receive, open up') resumes the appeal of 6:11-13. The triple denial — 'wronged no one, ruined no one, taken advantage of no one' — responds to accusations apparently leveled against Paul, perhaps related to the collection for Jerusalem or his exercise of authority.
3. The infinitives synapothanein ('to die together') and syzēn ('to live together') express the totality of Paul's bond with the Corinthians — a bond that encompasses both death and life. This echoes the death-and-life theme that pervades the letter (4:10-12; 5:14-15).
4. Four declarations of abundance: great confidence, great pride, filled with comfort, overflowing with joy. The verb hyperperisseuomai ('I overflow beyond measure') is an intensified form found only here and in Romans 5:20 in the New Testament. The paradox of overflowing joy 'in all our affliction' (epi pasē tē thlipsei) captures the letter's central paradox.
5. This resumes the narrative from 2:13, where Paul left Troas for Macedonia in search of Titus. The phrase 'our flesh had no rest' (oudēman eschēken anesin hē sarx hēmōn) echoes 2:13 ('my spirit had no rest'). The pair 'conflicts without, fears within' (exōthen machai, esōthen phoboi) reveals both external opposition and internal anxiety.
6. The title 'God who comforts the downcast' (ho parakalōn tous tapeinous) echoes the comfort theology of 1:3-4 and draws on Isaiah 49:13. The word tapeinous ('lowly, humble, downcast') describes Paul's emotional state without shame — vulnerability before God is the posture that receives comfort.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 49:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The comfort cascades: God comforts Paul through Titus, who was comforted by the Corinthians. Three responses characterize the Corinthians: longing (epithēsis — deep desire to see Paul), mourning (odymos — grief over the breach), and zeal (zēlos — passionate commitment). This triad demonstrates genuine repentance through relational action.

8. Paul's candor is remarkable: he admits to having initially regretted sending the severe letter (metemelomin, 'I was regretting'), but the Corinthians' positive response has resolved his regret. The temporal qualifier 'for a while' (pros hōran, 'for an hour') indicates that the grief was temporary, not permanent.
9. Paul carefully distinguishes: his joy is not sadistic pleasure in their grief but joy that the grief accomplished its purpose — metanoia ('repentance, change of mind'). The phrase kata theon ('according to God, in a godly manner') qualifies the grief as divinely directed, not merely psychologically painful.
10. This verse presents one of the most important pastoral distinctions in the New Testament. Godly grief (kata theon lypē) is grief aligned with God's purposes that produces genuine transformation. Worldly grief (tou kosmou lypē) is self-focused remorse that leads to despair and death — Judas being the paradigmatic example (Matthew 27:3-5). The adjective ametamelēton ('without regret, not to be regretted') can modify either 'repentance' or 'salvation'; grammatically it most naturally modifies 'repentance.'
11. Seven responses demonstrate genuine repentance: (1) spoudēn ('earnestness, diligence'), (2) apologian ('defense, eagerness to clear themselves'), (3) aganaktēsīn ('indignation' at the wrong), (4) phobon ('fear' of God's judgment or Paul's authority), (5) epipothēsīn ('longing' for Paul), (6) zēlon ('zeal' for righteousness), (7) ekdikēsīn ('punishment, vindication'). The repeated alla ('but also, indeed') creates an escalating rhetorical effect.
12. Paul reveals that the severe letter had a deeper purpose than dealing with the specific offense: it was a test of the Corinthians' loyalty and love. The phrase 'in the sight of God' (enōpion tou theou) raises the relational dynamic to a theological level — the community's response to Paul is ultimately a response to God.
13. The joy multiplies through relational connection: the Corinthians' response comforted Paul, and Titus's joy at their response added even more to Paul's comfort. The verb anapepautai ('has been refreshed, has been given rest') echoes 1 Corinthians 16:18 and indicates that Titus found genuine rest of spirit among the Corinthians.
14. Paul had staked his credibility with Titus by boasting about the Corinthians' character. The Corinthians' positive response vindicated Paul's confidence and proved that his boast was not empty but truthful (alētheia egenēthē, 'proved to be truth').
15. The phrase 'fear and trembling' (meta phobou kai tromou) echoes Philippians 2:12 and indicates reverent seriousness in their reception of Titus as Paul's representative. Titus's deep affection (splanchna, 'gut-level compassion') for the Corinthians grew through the experience of their obedience.
16. The chapter ends on a note of unqualified confidence (tharrō, 'I am confident, I take courage') — remarkable given the tensions evident throughout the letter. This positive conclusion prepares the ground for the collection appeal in chapters 8-9, where Paul will leverage this restored relationship for a concrete act of generosity.

8

Summary: *Paul turns to the collection for the Jerusalem saints, using the Macedonian churches as a model of extraordinary generosity. Despite their severe affliction and extreme poverty, the Macedonians gave beyond their means, begging earnestly for the privilege of participating. Paul urges the Corinthians to excel in this grace as well, reminding them of Jesus Christ's supreme example: though he was rich, for their sake he became poor, so that by his poverty they might become rich. Paul counsels that giving should be proportional — from what one has, not what one does not have — and appeals to the principle of equality, quoting the manna story from Exodus. He commends Titus and two unnamed brothers who will administer the collection with full accountability and transparency.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verse 9 is one of the most theologically loaded single verses in the Pauline corpus: 'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.' This is not merely an appeal to follow Christ's example but a statement about the incarnation itself — Christ's pre-existent divine wealth, his voluntary impoverishment in becoming human, and the spiritual enrichment that results. Paul's fundraising theology is remarkable: he never simply asks for money but always grounds the request in Christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. The principle of 'equality' (isotēs, v. 14) is not communism but reciprocal sharing among communities — those with surplus supply those in need, and the roles may reverse.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'brother famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel' (v. 18) is unknown — Luke, Barnabas, and others have been suggested, but Paul's deliberate anonymity prevents identification. The relationship between chapters 8-9 is debated: some scholars see chapter 9 as a separate letter, others as a continuation. We render the text as continuous.*

Connections: The collection for Jerusalem connects to 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, Romans 15:25-28, and Acts 24:17. The Christ-hymn in verse 9 parallels Philippians 2:6-8 (the self-emptying of Christ). The manna quotation (v. 15) connects to Exodus 16:18. The theme of abundance from poverty echoes 6:10 ('poor yet making many rich').

¹We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, ²In the midst of a severe trial, their overflowing joy and extreme poverty welled up into rich generosity. ³For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, ⁴They urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to God's people. ⁵This they did, not as we hoped, but foremost offered their own selves to the Lord, and to us, by the will of God. ⁶So we urged Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, he should also complete among you this act of grace. ⁷But as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you — see that you excel in this act of grace also. ⁸I say this not as a command, but through the earnestness of others I am testing the genuineness of your love. ⁹That you through his poverty might be rich, for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet because your sakes he became poor. ¹⁰And in this matter I give my judgment: this benefits you, who a year ago started not only to do this work but also to desire it. ¹¹Now finish doing it as well, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. ¹²For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. ¹³For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness ¹⁴However, by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance as well may be a supply since your want — that there may be equality:. ¹⁵As it is written, "Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack." ¹⁶But thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same earnest care for you. ¹⁷For he not only accepted our appeal but, being very earnest, he is going to you of his own accord. ¹⁸With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel. ¹⁹And not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our good will. ²⁰We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, ²¹Providing for honest matters, not only in the sight of the Lord, but as well in the sight of men. ²²And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you. ²³As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit. As for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ. ²⁴So give proof of your love and of our boasting about you to these men, before all the churches.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul frames the Macedonians' generosity as 'the grace of God' (tēn charin tou theou) — their giving is not merely a human achievement but a divine gift. The Macedonian churches include Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea.
2. The paradox is striking: severe affliction + extreme poverty = overflowing generosity. The phrase kata bathous ptōcheia ('rock-bottom poverty') indicates not relative but absolute deprivation. Yet this poverty, combined with 'abundance of joy' (perisseia tēs charas), produced rich generosity (haplotētos, 'generosity, simplicity, single-mindedness').
3. Paul testifies (martyrō) that the Macedonians gave not only up to their capacity (kata dynamin) but beyond it (para dynamin). The key word is authairetoi ('of their own accord, voluntarily') — this was not coerced giving but spontaneous generosity.
4. The Macedonians actually begged to be allowed to give — an inversion of the expected dynamic. The word koinōnian ('partnership, participation, fellowship') indicates that the collection was not mere charity but an act of communion between churches. Paul uses charin ('grace, favor') again for the collection, maintaining its theological dignity.
5. The phrase 'they gave themselves first to the Lord' (heautous edōkan prōton tō kyriō) reveals the theological priority: self-surrender to Christ preceded and motivated their financial generosity. Money follows the person; giving flows from self-giving.
6. Titus had apparently begun organizing the Corinthian collection during a previous visit. Paul now urges him to complete (epitelessē) what was started. Again, the collection is called charin ('grace, act of grace'), not merely a financial transaction.
7. Paul lists five areas where the Corinthians already excel (partly echoing the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 1:5), then adds generosity as a sixth. The SBLGNT reads 'our love for you' (tē ex hēmōn en hymin agapē) rather than 'your love for us.' By framing generosity as excelling (perisseuēte) in grace, Paul makes it a spiritual discipline, not merely a financial obligation.

8. Paul explicitly refuses to command (ou kat' epitagēn) generosity — it must be voluntary or it is not grace. The Macedonians' example serves as the test: will the Corinthians' love prove equally genuine (gnēsion, 'authentic, legitimate, true-born')?
9. This verse is a compressed incarnation-and-atonement Christology. Christ's 'riches' (plousios ōn) refer to his pre-existent divine glory; his 'poverty' (eptōcheusen, 'became a beggar') refers to the incarnation and its culmination in the cross. The 'riches' believers receive are the spiritual blessings of salvation. The entire verse functions as the ultimate paradigm for generosity: if Christ gave up infinite wealth for others' sake, how can his followers withhold their finite resources?
10. Paul distinguishes between gnōmēn ('judgment, opinion, counsel') and epitagēn ('command') from verse 8. He notes that the Corinthians began both the willing (to thelein) and the doing (to poiēsai) a year ago. The fact that willingness preceded action reflects the priority of heart disposition in Paul's theology of giving.
11. The principle is practical: eagerness must be followed through with action. The phrase ek tou echein ('out of what you have') establishes proportionality — Paul asks for completion based on actual means, not impossible standards.
12. This verse establishes a crucial principle of Christian giving: God evaluates the gift by the giver's willingness and means, not by the absolute amount. The word euprosdektos ('acceptable, welcome') indicates divine acceptance. The principle echoes the widow's mite (Mark 12:41-44) and protects the poor from guilt.
13. Paul's principle is not that one group should be impoverished to enrich another. The word isotētos ('equality, fairness, equity') introduces a reciprocal principle that he develops in verse 14.
14. The principle of reciprocity: the Corinthians' material surplus meets Jerusalem's material deficit now; Jerusalem's spiritual riches (cf. Romans 15:27) or future material surplus may meet a Corinthian need later. The isotēs ('fairness, equality') is not mathematical equality but mutual provision within the body of Christ.
15. Paul quotes Exodus 16:18, describing the miraculous equalization of the manna: regardless of how much each Israelite gathered, everyone ended up with exactly what they needed. Paul applies this wilderness provision narrative to the church's economic life — God's people are meant to share so that no one has too much and no one too little.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 16:18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. Paul attributes Titus's concern for the Corinthians to divine action — God 'put' (donti, 'having given') this earnestness into Titus's heart. Even the delegate's motivation is a work of grace.
17. Titus's willingness exceeds the mere acceptance of Paul's request — he goes authairetos ('of his own accord, voluntarily'), the same word used of the Macedonians in verse 3. Genuine generosity is always voluntary.
18. This unnamed brother has been traditionally identified with Luke, Barnabas, Mark, or others — but Paul's deliberate anonymity prevents certainty. The phrase 'whose praise is in the gospel' (hou ho epainos en tō euangeliō) means he is praised for his gospel work throughout all the churches.
19. The verb cheirotoneō ('appointed, elected, chosen by raising hands') indicates that this brother was selected by the churches through a formal process, not merely by Paul's personal preference. Multiple oversight of the collection funds demonstrates accountability — Paul is scrupulous about financial transparency.
20. The word hadrotēti ('generous gift, lavish amount, abundance') indicates the collection was substantial. Paul's caution about blame (mōmēsētai) reflects practical wisdom: handling large sums of money invites suspicion, so Paul ensures multiple trusted delegates are involved.
21. Paul echoes Proverbs 3:4 (LXX), establishing a dual standard of integrity: accountability before God and before people. Financial transparency in ministry is not optional but essential. The verb pronoumen ('we take thought in advance, we aim at, we provide for') indicates deliberate, proactive measures.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 3:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. A second unnamed brother accompanies Titus — also proven through testing (edokimasamen, 'we tested and approved'). The three-person delegation provides full accountability for what was apparently a significant sum.
23. Titus is called koinōnos ('partner') and synergos ('fellow worker'). The brothers are called apostoloi ekklesiōn ('messengers of the churches, apostles of the churches') — the word apostolos here means 'delegate, envoy' rather than carrying the technical sense of the Twelve. The title doxa Christou ('glory of Christ') is remarkable: these brothers are a visible display of Christ's glory.
24. Paul closes the chapter by placing the Corinthians' generosity on a public stage: their response will be visible to all the churches (eis prosōpon tōn ekklesiōn, 'in the face of the churches'). The collection is not a private transaction but a public demonstration of love that validates Paul's boasting about the Corinthians.

9

Summary: *Paul continues his appeal regarding the collection, explaining that he is sending the brothers ahead to Corinth to ensure the gift is ready before Paul arrives with the Macedonians, so that neither Paul nor the Corinthians will be embarrassed. He then develops a theology of generous giving through the agricultural metaphor of sowing and reaping: whoever sows sparingly will reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully. Each person should give as they have decided in their heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. God is able to make all grace abound so that believers always have enough of everything and can abound in every good work. The chapter climaxes with doxology: the collection will produce thanksgiving to God, demonstrate the Corinthians' obedience to the gospel, and bind the churches together in mutual prayer and love. Paul closes with the exclamation, 'Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The phrase 'God loves a cheerful giver' (v. 7) is one of the most widely quoted verses in the Bible, drawn from Proverbs 22:8 (LXX). The Greek hilaros ('cheerful, glad, joyful') is the root of the English 'hilarious' — the giver God delights in is not merely willing but genuinely joyful. Paul's theology of giving is remarkably non-coercive: each person gives 'as they have decided in their heart' (v. 7), and God's grace is the source of both the ability and the willingness to give. The closing exclamation about God's 'indescribable gift' (v. 15) brings the entire collection discourse to a Christological climax — the ultimate gift behind all giving is Christ himself.*

Translation Friction: *Some scholars regard chapter 9 as a separate letter from chapter 8, noting the apparent fresh beginning in 9:1 ('Now it is superfluous for me to write to you'). We render the text as continuous. The phrase 'indescribable gift' (v. 15) is grammatically ambiguous — it could refer to Christ, to the grace of giving, or to the whole economy of salvation. We render the Greek without specifying.*

Connections: *The sowing-reaping imagery connects to Proverbs 11:24-25, Hosea 10:12, and Galatians 6:7-9. The 'cheerful giver' alludes to Proverbs 22:8 (LXX). The abundant provision of God connects to Psalm 112:9 (quoted in v. 9). The collection's role in producing thanksgiving connects to 1:11 and 4:15. The 'indescribable gift' forms an inclusio with 8:9 (the grace of Christ).*

¹Now it is superfluous for me to write to you about the ministry for the saints, ²I know how eager you are to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians. I told them that Achaia was ready a year ago, and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. ³But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you may not prove empty in this matter, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be. ⁴Otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we would be humiliated — to say nothing of you — in this undertaking. ⁵So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance the generous gift you have promised, so that it may be ready as a willing gift, not as an extortion. ⁶The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. ⁷Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. ⁹As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." ¹⁰He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. ¹²For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. ¹³By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your sharing with them and with all, ¹⁴By their petition for you, which long following you for the exceeding grace of God in you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *perisson moi estin* ('it is superfluous, unnecessary, excessive for me') is a rhetorical device (*praeteritio*) — by saying he does not need to write about it, Paul proceeds to write about it at length. The word *diakonia* ('ministry, service') elevates the collection from a mere financial transfer to an act of Christian service.
2. Paul reveals that he used the Corinthians' eagerness to motivate the Macedonians (just as he now uses the Macedonians' generosity to motivate the Corinthians). The verb *ērethisen* ('stirred up, provoked, stimulated') indicates healthy mutual encouragement between churches.
3. Paul is candid about his concern: if the Corinthians are not ready when the Macedonians arrive, his boasting will be exposed as hollow (*kenōthē*, 'be emptied, be made vain'). The advance delegation of Titus and the brothers (8:16-24) serves a practical purpose: to ensure the collection is complete before Paul arrives.
4. The parenthetical 'to say nothing of you' (*hina mē legō hymeis*) is wryly diplomatic — Paul acknowledges that the Corinthians' embarrassment would be even greater than his own. The word *hypostasei* ('undertaking, confidence, substance') can mean 'confident boasting' or 'project/enterprise.'
5. Paul uses *eulogia* ('blessing, generous gift, bounty') for the collection — a word that frames giving as blessing rather than obligation. The contrast between *eulogia* ('blessing, gift') and *pleonexia* ('greed, covetousness, extortion') reveals Paul's concern that the collection not appear coerced. The giving must be a blessing from the heart, not an extraction.
6. The agricultural metaphor of sowing and reaping was proverbial in the ancient world (cf. Proverbs 11:24; Galatians 6:7). The phrase *ep' eulogiais* ('upon blessings, bountifully') literally means 'sowing on the basis of blessings' — generosity produces abundance. The symmetry of the sentence makes the principle self-evident.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 11:24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The verb *proērētai* ('has decided beforehand, has chosen freely') emphasizes deliberate, premeditated generosity. Two negatives frame the motive: *not ek lypēs* ('from grief, reluctantly') and *not ex anangkēs* ('from compulsion, under necessity'). The quotation 'God loves a cheerful giver' draws from Proverbs 22:8 (LXX). The word *hilaros* ('cheerful, glad, joyful') is the root of 'hilarious' — God delights in giving that flows from joy, not obligation.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Proverbs 22:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The fourfold use of 'all/every' (*pasan... panti... pantote... pasan... pan*) emphasizes the comprehensiveness of God's provision. The word *autarkeia* ('sufficiency, self-sufficiency, contentment') was a Stoic virtue — having enough and needing no more. Paul transforms it: believers have *autarkeia* not through detachment but through God's abundant grace, which frees them for generosity.
9. Paul quotes Psalm 112:9 (LXX 111:9), which describes the righteous person's generosity. The verb *eskorpiō* ('scattered, distributed freely') suggests lavish, widespread giving. The 'righteousness' (*dikaioynē*) that 'endures forever' is expressed through generous action — in the Psalm's logic, generosity is righteousness made visible.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 112:9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Paul draws on Isaiah 55:10 and Hosea 10:12, combining the image of God as the one who supplies seed with the promise that he will multiply the harvest. The 'harvest of your righteousness' (*ta genēmata tēs dikaiosynēs hymōn*) connects generosity to righteousness as in the Psalm 112 quotation — giving produces a crop of righteous fruit.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 55:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Hosea 10:12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 112 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The theological circuit completes: God enriches believers so they can be generous, and their generosity produces thanksgiving to God. The word *haplotēta* ('generosity, simplicity, single-mindedness') indicates that enrichment is not for hoarding but for giving. The whole economy runs on grace and returns to God as praise.
12. Paul uses two words for the collection: *diakonia* ('ministry, service') and *leitourgia* ('liturgical service, public duty'). The latter is a cultic term — the collection is an act of worship, not merely philanthropy. It has a double effect: it meets physical needs and produces spiritual thanksgiving.
13. The collection proves the sincerity of the Corinthians' confession (*homologias*). Paul links financial generosity to gospel fidelity: sharing material resources with fellow believers demonstrates that one's confession of Christ is not mere words but lived reality. The phrase *eis autous kai eis pantas* ('toward them and toward all') extends the scope of generosity beyond Jerusalem.
14. The collection creates mutual affection: the Jerusalem saints will pray for the Corinthians and long for them. The relationship is no longer merely donor-to-recipient but sibling-to-sibling, bound together by the 'surpassing grace of God' (*hyperballousan charin tou theou*) that is visible in the Corinthians' generosity.
15. The chapter and the entire collection discourse close with this doxological exclamation. The word *anekdiēgētō* ('indescribable, inexpressible, beyond words') appears only here in the New Testament. The 'gift' (*dōrea*) most likely refers to Christ himself — the gift behind all gifts, the grace that enables all generosity. Paul began the collection appeal with the grace of Christ (8:9) and ends with it here, framing the entire discussion as a response to the supreme gift of God in the gospel.

10

Summary: *The tone of the letter shifts sharply as Paul addresses his opponents directly. He appeals 'by the meekness and gentleness of Christ' but warns that he is prepared to wage spiritual warfare against every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God. Paul's weapons are not worldly but divinely powerful for demolishing strongholds. He responds to the accusation that his letters are weighty but his physical presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible. Paul warns that when he comes in person, his actions will match his letters. He refuses to compare himself with those who commend themselves by their own standards, instead claiming only the territory God has assigned him — which includes Corinth. He closes with the principle that the one who boasts should boast in the Lord, for it is not self-commendation but the Lord's commendation that counts.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The military imagery of verses 3-6 is among the most vivid in Paul's letters. The 'strongholds' (ochyrōmata) he demolishes are not physical fortifications but patterns of thought — arguments, speculations, and 'every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God.' This is intellectual and spiritual warfare, not physical combat, and Paul's weapons are truth and the power of God. The accusation quoted in verse 10 ('his letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account') provides a rare glimpse of how Paul's opponents perceived him — and perhaps of Paul's actual physical appearance and rhetorical style.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship of chapters 10-13 to chapters 1-9 is one of the most debated questions in Pauline scholarship. The sharp change in tone has led many scholars to identify chapters 10-13 as part of the 'severe letter' or a separate letter fragment. We render the text as it stands in the SBLGNT. The identity of Paul's opponents (the 'super-apostles' of 11:5) remains debated — they appear to be Jewish-Christian missionaries who valued eloquence, visions, and physical impressiveness.*

Connections: *The spiritual warfare imagery anticipates Ephesians 6:10-17. The 'meekness and gentleness of Christ' echoes Matthew 11:29. The principle of boasting in the Lord quotes Jeremiah 9:24 (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:31). The territorial language ('the territory God has assigned to us') connects to Paul's apostolic commission in Galatians 2:7-9.*

¹I, Paul, myself appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ — I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away! — ²I ask that when I am present I may not have to show boldness with such confidence as I intend to show against some who regard us as walking according to the flesh. ³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh. ⁴For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, ⁶We are ready to punish every act of disobedience once your own obedience is complete. ⁷Look at what is before your eyes. If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, let him remind himself that just as he belongs to Christ, so also do we. ⁸For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be ashamed. ⁹I do not want to seem as if I am trying to frighten you with my letters. ¹⁰For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account." ¹¹Let such a person understand that what we say by letter when absent, we will do when present. ¹²Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding. ¹³But we will not boast beyond limits, but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even to you. ¹⁴For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you. We were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ. ¹⁵We do not boast beyond limit in the labors of others. But our hope is that as your faith increases, our area of influence among you may be greatly enlarged, ¹⁶To preach the good news in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of matters fashioned ready to our possession. ¹⁷"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." ¹⁸For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The emphatic *autos de egō Paulos* ('I myself, Paul') signals a major shift in tone. Paul quotes his opponents' criticism ironically: they say he is *tapeinos* ('humble, lowly, servile') in person but bold only from a distance. By appealing through 'the meekness and gentleness of Christ' (*prautētōs kai epieikeias tou Christou*), Paul transforms the accusation: his humility in person mirrors Christ's own self-lowering.
2. Paul issues a veiled warning: he prefers not to exercise the bold authority in person that he is willing to use. The charge that Paul walks 'according to the flesh' (*kata sarka*) implies that his opponents see his ministry as driven by human calculation rather than spiritual power.
3. Paul makes a crucial distinction: 'in the flesh' (*en sarki*, the sphere of ordinary human existence) versus 'according to the flesh' (*kata sarka*, by merely human means and standards). Living as a human does not mean fighting as one. The military metaphor *strateuometha* ('we wage war, we serve as soldiers') introduces the extended warfare imagery.
4. The phrase *dynata tō theō* ('powerful for God, divinely powerful, empowered by God') identifies the source of the weapons' effectiveness. The *ochyrōmata* ('strongholds, fortified places') are not physical fortresses but intellectual and spiritual constructions that oppose God's truth. The military language is metaphorical throughout.
5. The military imagery continues: *logismous* ('arguments, reasonings, calculations') and *hypsōma* ('lofty thing, high rampart, pretension') are demolished, and every *noēma* ('thought, scheme, mind') is taken prisoner (*aichmalōtizōntes*, 'taking captive as a prisoner of war'). The warfare is explicitly intellectual and spiritual — the enemy is wrong thinking about God, and the goal is the obedience (*hypakoē*) of every thought to Christ.
6. Paul holds back disciplinary action (*ekdikēsai*, 'to punish, to avenge, to execute justice') until the Corinthians' obedience (*hypakoē*) is complete. This shows pastoral restraint: he gives the community time to self-correct before intervening with apostolic authority.
7. The opening can be read as an imperative ('Look at what is in front of you!') or an indicative ('You look only at the surface'). Either way, Paul challenges the Corinthians' superficial evaluation. His opponents claim special connection to Christ; Paul asserts that his claim is equally valid.
8. Paul defines the purpose of apostolic authority: *eis oikodomēn* ('for building up, for edification') and *ouk eis kathairesin* ('not for tearing down, not for destruction'). The verb *kathairesin* uses the same root as the 'destruction of strongholds' in verse 4 — Paul destroys arguments, not people.
9. Paul acknowledges the perception problem: his forceful letters could be read as mere intimidation (*ekphobein*, 'to terrify, to frighten thoroughly'). He wants his words to be taken seriously but not as bullying.
10. Paul quotes his opponents directly (*phēsin*, 'he/she/one says'). The criticism reveals that Paul's letters were powerful (*bareiai kai ischyrai*, 'heavy and strong'), but his in-person ministry was perceived as physically unimpressive (*asthenēs*, 'weak') and rhetorically poor (*exouthenēmenos*, 'despised, of no account'). This provides a rare window into how Paul appeared to his contemporaries.
11. Paul warns that his in-person actions will match his written words. The dichotomy his opponents exploit (strong in writing, weak in person) will collapse when he arrives. The warning is direct and unqualified.
12. Paul's irony is sharp: his opponents form a closed system of mutual admiration, measuring themselves only against each other. The repeated reflexive pronouns (*heautous... heautois... heautous*) emphasize the circularity. Those who commend themselves (*synistanontōn*) have no external standard — they are 'without understanding' (*ou syniasin*).
13. Paul introduces the concept of a divinely assigned *kanōn* ('rule, measuring rod, standard, territory'). His boasting is not unlimited but bounded by the territory God has apportioned. Corinth falls within that territory — Paul reached them first with the gospel, and his apostolic claim over them is legitimate.
14. The verb *efthasamen* ('we arrived first, we reached') implies chronological priority: Paul was the first to bring the gospel to Corinth (Acts 18). His opponents are latecomers who are building on Paul's foundation — a point he made in 1 Corinthians 3:10.
15. Paul implicitly accuses his opponents of boasting 'in the labors of others' (*en allotriois kopois*) — taking credit for churches they did not found. Paul's own hope is that the Corinthians' growing faith will expand his ability to carry the gospel further, using Corinth as a base.
16. Paul's missionary ambition extends westward — 'the lands beyond you' (*ta hyperekeina hymōn*) likely refers to Spain (cf. Romans 15:24, 28). He refuses to claim credit for territory someone else has evangelized, a principle of missionary ethics that his opponents apparently violate.
17. Paul quotes Jeremiah 9:24 (LXX 9:23), as he did in 1 Corinthians 1:31. The principle reframes all boasting: the only legitimate ground for boasting is what the Lord has done, not personal achievement. This sets the standard against which Paul's 'fool's boast' in chapters 11-12 will be measured.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 9:24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The chapter ends with the fundamental criterion of apostolic legitimacy: *dokimos* ('approved, tested, genuine') comes from the Lord's commendation (*synistēsīn*), not from self-promotion. This single sentence demolishes the opponents' entire project of self-commendation and returns the discussion to its proper ground: divine evaluation.

11

Summary: *Paul begins his 'fool's speech' — a sustained, ironic piece of self-defense in which he adopts the persona of a boasting fool to expose the absurdity of his opponents' credentials. He expresses jealousy for the Corinthians with a divine jealousy, fearing they will be led astray from sincere devotion to Christ. He sarcastically acknowledges the 'super-apostles' and defends his right to financial support while explaining why he chose to preach free of charge. He warns against false apostles who disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, just as Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. The chapter climaxes with an extraordinary catalog of sufferings: five times receiving thirty-nine lashes, three times beaten with rods, once stoned, three shipwrecks, a night and a day adrift at sea, danger from rivers, bandits, his own people, Gentiles, the city, the wilderness, the sea, and false brothers — along with sleeplessness, hunger, cold, and exposure. Beyond all these, Paul bears the daily pressure of his anxiety for all the churches.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The suffering catalog (vv. 23-28) is unparalleled in ancient literature for its combination of scope, specificity, and theological purpose. Paul lists sufferings that go far beyond the Acts narrative — only one of his five floggings and one of his three beatings can be correlated with Acts, meaning most of these events are otherwise unrecorded. The catalog functions as an anti-resume: where his opponents boast of impressive credentials, Paul boasts of the very things that prove his weakness. The ironic framework ('I am speaking as a fool,' v. 23) maintains the paradox throughout — the boast of suffering is simultaneously a refusal to boast in the conventional sense. The Damascus escape (vv. 32-33) is chosen as the climactic story not because it is the most dramatic but because it is the most humiliating: the great apostle fled like a smuggled package.*

Translation Friction: *The 'super-apostles' (hyperlian apostoloi, v. 5) are debated — some identify them with the Jerusalem apostles (Peter, James, John), others with Paul's opponents in Corinth. The context favors the Corinthian opponents. Paul's self-identification as 'unskilled in speech' (v. 6) may be genuine modesty, rhetorical strategy, or sarcastic understatement. The phrase 'another Jesus... a different spirit... a different gospel' (v. 4) suggests the opponents' theology differed significantly from Paul's, though the exact differences are unclear.*

Connections: *The 'divine jealousy' echoes Hosea and the prophetic tradition. Satan disguised as an angel of light connects to Jewish traditions about the fall of Satan. The suffering catalog connects to the shorter lists in 4:8-9 and 6:4-10, and to the imprisonments recorded in Acts. The Damascus escape connects to Acts 9:23-25. The 'anxiety for all the churches' (v. 28) encapsulates Paul's pastoral theology.*

¹I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! ²For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. ³But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. ⁴For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough. ⁵Indeed, I consider that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. ⁶Even if I am unskilled in speaking, I am not so in knowledge; indeed, in every way we have made this plain to you in all things. ⁷Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached God's gospel to you free of charge? ⁸I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. ⁹And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied my need. So I refrained and will refrain from burdening you in any way. ¹⁰As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. ¹¹And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do! ¹²And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. ¹³For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵So it is no surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds. ¹⁶I repeat, let no one think me foolish. But even if you do, accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. ¹⁷What I am saying with this boastful

confidence, I say not as the Lord would but as a fool. ¹⁸Since many boast according to the flesh, I too will boast. ¹⁹For you gladly bear with fools, being wise yourselves! ²⁰For you bear it if someone makes you a slave, or devours you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face. ²¹To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that! But whatever anyone else dares to boast of — I am speaking as a fool — I also dare to boast of that. ²²They are Hebrews? I am too. They are Israelites? So am I. They descend from Abraham? I do as well. ²³Are they servants of Christ? I am talking like a madman — I am a better one: with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. ²⁴Five times I received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. ²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I was adrift at sea. ²⁶In journeyings frequently, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the desert, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brothers and sisters; ²⁷In exhaustion and hardship, in many sleepless nights, going hungry and thirsty, frequently going without food, exposed to cold and lacking adequate clothing. ²⁸And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches. ²⁹Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not indignant? ³⁰If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ³¹The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. ³²At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus in order to seize me, ³³By way of a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word *aphrosynēs* ('foolishness, senselessness') signals the beginning of the 'fool's speech' that runs through chapter 12. Paul adopts the rhetorical convention of the fool's speech (known in the Greco-Roman world) but transforms it: his 'boasting' will consist entirely of weaknesses and sufferings.
2. Paul casts himself as the father who arranged the betrothal between the Corinthian church (the bride) and Christ (the husband). The 'divine jealousy' (*theou zelō*) echoes the LORD's jealousy for Israel in the Old Testament (Exodus 20:5; Deuteronomy 4:24). Paul's concern is that the bride remain faithful to her betrothed until the wedding day.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 20:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 4:24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The allusion to Genesis 3 casts Paul's opponents as serpent-figures who lead the bride astray through deceptive cunning (*panourgia*). The word *haplotētos* ('sincerity, simplicity, single-mindedness') describes the undivided devotion that characterizes faithfulness to one husband.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The irony is biting: the Corinthians tolerate false teachers but are impatient with Paul. The threefold 'another/different' (*allon Iēsoun... pneuma heteron... euangelion heteron*) suggests the opponents' teaching differed substantially from Paul's, though the exact nature of 'another Jesus' is debated.
5. The term *hyperlian apostolōn* ('super-apostles, supreme apostles') is Paul's sarcastic coinage — the prefix *hyper-* ('super, excessive') mocks their inflated self-estimation. Whether these are the Corinthian opponents or the Jerusalem apostles is debated; the context favors the opponents in Corinth.
6. The word *idiōtēs* ('layperson, amateur, unskilled person') was used for someone without professional training. Paul may concede lack of formal rhetorical training while insisting that his knowledge (*gnōsis*) — his grasp of the gospel — is not lacking. The irony is that Paul's letters demonstrate extraordinary rhetorical skill.
7. The rhetorical question drips with irony: Paul's 'sin' was preaching without payment. In the Greco-Roman world, traveling teachers who charged fees were considered more credible; by refusing payment, Paul lowered his social status (*tapeinōn*, 'humbling himself'). His opponents apparently used this against him, suggesting that his free preaching proved he was not a real apostle.
8. The verb *esylēsa* ('I robbed, I plundered') is deliberately provocative military language — Paul 'plundered' other churches (particularly the Macedonians, Philippians 4:15-16) by accepting their financial support while serving Corinth for free. The exaggeration highlights the absurdity of criticizing his free ministry.
9. The verb *katēnarkēsa* ('I was a burden, I was a deadweight') is a vivid word, possibly meaning 'I numbed no one' or 'I was a parasite to no one.' Paul's policy of financial independence from Corinth was deliberate and permanent (*tērēsō*, 'I will continue to keep').

10. Paul swears by the truth of Christ that he will never accept payment from Corinth. The verb *phragēsetai* ('will be blocked, will be silenced, will be stopped up') treats his boast about free ministry as a river that cannot be dammed.
11. The short, punchy question and answer reveal the emotional core beneath the theological argument. Paul's opponents had apparently suggested that his refusal of payment proved he did not love the Corinthians. Paul appeals to God as witness of his love.
12. Paul's free ministry removes his opponents' ability to claim equivalence with him. If they charge fees and Paul does not, they cannot say they work 'on the same terms' (*kathōs kai hēmeis*). Paul's financial policy is a strategic weapon against false apostles.
13. Paul drops the irony and speaks bluntly: his opponents are *pseudapostoloi* ('false apostles') and *ergatai dolioi* ('deceitful workers'). The verb *metaschēmatisomenoi* ('disguising themselves, masquerading') suggests deliberate deception, not mere error. They put on the appearance (*schēma*) of Christ's apostles while serving a different agenda.
14. Paul grounds the opponents' deception in a cosmic pattern: Satan himself practices disguise (*metaschēmatizetai*). The 'angel of light' image may draw on Jewish traditions about Satan's fall from angelic glory (cf. Life of Adam and Eve 9:1). If the master deceiver operates through attractive disguise, his servants will do the same.
15. Paul calls his opponents 'servants of Satan' (*diakonoι autou*) disguised as 'servants of righteousness.' The warning about their end (*telos*) corresponding to their deeds recalls the judgment seat of Christ (5:10) and places the opponents under eschatological judgment.
16. Paul re-establishes the ironic framework: he is about to boast 'as a fool' (*hōs aphrona*). The rhetorical device allows him to engage in self-promotion while simultaneously signaling that such behavior is foolish. The audience is put on notice that what follows is not Paul's normal mode of discourse.
17. The disclaimer *ou kata kyrion* ('not according to the Lord') is remarkable — Paul admits that self-boasting is not Christ's way. Yet the situation requires it: the Corinthians have been so impressed by his opponents' boasting that they need to hear Paul's credentials, even if presenting them feels foolish.
18. Paul matches his opponents' game — they boast 'according to the flesh' (*kata sarka*), by worldly credentials, so Paul will enter the same arena. But his boast, as it unfolds, will consist entirely of weaknesses and sufferings, inverting the entire convention.
19. Sharp irony: if the 'wise' Corinthians can tolerate the foolish boasting of his opponents, surely they can tolerate Paul's. The phrase *phronimoi ontes* ('being wise') echoes 1 Corinthians 4:10, where Paul called the Corinthians 'wise in Christ' with similar sarcasm.
20. Five abuses the Corinthians tolerate from Paul's opponents: enslavement (*katadouloi*), exploitation (*katesthiei*, 'devours, eats up'), theft (*lambanei*, 'takes'), arrogance (*epairetai*, 'exalts himself'), and physical abuse (*derei*, 'strikes, beats'). Whether the face-striking is literal or metaphorical is debated, but the rhetorical effect is clear: the Corinthians tolerate terrible treatment from impressive-looking leaders while rejecting Paul's genuine care.
21. More irony: Paul's 'shame' is that he was 'too weak' to abuse the Corinthians as his opponents do. The verb *ēsthenēkamen* ('we were weak') is the letter's central self-description, used both sarcastically here and sincerely elsewhere. Paul now turns to credentials that he shares with his opponents.
22. The three parallel claims establish ethnic and religious parity with his opponents, who apparently emphasized their Jewish credentials. 'Hebrews' (Hebrew-speaking Jews), 'Israelites' (members of the covenant people), and 'offspring of Abraham' (heirs of the promise) form an ascending scale of theological significance. Paul matches them at every level — but immediately surpasses them in the next verse.
23. Paul escalates from parity ('so am I') to superiority ('I am more,' hyper *egō*) — but his superiority consists entirely of suffering. The word *paraphronōn* ('talking like a madman, out of my mind') intensifies the foolishness motif. The catalog that follows is Paul's anti-resume: more labors, more prisons, more beatings, more brushes with death.
24. The 'forty lashes less one' (*tessarakonta para mian*) was the Jewish punishment prescribed in Deuteronomy 25:3, which set forty as the maximum. Jewish practice stopped at thirty-nine as a safeguard against exceeding the limit. None of these five floggings is recorded in Acts. The punishment indicates that Paul continued to submit to synagogue discipline, maintaining his identity within the Jewish community.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 25:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. Beating with rods was a Roman punishment (Acts 16:22 records one instance at Philippi). The stoning likely refers to the event at Lystra (Acts 14:19). The three shipwrecks predate the one in Acts 27, which occurred after this letter was written. The 'night and a day adrift at sea' (*nuchthēmeron en tō bythō*, literally 'in the deep') is otherwise unrecorded.
26. Eight instances of *kindynois* ('dangers') create a relentless catalog of peril. The dangers come from every direction: natural (rivers, sea), human (bandits, kinsmen, Gentiles), environmental (city, wilderness), and ecclesiastical (false brothers). The inclusion of 'false brothers' (*pseudadelphois*) at the climax of the list suggests that betrayal from within the church was the most painful danger of all.
27. The shift from dramatic dangers to grinding daily deprivation — sleeplessness, hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness (*gymnotēti*, 'inadequate clothing, exposure') — completes the picture. Paul's suffering was not only spectacular but mundane, not only episodic but chronic.
28. The phrase *choris tōn parektos* ('apart from the external things, besides what I have not mentioned') suggests the catalog is not even complete. The *epistasis* ('pressure, attack, concern, crowding upon') and *merimna* ('anxiety, care, worry') describe the weight of pastoral responsibility for multiple churches simultaneously. This verse reveals what Paul considered the heaviest burden: not physical suffering but spiritual care.

- 29.** Two rhetorical questions express Paul's empathetic identification with every member of his churches. When anyone is weak (*asthenei*), Paul feels their weakness. When anyone stumbles (*skandalizetai*), Paul burns with indignation (*pyroumai* — 'I am set on fire') on their behalf. This is not detached pastoral administration but visceral participation in others' suffering.
- 30.** This verse is the thesis statement of Paul's entire fool's speech: his boast consists not of strengths but of weaknesses (*astheneia*). The paradox that governs 2 Corinthians — power made perfect in weakness — finds its definitive expression here.
- 31.** Paul inserts a solemn oath, calling God as witness to the truth of his suffering catalog. The doxological phrase 'blessed forever' (*eulogētos eis tous aiōnas*) resembles the Jewish *berakah* formula and solemnizes the oath. The catalog of sufferings is so extraordinary that it requires divine attestation.
- 32.** King Aretas IV was the Nabataean king (reigned 9 BC - AD 40). The *ethnarchēs* ('governor, ethnarch') was his representative in Damascus. This episode (also in Acts 9:23-25) comes from the very beginning of Paul's ministry. Its placement here, after the grand catalog, seems anticlimactic — which is precisely the point.
- 33.** Paul closes the suffering catalog not with a triumphant deliverance but with an undignified escape — lowered through a window in a *sarganē* ('woven basket, hamper'). The great apostle to the Gentiles began his career being smuggled out of a city like a bundle of goods. This story is the perfect capstone for the fool's boast: Paul's signature moment of escape was simultaneously a moment of humiliation.

12

Summary: *Paul continues his fool's speech with an account of extraordinary visions and revelations, speaking of himself in the third person as 'a man in Christ' who was caught up to the third heaven and heard inexpressible things. To keep him from becoming conceited, a 'thorn in the flesh' was given to him — a messenger of Satan to torment him. Three times Paul pleaded with the Lord for its removal, and the Lord answered: 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Paul embraces this paradox, declaring that he will boast all the more gladly in his weaknesses, for when he is weak, then he is strong. He then defends his apostleship by pointing to the signs, wonders, and mighty works performed among the Corinthians, while reiterating his refusal to burden them financially. He expresses his concern that when he comes, he will find quarreling, jealousy, and unrepentant sin, and that God will humble him before them.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Lord's response to Paul's prayer — 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness' (v. 9) — is the theological heart of 2 Corinthians and arguably of Paul's entire ministry theology. It is one of only a few direct quotations of the risen Christ in the Pauline letters. The paradox that divine power reaches its full expression (*teleitai*, 'is completed, is perfected') specifically through human weakness is not merely a silver lining to suffering but a fundamental principle of how God operates in the world. Paul's response — 'when I am weak, then I am strong' (v. 10) — is the letter's thesis in a single sentence. The vision account (vv. 2-4) is remarkable for its reticence: Paul distances himself from the experience by using the third person, claims not to know whether it was bodily or spiritual, and says nothing about what he heard except that it was 'inexpressible.'*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'thorn in the flesh' (v. 7) has been endlessly debated: chronic illness (eye disease, epilepsy, malaria), a spiritual trial, persecution, or a particular opponent. Paul's language is deliberately vague, using the metaphor *skolops* ('thorn, stake, splinter') and the phrase 'messenger of Satan' (*angelos satana*). We render the Greek without specifying. The 'third heaven' and 'paradise' (vv. 2, 4) reflect Jewish cosmological categories in which multiple heavens exist; Paul uses these terms without explaining them.*

Connections: *The vision of paradise connects to Jewish apocalyptic literature (1 Enoch, Testament of Levi, 2 Baruch). The 'thorn in the flesh' connects to Numbers 33:55 and Ezekiel 28:24 (thorns as instruments of divine testing). The threefold prayer echoes Jesus's threefold prayer in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39-44). The 'signs of an apostle' (v. 12) connect to Romans 15:18-19 and Hebrews 2:4. The power-in-weakness theme reaches back to 1:8-9, 4:7, and 6:4-10.*

¹I must go on boasting. Though there is nothing to be gained by it, I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. ²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. ³And I know that this man was caught up — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows — ⁴How that he was caught up into paradise, and listened to unspeakable words, which it is not permitted for a man

to utter. ⁵On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. ⁶Though if I should wish to boast, I would not be a fool, for I would be speaking the truth; but I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. ⁷So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. ⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. ⁹But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong. ¹¹I have been a fool! You forced me to it, for I ought to have been commended by you. For I was not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. ¹²The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works. ¹³For in what were you less favored than the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong! ¹⁴Here for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you. For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. ¹⁵I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? ¹⁶But granting that I myself did not burden you, I was crafty, you say, and got the better of you by deceit. ¹⁷Did I take advantage of you through any of those I sent to you? ¹⁸I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps? ¹⁹Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved. ²⁰For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish — that perhaps there will be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. ²¹I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul acknowledges the unprofitability of boasting (ou sympheron, 'not beneficial') yet continues, driven by the rhetorical necessity of the fool's speech. The transition from suffering (ch. 11) to visions reveals another arena where Paul can match his opponents — but he will handle even this credential with characteristic self-deprecation.
2. Paul speaks of himself in the third person ('a man in Christ'), creating distance from the experience. The verb harpagenta ('caught up, snatched away') is passive — Paul did not achieve this experience through technique or merit; he was seized by divine power. The 'third heaven' in Jewish cosmology was the highest heaven, the dwelling place of God. The repeated disclaimer 'I do not know... God knows' reflects genuine uncertainty about the nature of the experience and a refusal to claim more than he can verify.
3. The repetition of the disclaimer emphasizes Paul's epistemological humility. Unlike his opponents who presumably boasted about their visions with elaborate detail, Paul refuses to claim knowledge he does not have about the mechanics of the experience.
4. The word paradeisos ('paradise') is a Persian loanword (pairidaeza, 'enclosed garden') used in the LXX for the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8) and in Jewish apocalyptic for the heavenly dwelling of the righteous. The arrēta rēmata ('inexpressible words, unspeakable utterances') are doubly inaccessible: they cannot be expressed (arrēta) and they are not permitted to be spoken (ouk exon). Paul's vision account is remarkable for what it withholds rather than what it reveals.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 2:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Paul maintains the third-person fiction: he will boast about 'that man' (the one who received the vision) but not about himself — except concerning his weaknesses. The distinction is theologically precise: the vision was God's doing and cannot be claimed as Paul's achievement; only his weaknesses are truly 'his own.'
6. Paul could legitimately boast about his visions — it would be truth, not foolishness. But he deliberately restrains himself (pheidomai, 'I spare, I refrain') so that people evaluate him only by what they can observe: his words and actions. He refuses to trade on secret spiritual experiences.
7. The skolops ('thorn, stake, splinter') is one of the most debated words in the Pauline corpus. Its identity has been suggested as a chronic illness, a spiritual affliction, an opponent, or persecution. Paul describes it with two phrases: 'in the flesh' (tē sarki, locating it in his bodily or human experience) and 'a messenger of Satan' (angelos satana, attributing it to demonic agency while recognizing it serves divine purpose). The purpose clause is repeated: 'to keep me from becoming conceited' (hina mē hyperairōmai) — God uses even Satan's torment to accomplish sanctification.

8. The threefold prayer echoes Jesus's threefold prayer in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39, 42, 44). In both cases, the answer is not removal of the suffering but grace to endure it. 'The Lord' (ton kyrion) to whom Paul prays is Christ, as the following verse makes clear — an early witness to prayer directed to the risen Jesus.
9. The perfect tense eirēken ('he has said and it still stands') indicates that Christ's answer is permanently valid, not a one-time response. The verb teleitai ('is made perfect, is completed, reaches its goal') means that divine power achieves its full expression specifically through human weakness — not despite it, not alongside it, but through it. Paul's response transforms suffering into opportunity: he will 'boast all the more gladly' (hēdista mallon) in weakness because weakness is the condition for experiencing Christ's power. The verb episkēnōsē ('may rest upon, may tabernacle upon, may spread a tent over') echoes the shekinah glory — God's dwelling presence — resting on the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35).
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 40:34-35. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The verb eudokō ('I am content, I delight, I take pleasure') does not describe masochism but the settled conviction that weakness is the arena of divine power. The final sentence — hotan gar asthenō, tote dynatos eimi ('for when I am weak, then I am strong') — is the thesis of the entire letter compressed into eight Greek words. It is the definitive Pauline paradox.
11. Paul closes the fool's speech by blaming the Corinthians for making it necessary — they should have been defending him instead of requiring him to defend himself. The phrase 'even though I am nothing' (ei kai ouden eimi) is both genuine humility and ironic understatement: Paul has just demonstrated superiority to the 'super-apostles' in every relevant category.
12. Paul mentions 'signs of an apostle' (sēmeia tou apostolou) as a recognized category — the Corinthians knew what authenticated an apostle. The triad sēmeiois te kai terasin kai dynamessin ('signs and wonders and mighty works') is a standard biblical formula for miracles (cf. Acts 2:22; Romans 15:19). Yet Paul places 'utmost patience' (pasē hypomonē) first, suggesting that endurance under suffering is the primary apostolic credential, not miraculous power.
13. Devastating irony: the only way the Corinthians were 'less favored' than other churches was that Paul did not take their money. 'Forgive me this wrong!' (charisasthe moi tēn adikian tautēn) is sarcasm at its most cutting — Paul's refusal to be a financial burden is cast as an 'injustice' requiring forgiveness.
14. The phrase 'I seek not what is yours but you' (ou zētō ta hymōn alla hymas) is one of the most beautiful expressions of pastoral love in the New Testament. Paul wants the Corinthians themselves, not their money. The parent-child analogy is apt: as their spiritual father (1 Corinthians 4:15), Paul provides for his children, not the reverse.
15. The verbs dapanēsō ('I will spend') and ekdapanēthēsomai ('I will be utterly spent, I will be completely exhausted') move from active to passive, from spending resources to being spent as a resource. Paul offers himself as an expendable commodity for the Corinthians' benefit. The closing question is poignant: greater love receives less love in return — the disproportionate economy of pastoral care.
16. Paul quotes another accusation: even if he did not accept payment directly, he was 'crafty' (panourgōs) and got money through deception — perhaps through the collection for Jerusalem. Paul's sarcastic tone indicates he is repeating slander, not confessing to it.
17. Paul challenges the accusation with a specific question: can the Corinthians name a single delegate of Paul's who exploited them? The verb epleonektēsa ('took advantage of, defrauded') is the same used in 7:2.
18. Paul cites Titus as a specific test case: the Corinthians can verify that Titus conducted himself with the same integrity as Paul. The rhetorical questions expect the answer 'No, he did not take advantage' and 'Yes, you acted the same way.' Paul's delegates replicate his character.
19. Paul corrects a misperception: his fool's speech was not self-defense (apologia) but was spoken 'in the sight of God' (katenanti theou) for the Corinthians' edification (oikodomēs, 'building up'). Everything Paul has said serves not his reputation but their spiritual growth. The address 'beloved' (agapētoi) reminds them of the relational warmth beneath the sharp rhetoric.
20. Paul lists eight vices he fears finding in Corinth — a catalog of relational sins that destroy community. The fear is mutual: Paul may not find the Corinthians as he wishes, and they may encounter a Paul they do not want (i.e., a disciplinarian). Many of these vices echo the problems already addressed in 1 Corinthians.
21. Paul's deepest fear is that unrepentant sin will force a painful confrontation. The triad akatharsia ('impurity'), porneia ('sexual immorality'), and aselgeia ('sensuality, debauchery') describes the sexual sins that were endemic in Corinthian culture and had apparently persisted in the church. The verb penthēsō ('I will mourn, I will grieve') shows that Paul's response to sin in the community is grief, not anger — the pastoral heart behind the apostolic authority.

13

Summary: *Paul prepares for his third visit to Corinth, warning that he will not spare the unrepentant. He cites the Old Testament requirement of two or three witnesses and warns those who have sinned that when he comes he will not be lenient. He challenges the Corinthians to examine themselves to see whether they are in the faith, pointing out that Christ speaks through him — the same Christ who was crucified in weakness but lives by the power of God. Paul prays that they will do what is right so that he will not need to use his authority severely. The letter closes with final exhortations to restore relationships, agree with one another, and live in peace. The benediction that concludes the letter — 'The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all' — is the fullest Trinitarian formula in the Pauline corpus and has become the most widely used blessing in Christian worship.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The closing benediction (v. 14) is one of the most theologically significant sentences in the New Testament. It names all three persons of the Trinity in a single blessing formula: the grace of Christ, the love of God (the Father), and the fellowship (koinōnia) of the Holy Spirit. This is not a later credal formulation imposed on Paul but an early, pre-systematic expression of the church's experience of the triune God. The order — Christ first, then the Father, then the Spirit — reflects Paul's experiential starting point: believers encounter God's love through Christ's grace, and this encounter is made real by the Spirit's fellowship. The earlier paradox in verse 4 ('crucified in weakness... lives by the power of God') encapsulates the entire letter's theology in a single sentence about Christ.*

Translation Friction: *The 'two or three witnesses' citation (v. 1) from Deuteronomy 19:15 may refer to Paul's three visits (each visit being a 'witness' against the offenders) or to the standard legal requirement for church discipline. The phrase 'Christ is not weak in dealing with you but is powerful among you' (v. 3) could be heard as a threat of disciplinary action through apostolic authority, or as a statement about Christ's ongoing presence and power in the community. We render the Greek without privileging either reading.*

Connections: *The two-or-three-witnesses principle connects to Deuteronomy 19:15, Matthew 18:16, and 1 Timothy 5:19. The 'crucified in weakness / lives by the power of God' formulation connects to Romans 1:4, 1 Corinthians 1:23-25, and Philippians 2:7-8. The self-examination call echoes 1 Corinthians 11:28. The Trinitarian benediction connects to Matthew 28:19 and the later development of Trinitarian theology in the early councils.*

1This is the third time I am coming to you. "Every charge must be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses." 2I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not spare them — 3since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you but is powerful among you. 4For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God. 5Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you fail to meet the test! 6I hope you will find out that we have not failed the test. 7But we pray to God that you may not do wrong — not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, even though we may seem to have failed. 8For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. 9For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. Your restoration is what we pray for. 10For this reason I write these things while I am away from you, so that when I come I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down. 11Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 12Welcome one another with a sacred embrace. 13All the saints greet you. 14The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 19:15, the legal requirement for establishing a charge. The application may be that each of Paul's three visits constitutes a 'witness' against the unrepentant — the first visit founded the church, the second ('painful visit') confronted the offense, and the third will bring judgment if necessary.

1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 19:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The phrase *ou pheisomai* ('I will not spare') is the same verb used in 1:23, where Paul explained his delayed visit was 'to spare' the Corinthians. The time for sparing is ending; if repentance has not occurred by the time he arrives, Paul will exercise apostolic discipline.
3. The Corinthians demanded proof (*dokimēn*) that Christ speaks through Paul. Paul's response is that Christ's power among them — seen in the gospel that transformed their lives and the signs that accompanied Paul's ministry — is that proof. The contrast between 'not weak' (*ouk asthenei*) and 'powerful' (*dynatei*) anticipates the next verse's paradox.
4. This verse is the Christological key to the entire letter. Christ's crucifixion was an act of weakness (*ex astheneias*) — the most helpless, degrading death imaginable. Yet from that weakness, he lives by the power of God (*ek dynamēōs theou*). Paul applies the same pattern to himself: his weakness mirrors Christ's crucifixion, and the power he exercises mirrors Christ's resurrection life. The cross-resurrection pattern is the template for apostolic ministry.
5. Paul redirects the demand for proof: instead of testing Paul, the Corinthians should test themselves (*heautous peirazete... heautous dokimazete*). The test is whether Christ is 'in' them — a statement of the mystical union that defines Christian existence. The word *adokimoi* ('failing the test, disapproved, disqualified') is the negative of *dokimos* ('approved, tested'), used in verse 3 for the proof they sought from Paul.
6. Paul expresses confidence (*elpizō*, 'I hope') that the Corinthians will recognize that he is not *adokimos* ('disqualified'). The logic is circular by design: if Christ is in the Corinthians (v. 5), and Paul brought them Christ, then Paul cannot be a fraud.
7. Paul's prayer reveals his deepest pastoral priority: he wants the Corinthians to do right, even if it means Paul looks bad. If they repent before he arrives, he will not need to exercise discipline — which means he will not get the chance to 'prove' his authority. He is willing to appear *adokimos* ('failed, disqualified') as long as the Corinthians are doing *kalon* ('what is good, what is right').
8. This deceptively simple sentence contains a profound claim about apostolic authority: it operates within boundaries set by truth itself. Paul's power is not arbitrary but bound to the truth of the gospel. He cannot act against the truth even if he wanted to — apostolic authority serves truth, not the reverse.
9. The final occurrence of the weakness-strength paradox in the letter: Paul rejoices when he is weak and the Corinthians are strong. The word *katartisin* ('restoration, mending, making complete') is related to the verb *katartizō* used for mending fishing nets (Matthew 4:21) and for setting a broken bone. Paul wants the Corinthian community healed and whole.
10. The purpose of this entire severe section (chs. 10-13) is restated: Paul writes firmly now so that he will not have to act firmly later. His authority (*exousia*) is for *oikodomēn* ('building up, edification'), not *kathairesin* ('tearing down, destruction') — the same distinction made in 10:8. The letter is an instrument of pastoral care, not punitive power.
11. Five imperatives close the letter: *chairete* ('rejoice' or 'farewell'), *katartizesthe* ('restore yourselves, be mended'), *parakaleisthe* ('comfort one another, encourage one another'), *to auto phroneite* ('think the same thing, be of one mind'), *eirēneuete* ('live in peace'). The promise attached is conditional in form: do these things, and 'the God of love and peace will be with you.' The title 'God of love and peace' is unique to this verse.
12. The 'holy kiss' (*hagiō philēmati*) is the standard early Christian liturgical greeting (cf. Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:26). It expressed familial bond and spiritual unity within the believing community, distinguishing itself from merely social or erotic greetings by the qualifier 'holy.'
13. The greeting from 'all the saints' (*hoi hagioi pantes*) encompasses the entire believing community from which Paul writes, connecting the Corinthians to the wider body of Christ. The universal scope ('all') emphasizes that the Corinthians are not isolated but part of a network of churches united in faith.
14. This is the fullest Trinitarian benediction in the New Testament and has become the most widely used liturgical blessing in Christian worship. Three divine persons are named with three distinct gifts: grace (*charis*) from Christ, love (*agapē*) from God the Father, and fellowship (*koinōnia*) from the Holy Spirit. The order — Christ, Father, Spirit — is unusual (Matthew 28:19 has Father, Son, Spirit) and reflects Paul's experiential starting point: believers first encounter Christ's grace, through which they know the Father's love, and this becomes real in the Spirit's fellowship. The SBLGNT omits the 'Amen' found in the KJV and some manuscripts.

Galatians

1

Summary: *Galatians 1 opens with Paul's apostolic greeting, immediately asserting that his commission comes from Jesus Christ and God the Father, not from any human authority. After a brief doxology, Paul expresses astonishment that the Galatian churches are so quickly abandoning the gospel he preached to them in favor of a distorted version. He pronounces a double curse on anyone — even an angel from heaven — who preaches a different gospel. Paul then defends his apostolic authority by narrating his personal history: his former life as a persecutor of the church, his dramatic call through divine revelation, his years in Arabia and Damascus, and his eventual brief visit to Jerusalem where he met only Peter and James.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The letter lacks Paul's customary thanksgiving section — he moves directly from greeting to rebuke, signaling the urgency of the crisis. The double anathema formula (vv. 8-9) is the strongest language Paul uses in any letter. His autobiographical defense establishes a pattern that dominates the first two chapters: the gospel he preaches was not received from humans but through a direct revelation of Jesus Christ. The Greek apokalypsis ('revelation, unveiling') in verse 12 is the same word used for apocalyptic disclosure — Paul's encounter with Christ was not instruction but unveiling.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'agitators' promoting a different gospel is debated — they likely advocated circumcision and Torah observance for Gentile believers (as clarified in later chapters). Paul's claim to have received his gospel independently of the Jerusalem apostles creates tension with Acts' account of his conversion and early ministry. We render the Greek as given without harmonizing. The phrase 'the churches of Galatia' leaves unresolved whether these are in north or south Galatia — the so-called North Galatian and South Galatian hypotheses.*

Connections: *Paul's call narrative echoes the prophetic call patterns of Jeremiah 1:5 ('before I formed you in the womb') and Isaiah 49:1 ('called me from my mother's womb'). The curse formula connects to Deuteronomy 27:15-26. The revelation of the Son 'in me' (en emoi, v. 16) connects to Paul's 'Christ in me' theology developed fully in 2:20.*

¹Paul, an apostle — not sent from human authority nor commissioned by any human being, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead — ²All the brothers and sisters which are with me, to the churches of Galatia:. ³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴Who offered himself for our wrongdoings, that he may deliver us from this present wicked age, according to the will of God and our Father:. ⁵To him be glory through all the

ages. Amen. ⁶I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and turning to a different gospel — ⁷Not that there really is another gospel — it is simply that certain people are troubling you and trying to distort the good news about Christ. ⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be cursed. ⁹As we have said before, so now I say again: if anyone is proclaiming to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be cursed. ¹⁰Am I now seeking human approval, or God's? Am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ. ¹¹For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I proclaimed is not of human origin. ¹²For I did not receive it from any human source, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³For you have heard about my former way of life in Judaism — how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my people, being far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. ¹⁵But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through his grace, was pleased ¹⁶To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him in the midst of the heathen. Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: ¹⁷Neither traveled I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles prior to me. But I traveled into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. ¹⁸Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days. ¹⁹I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother. ²⁰Now regarding what I am writing to you — before God, I am not lying. ²¹Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. ²²I was still personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. ²³They only kept hearing, "The one who once persecuted us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy." ²⁴And they glorified God because of me.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul's double negation (ouk ap' anthropon oude di' anthropou) distinguishes both the source and the agent of his apostleship. The preposition apo ('from') denies human origin; dia ('through') denies human mediation. This opening salvo establishes the letter's central argument: Paul's gospel and authority derive directly from God, not from Jerusalem or any human chain of authorization.
1. The participial clause 'who raised him from the dead' (tou egeirantos auton ek nekron) is not incidental — it anchors Paul's apostleship in the resurrection, the same event that commissioned him on the Damascus road.
2. The Greek adelphoi is grammatically masculine plural but functioned as an inclusive term for the community of believers. We render 'brothers and sisters' to reflect the inclusive reference. The plural 'churches' (ekklēsiai) indicates this is a circular letter addressed to multiple congregations in the region of Galatia.
3. Paul's standard greeting combines the Greek charis ('grace') with the Hebrew-rooted eirēnē ('peace,' translating shalom). The single preposition apo ('from') governs both 'God our Father' and 'the Lord Jesus Christ,' placing them in a coordinate relationship as the joint source of grace and peace.
4. The Greek aionos tou enestotos ponerou ('the present evil age') reflects Jewish apocalyptic theology that divides history into 'this age' and 'the age to come.' Paul's word is aiōn ('age'), not kosmos ('world') — the emphasis is temporal, not spatial. The rescue is from a corrupt era, not escape from the physical world.
4. The verb exelētai ('rescue, deliver') is in the middle voice, suggesting Christ's active, personal involvement in the deliverance. The phrase 'according to the will of God' grounds the entire saving act in divine initiative.
5. The doxology eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn ('unto the ages of the ages') is a Hebraism intensifying the concept of eternity — literally 'to the ages of ages.' This formula is standard in Pauline doxologies but unusual this early in a letter. Paul typically places his doxology later; its early placement here may reflect the gravity of the situation — he pauses to anchor his rebuke in worship before proceeding.
6. The verb metatitheske ('you are turning, deserting') is present tense, indicating the defection is in progress, not yet complete. The same verb was used for political or military defection — switching allegiance. Paul frames the Galatians' shift not as a theological adjustment but as treason against the one who called them.
6. The absence of a thanksgiving section (standard in Paul's other letters) is itself a rhetorical statement — Paul is too alarmed for pleasantries.
7. Paul plays on two Greek words for 'other': heteron ('different in kind,' v. 6) and allo ('another of the same kind,' v. 7). The so-called 'other gospel' is not actually a gospel at all — it is a distortion (metastrepsai, 'to turn around, reverse, pervert'). The verb tarassontes ('disturbing, agitating') was used for stirring up sedition; these unnamed opponents are creating upheaval in the community.
8. The Greek anathema ('cursed, devoted to destruction') corresponds to the Hebrew cherem — something placed under a ban, devoted to God for destruction. This is not mere disapproval but a solemn invocation of divine judgment. Paul includes himself ('we') in the hypothetical, establishing that the gospel's authority transcends even apostolic persons. The conditional ean with the subjunctive presents this as a real possibility, not an absurd hypothetical.

9. The repetition transforms the conditional warning into a direct verdict. The shift from 'we' to 'I' (legō) makes the pronouncement personal and authoritative. The verb *parelabete* ('you received') is a technical term for receiving tradition — the Galatians received a specific, defined gospel, and deviation from it is not progress but apostasy.
10. The rhetorical questions respond to an apparent accusation that Paul was a people-pleaser who tailored his message to gain approval. The word *doulos* ('servant, slave') carries its full force — Paul is Christ's slave, not a freelance diplomat. The adverb *eti* ('still') implies Paul once did seek human approval (in his former life as a Pharisee, perhaps), but that era is over.
11. The phrase *kata anthrōpon* ('according to a human standard') denies that Paul's gospel conforms to any human pattern or was generated by human reasoning. This verse introduces the autobiographical defense that runs through 2:14 — Paul will demonstrate the divine origin of his gospel by tracing his own story.
12. The genitive *Iēsou Christou* ('of Jesus Christ') is ambiguous — it could be objective ('a revelation about Jesus Christ') or subjective ('a revelation given by Jesus Christ'). Both senses may be intended: Christ was both the content and the agent of the revelation. The Greek *apokalypsis* ('unveiling, disclosure') denotes a direct divine disclosure, not gradual learning or instruction.
13. The Greek *anastrophē* ('way of life, conduct') is rendered 'conversation' in the KJV using the word's older English meaning. The phrase *kath' hyperbolēn* ('beyond measure, to an extraordinary degree') intensifies the verb — Paul's persecution was not casual but extreme. The imperfect tenses (*ediōkon*, *eporthoun*) indicate sustained, repeated action: 'I kept persecuting... I kept trying to destroy.'
14. The verb *proekopton* ('was advancing, making progress') was used for cutting a path forward — Paul was outpacing his peers. The word *zēlōtēs* ('zealot, one burning with zeal') echoes the Maccabean tradition of violent zeal for the Torah. Paul's pre-conversion identity was defined by aggressive devotion to ancestral tradition (*patrikōn paradoseōn*), which he now reinterprets through the lens of divine call.
15. The language directly echoes prophetic call narratives: 'set apart from my mother's womb' parallels Jeremiah 1:5 ('Before I formed you in the womb I knew you') and Isaiah 49:1 ('The LORD called me from the womb'). Paul interprets his entire life — including the persecution years — as part of a divine plan that predated his birth. The verb *aphorisas* ('having set apart') is related to *Pharisaios* ('Pharisee,' meaning 'separated one'), creating an ironic wordplay: God's separation of Paul preceded and superseded his self-separation as a Pharisee.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 1:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 49:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The phrase *en emoi* ('in me') rather than the expected 'to me' (*moi*) is striking — the revelation was not merely informational but internal and transformative. The Greek *ethnesin* ('nations, Gentiles') indicates that Paul's commission to the Gentiles was simultaneous with his call, not a later development. The idiom *sarki kai haimati* ('flesh and blood') means mortal humans — Paul did not seek human validation of his divine encounter.
17. The verb *anēlthon* ('went up') reflects Jerusalem's geographic and theological elevation — one always 'goes up' to Jerusalem. Paul's point is that he deliberately avoided the apostolic headquarters. 'Arabia' likely refers to the Nabatean kingdom east of Damascus, not necessarily the Arabian Peninsula. Paul's time in Arabia is unrecorded in Acts and its purpose is debated — possibly for reflection, possibly for early mission work.
18. The verb *historēsai* is significant — it means 'to inquire of, to get to know, to visit for the purpose of learning about someone.' It implies a purposeful visit to learn from Peter, but not to receive authorization. Paul uses the Aramaic name *Kēphas* (Cephas) rather than the Greek *Petros* (Peter), possibly reflecting the name's original use in the Jerusalem community. The fifteen-day visit is too brief for systematic instruction — Paul is arguing for independence, not dependence.
19. James (*Iakōbos*) is identified as 'the brother of the Lord' (*ton adelphon tou kyriou*), distinguishing him from James the son of Zebedee. Whether *adelphos* here means full brother, half-brother, or kinsman is debated across Christian traditions. Paul's limited contact — only Peter and James — reinforces his independence from the Jerusalem leadership. The phrase may also imply that James held apostolic status, though he was not one of the Twelve.
20. The solemn oath formula *enōpion tou theou* ('before God') invokes God as witness. That Paul feels compelled to swear he is telling the truth suggests the Galatians have heard a conflicting account of his early history — perhaps from the agitators who claimed Paul was dependent on Jerusalem and was now teaching a watered-down version of their gospel.
21. Syria and Cilicia were the provinces surrounding Paul's hometown of Tarsus (in Cilicia) and the base church of Antioch (in Syria). Paul's point is geographic distance from Jerusalem — he was active in ministry far from the apostolic center, further demonstrating his independence.
22. The phrase *agnoumenos tō prosōpō* ('unknown by face') means the Judean believers had not met Paul in person. The participle reinforces that Paul had no extended contact with the broader Jerusalem-area church. The phrase *en Christō* ('in Christ') marks these as specifically Christian assemblies, distinguished from the synagogues.
23. The article *ho diōkōn* ('the one persecuting') functions almost as a title — Paul was known as 'the Persecutor.' The irony is powerful: the faith (*tēn pistin*) he tried to destroy (*eporthēi*, the same verb as 1:13) is now the message he proclaims. Paul's conversion is framed as the most compelling evidence for the gospel's divine power.
24. The phrase *en emoi* ('in me' or 'because of me') echoes the same phrase in verse 16 where God revealed his Son 'in me.' The chapter closes with a striking reversal: the Judean churches — who never met Paul — praised God for the very transformation that his Galatian opponents now question. Paul's former enemies became his unwitting character witnesses.

2

Summary: *Galatians 2 continues Paul's autobiographical defense of his apostolic authority and gospel. He recounts his visit to Jerusalem fourteen years later, where he presented his gospel to the recognized leaders — James, Cephas, and John — who added nothing to his message and affirmed his mission to the Gentiles. Paul then narrates his public confrontation with Peter at Antioch, where Peter's withdrawal from table fellowship with Gentile believers exposed a contradiction between gospel truth and social pressure. The chapter culminates in Paul's most concentrated statement of justification theology: a person is made right with God not through works of the law but through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. The chapter closes with the iconic declaration that Paul has been crucified with Christ and now lives by faith in the Son of God.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter contains one of the most theologically dense passages in all of Paul's writings (vv. 15-21). The Antioch incident (vv. 11-14) reveals that even Peter could compromise gospel integrity under social pressure. The phrase 'crucified with Christ' (v. 20) introduces participatory atonement language — believers do not merely benefit from Christ's death but are incorporated into it. The pistis Christou debate (v. 16) — whether the Greek means 'faith in Christ' or 'the faithfulness of Christ' — is one of the most consequential translation decisions in Pauline studies.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between Paul's Jerusalem visits in Galatians 2 and Acts 15 (the Jerusalem Council) is debated — they may describe the same event or different ones. The pistis Iēsou Christou construction in verse 16 is grammatically ambiguous (objective or subjective genitive), and we note both options. Paul's rebuke of Peter raises questions about early church unity that the text does not resolve.*

Connections: *The 'right hand of fellowship' (v. 9) echoes covenant-making gestures in the Old Testament. Paul's 'crucified with Christ' language connects to Romans 6:1-11 (baptismal death with Christ). The justification-by-faith argument is the compressed version of what Paul expands in Romans 3-4. The Antioch incident foreshadows the broader Jew-Gentile tension addressed in Ephesians 2.*

¹Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along as well. ²I went up because of a revelation, and I laid before them the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles — but privately to those who were recognized as leaders — to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. ³But not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. ⁴Now this matter arose because of false brothers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us. ⁵To them we did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you. ⁶And from those recognized as important — whatever they once were makes no difference to me; God shows no favoritism — those leaders added nothing to my message. ⁷On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised — ⁸For the same God who worked through Peter as an apostle to the Jewish people also worked powerfully through me as an apostle to the Gentiles. ⁹When James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given to me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship. That we should go to the heathen, and they to the circumcision. ¹⁰They asked only that we remember the poor — the very thing I was eager to do. ¹¹But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. ¹²For before certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself, fearing those of the circumcision party. ¹³And the rest of the Jewish believers joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. ¹⁴But when I saw that they were not walking in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of everyone: "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?" ¹⁵We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, ¹⁶Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law — for by the works of the law will no flesh be justified. ¹⁷But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have also been found to be sinners, does that make Christ an agent of sin? Absolutely not! ¹⁸For if I rebuild what I tore down, I demonstrate that I am a lawbreaker. ¹⁹For through the law I died to the

law, so that I might live for God. ²⁰I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Whether the fourteen years are counted from Paul's conversion or from the previous Jerusalem visit (1:18) is debated. Titus, a Gentile believer, serves as a living test case for the circumcision question — his presence in Jerusalem is itself an argument. Barnabas's inclusion signals that Paul is not a lone actor but represents the Antioch church.
2. The phrase kata apokalypsin ('according to a revelation') indicates divine direction, not human summons — Paul went because God sent him, not because Jerusalem called him. The verb anethēmēn ('laid before, set forth') means to present for consideration, not to submit for approval. The athletic metaphor trechō ('run') pictures ministry as a race that could be wasted if the Jerusalem leaders rejected Paul's gospel. The phrase tois dokousin ('those who seemed, those of reputation') carries a slight edge — Paul uses this somewhat ironic phrase three times in this passage.
3. The Titus test case is Paul's strongest evidence: in the very heart of Jerusalem, with the apostolic leadership present, an uncircumcised Greek believer was accepted without being required to undergo circumcision. The passive ēnagkasthē ('was compelled') leaves open whether there was pressure to circumcise him — only that the pressure did not succeed.
4. The vocabulary is militant: pareisaktos ('smuggled in'), pareisēlthon ('infiltrated'), kataskopēsai ('to spy out, reconnoiter' — a military intelligence term), katadoulōsousin ('to enslave completely'). Paul portrays the false brothers as enemy agents conducting covert operations against the community's freedom. The kata- prefix on katadoulōsousin intensifies the enslavement — they aimed to reduce believers to total bondage under the law.
5. The phrase pros hōran ('for an hour') is idiomatic for 'even momentarily.' Paul's resistance was absolute and immediate. The purpose clause hina hē alētheia tou euangeliou diamenē ('so that the truth of the gospel might remain') frames the confrontation not as personal stubbornness but as gospel preservation. The Galatians' freedom is at stake in Paul's past decision.
6. Paul's parenthetical interruption is characteristically abrupt. The phrase prosōpon ou lambanei ('does not receive face') is a Hebraism (Hebrew: nasa panim, 'lift the face') meaning God does not show partiality based on status. The verb prosanethento ('added to, contributed to') means the Jerusalem leaders had nothing to supplement or correct in Paul's gospel — their authority did not enhance or alter it.
7. The passive pepisteumai ('I have been entrusted') indicates divine commissioning — God entrusted Paul with this work. The gospel itself is one; it is the audiences that differ. 'The uncircumcision' (akrobystia) and 'the circumcision' (peritomē) are metonyms for Gentiles and Jews respectively. Paul uses 'Peter' (Petros) here rather than 'Cephas' as in surrounding verses — possibly because Peter was the more widely recognized form.
8. The verb energeō ('to work in, to empower, to be active in') attributes the effectiveness of both apostolates to God's power working through each apostle. The parallel structure (ho energēsas Petrō... enērgēsēn kai emoi) places Paul's commission on precisely the same divine footing as Peter's — the same God, the same empowerment, different audiences.
9. James is listed first, suggesting his prominence in the Jerusalem church by this time. The 'pillars' (styloi) metaphor likely draws on the temple imagery — these leaders are foundational supports of the community. The 'right hand of fellowship' (dexias koinōnias) is a formal covenant gesture recognizing mutual partnership. The agreement is geographic and ethnic, not doctrinal — one gospel, two mission fields.
10. The 'poor' (ptōchōn) likely refers specifically to the Jerusalem church, which faced economic hardship. Paul's collection for Jerusalem (Romans 15:25-27; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9) fulfills this request. The verb espoudasa ('I was eager, I made haste') indicates Paul's wholehearted agreement — care for the poor was not an imposed obligation but a shared commitment.
11. The shift from the Jerusalem accord to the Antioch confrontation is abrupt and dramatic. The phrase kata prosōpon ('to the face') means publicly, openly — not behind his back. The perfect participle kategnōsmenos ('having been condemned, standing condemned') indicates that Peter's actions had already self-evidently condemned him before Paul spoke. Paul's willingness to publicly confront the leading apostle demonstrates that gospel truth outranks apostolic hierarchy.
12. The imperfect synēsthien ('he was eating, he used to eat') indicates habitual practice — Peter had been regularly sharing meals with Gentile believers. The imperfections hystellēn ('was drawing back') and aphōrizen ('was separating') picture a gradual withdrawal, not a single dramatic exit. Table fellowship in the ancient world implied full social and religious acceptance; Peter's withdrawal communicated that Gentile believers were second-class. The 'certain people from James' may or may not have represented James's actual position.
13. The compound verb synpekrithēsan ('acted hypocritically together with') uses the theatrical term hypokrisis ('playing a role, wearing a mask'). Paul's charge is devastating: Peter and the others were not acting according to their actual convictions but performing for an audience. The word 'even' (kai) before Barnabas registers Paul's shock — his own ministry partner was swept up in the pretense. The verb synapēchthē ('was carried away, swept along') suggests Barnabas was pulled by the current rather than acting deliberately.
14. The verb orthopodousin ('walk straight, walk uprightly') occurs only here in the New Testament — literally 'to walk with straight feet.' Paul's accusation is that Peter's conduct is crooked relative to the gospel's straight line. The logic of Paul's rebuke is devastating: Peter himself had been living like a Gentile (eating non-kosher food with Gentile believers), which proves he knew the law's food restrictions were not binding. His

withdrawal now implicitly demands that Gentiles adopt Jewish practices — a requirement Peter himself had abandoned. The verb *ioudaizein* ('to judaize, to live as a Jew') appears only here in the New Testament.

15. It is debated where Paul's direct speech to Peter ends and his reflection for the Galatians begins — the transition may be gradual. The phrase 'Gentile sinners' (ex *ethnōn hamartōloi*) reflects standard Jewish categorization of Gentiles as outside the law and therefore sinners by definition. Paul adopts this language only to subvert it in the following verses.
16. This is the most theologically concentrated verse in Galatians. The phrase *pistis Iēsou Christou* (and *pistis Christou*) is the center of a major scholarly debate. The genitive can be objective ('faith in Jesus Christ') or subjective ('the faithfulness of Jesus Christ'). The subjective reading sees Christ's own faithfulness — his covenant loyalty unto death — as the ground of justification, with human faith as the response. The objective reading sees human faith directed toward Christ as the means of justification. The threefold denial of works of the law (ex *ergōn nomou*) echoes Psalm 143:2 LXX.
16. The verb *dikaioutai* ('is justified, is declared righteous') carries both forensic (legal declaration) and relational (right relationship) dimensions. Paul does not separate these.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 143:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. Paul anticipates an objection: if Jewish believers abandon the law to be justified in Christ and are then found to be 'sinners' (by the law's standard), does that mean Christ promotes sin? The emphatic *mē genoito* ('may it never be!' — rendered 'absolutely not!') is Paul's strongest formula of denial, appearing fifteen times in his letters. The word *diakonos* ('servant, agent, minister') applied to Christ sarcastically — would Christ serve sin's interests? The very idea is absurd.
18. The building metaphor (*katalyō*, 'tear down'; *oikodomeō*, 'build up') pictures the law as a wall that Paul demolished. Rebuilding it — returning to law observance as the basis for acceptance — would prove Paul wrong to have torn it down in the first place. The word *parabatēs* ('transgressor, lawbreaker') turns the accusation around: the real transgression is not abandoning the law but returning to it after receiving grace.
19. The paradox is sharp: the law itself brought about Paul's death to the law. How the law accomplished this is debated — possibly through the law's curse that fell on Christ (3:13), or through the law's inability to produce life (3:21), which drove Paul to the end of himself. The purpose clause 'so that I might live for God' (*hina theō zēsō*) reframes death as liberation: death to the law is the prerequisite for life with God.
20. The perfect tense *synestaurōmai* ('I have been crucified with') indicates a past event with ongoing results — the crucifixion with Christ happened and remains in effect. This is Paul's most concentrated statement of participatory soteriology: the believer's identity is relocated from the old self to Christ. The phrase *en pistei zō tē tou huiou tou theou* could be rendered 'by the faithfulness of the Son of God' (subjective genitive) — maintaining consistency with verse 16. However, the deeply personal tone of this verse ('who loved me and gave himself for me') suits the objective genitive reading ('by faith in the Son of God') — the believer's personal trust responding to Christ's personal love. We render as objective genitive here while noting the ambiguity.
20. The verb *paradontos* ('having given over, having handed over') is the same verb used for Judas's betrayal — Christ's self-giving transforms the language of betrayal into the language of salvation.
21. The verb *atheteō* ('to set aside, to nullify, to treat as invalid') was used for annulling a treaty or breaking a covenant. To return to the law for justification would be to declare God's grace null and void. The final statement is devastating in its simplicity: *dōrean apethanen* ('he died gratuitously, for nothing, without cause'). If the law could produce righteousness, the cross was pointless — the most wasteful death in history. Paul leaves the Galatians with this stark either/or: grace or law, not both.

3

Summary: *Galatians 3 shifts from autobiography to theological argument. Paul begins with a sharp rebuke — 'You foolish Galatians!' — and asks whether they received the Spirit through law-keeping or through believing the gospel. He then builds a sustained case from Scripture that Abraham was justified by faith, that the law brings a curse from which Christ redeemed humanity by becoming a curse himself, that the Abrahamic promise operates through faith rather than law, and that the law served as a temporary guardian until Christ came. The chapter culminates in the declaration that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female — all are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to the promise.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's argument moves through five distinct scriptural proofs: Abraham's faith (Genesis 15:6), the blessing of the nations (Genesis 12:3), the curse of the law (Deuteronomy 27:26), justification by faith (Habakkuk 2:4), and redemption from the curse (Deuteronomy 21:23). The 'seed' argument in verse 16 turns on the singular form of the Greek *sperma* — a striking piece of exegesis. The law as *paidagogos* (vv. 24-25) draws on the Greco-Roman institution of the slave-tutor who supervised a child until maturity. Verse 28 is one of the most radical equality*

statements in ancient literature.

Translation Friction: Paul's claim that the law was given 'through angels by a mediator' (v. 19) draws on Jewish tradition not explicit in the Torah itself. His singular 'seed' argument (v. 16) has been criticized as grammatically forced, since collective nouns are regularly singular in both Hebrew and Greek. We render the text faithfully and note the exegetical complexity. The phrase 'baptized into Christ' (v. 27) raises questions about the relationship between faith and baptism that Paul does not resolve here.

Connections: Abraham's justification by faith (v. 6) is the same text Paul expounds in Romans 4. The 'curse of the law' argument (vv. 10-14) builds on Deuteronomy 27-28. The law as guardian until Christ anticipates the fuller development in Galatians 4:1-7. The baptismal formula of verse 28 likely reflects an early Christian confession used at baptism. The 'clothing' metaphor (v. 27) connects to the new-creation imagery Paul develops elsewhere (2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:9-10).

¹You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified! ²I want to learn only one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? ³Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now trying to reach completion by the flesh? ⁴Did you experience so much for nothing? — if indeed it was for nothing. ⁵So then, does God supply the Spirit to you and work miracles among you because of works of the law, or because of hearing with faith? ⁶Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁷Understand, then, that those who are of faith — these are the children of Abraham. ⁸And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed the gospel in advance to Abraham: "In you all the nations will be blessed." ⁹So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. ¹⁰For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse. For it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all the things written in the book of the law, to do them." ¹¹Now it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, because "The righteous one will live by faith." ¹²But the law is not based on faith; rather, "The one who does them will live by them." ¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us — for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" — ¹⁴That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles by way of Jesus Christ. That we might accept the promise of the Spirit by way of faith. ¹⁵Brothers and sisters, I speak in human terms: even a human covenant, once it has been ratified, no one annuls or adds conditions to it. ¹⁶Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," as referring to many, but as referring to one: "And to your offspring," who is Christ. ¹⁷This is what I am saying: the law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. ¹⁸For if the inheritance comes from the law, it no longer comes from the promise. But God granted it to Abraham through a promise. ¹⁹Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was arranged through angels by the hand of a mediator. ²⁰Now a mediator implies more than one party, but God is one. ²¹Is the law then opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed have come through the law. ²²But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise might be given through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ to those who believe. ²³Now before faith came, we were held in custody under the law, confined until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. ²⁶For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female — for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *anoētoi* ('foolish, senseless, unthinking') is not an insult to intelligence but a charge of irrationality — they are failing to think through the implications of what they already know. The verb *ebaskanen* ('bewitched') evokes the 'evil eye' of ancient Mediterranean culture — someone has cast a spell over them. The verb *prographē* ('was publicly displayed, was placarded') was used for official public notices or proclamations posted in the marketplace. Paul's preaching was so vivid that it was as if Christ crucified had been posted on a billboard before their eyes.

2. Paul appeals to the Galatians' own experience as evidence. The phrase *ex akoēs pisteōs* ('from hearing of faith') is ambiguous: it could mean 'by hearing the message that calls for faith,' 'by hearing that comes from faith,' or 'by a faithful hearing.' The contrast with 'works of the law' suggests the emphasis is on receptive trust versus active effort. The Galatians' reception of the Spirit — presumably visible in charismatic experience — occurred without any law observance.
3. The contrast between *pneumati* ('by the Spirit') and *sarki* ('by the flesh') is not spirit versus body but divine power versus human effort. The verb *epiteleisthe* ('being completed, being perfected') in the middle voice suggests the Galatians are attempting to complete by their own effort what God started by his Spirit. The irony is sharp: moving from Spirit to flesh is not progress but regression.
4. The verb *epathete* can mean either 'suffered' or 'experienced' — both senses may be in play. The Galatians may have faced persecution as a result of their faith. The trailing phrase *ei ge kai eikē* ('if indeed even for nothing') leaves a sliver of hope — Paul has not yet given up on them.
5. The present participles *epichorēgōn* ('supplying, lavishly providing') and *energōn* ('working, being active in') indicate ongoing divine activity, not a one-time event. God is currently supplying the Spirit and currently working miracles — and this is happening without law observance. The verb *epichorēgeō* was used for a wealthy patron generously underwriting a public performance — God supplies abundantly, not grudgingly.
6. Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 (LXX), the foundational text for his justification theology (cf. Romans 4). The verb *elogisthē* ('was credited, was reckoned, was counted') is an accounting term — righteousness was deposited to Abraham's account on the basis of his trust, not his performance. This precedes the institution of circumcision (Genesis 17) by at least fourteen years, which becomes Paul's key chronological argument.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 15:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The imperative *ginōskete* ('know, understand, recognize') could also be indicative ('you know'). The phrase *hoi ek pisteōs* ('those out of faith, those whose identity is defined by faith') establishes faith, not ethnicity or law observance, as the marker of Abrahamic descent. This is the theological foundation for Gentile inclusion: Abraham's real children are identified by sharing Abraham's faith.
8. Paul personifies Scripture (*hē graphē*) as an agent that 'foresaw' and 'proclaimed the gospel in advance' (*proeuēngelisato* — a remarkable compound verb meaning 'pre-evangelized'). The quotation combines Genesis 12:3 and 18:18. Paul reads the Abrahamic promise to bless 'all nations' (*panta ta ethnē*) as a prophetic announcement of Gentile justification by faith — the gospel was already embedded in the Abrahamic covenant.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 12:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The adjective *pistō* ('faithful, believing') applied to Abraham emphasizes his defining characteristic: trust in God's promise. The preposition *syn* ('together with') establishes solidarity — those who share Abraham's faith share Abraham's blessing. Paul has redrawn the boundaries of the Abrahamic family: faith, not circumcision, is the membership marker.
10. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 27:26 to argue that the law's own terms condemn those who depend on it — since the law demands total, unbroken obedience (*pasin tois gegrammenois*, 'all the things written'), any failure brings the covenant curse. The word *katara* ('curse') is the opposite of *eulogia* ('blessing') from verse 9. Paul's logic: law-reliance leads to curse; faith leads to blessing. The assumption is that no one achieves perfect obedience.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 27:26 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. Paul quotes Habakkuk 2:4, a text also central to Romans 1:17. The Hebrew of Habakkuk reads *be'emunato* ('by his faithfulness/faith'), and the ambiguity of *ek pisteōs* ('by faith/faithfulness') carries over into the Greek. The quotation establishes that the life of the righteous person is grounded in faith, not in law — and since this is Scripture's own testimony, the law itself witnesses against law-righteousness.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Habakkuk 2:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. Paul quotes Leviticus 18:5, which promises life through doing the commandments. His point is that law and faith operate on fundamentally different principles: law demands doing, faith demands trusting. The two systems are incompatible as bases for justification. This does not mean the law is evil (Paul addresses that in 3:19-22), but that its operating principle differs from faith's.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 18:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The verb *exēgorasen* ('redeemed, bought out of') is a marketplace term for purchasing a slave's freedom. Christ's redemption is presented as a commercial transaction: he paid the price to buy believers out of the law's curse. The mechanism is substitutionary: *genomenos hyper hēmōn katara* ('having become a curse on our behalf'). Paul quotes Deuteronomy 21:23, which pronounces a curse on anyone hung on a tree (*xylon*). The crucifixion fulfills this: Christ on the cross bore the covenant curse that rested on law-breakers.

13. The word *xylon* means 'wood, tree, stake' — Paul uses it rather than *stauros* ('cross') to align with the Deuteronomy text. The early church read this passage as a divine explanation of why the Messiah had to die by crucifixion specifically.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 21:23 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Two purpose clauses (*hina... hina...*) spell out the twin results of Christ's redemptive act: (1) the Abrahamic blessing extends to the Gentiles, and (2) the promised Spirit is received through faith. The 'promise of the Spirit' (*tēn epangelian tou pneumatos*) links the Abrahamic promise to the Pentecost experience — the Spirit is the concrete fulfillment of what God promised to Abraham. The 'in Christ Jesus' (*en Christō Iēsou*) is the instrument through which the ancient promise reaches its intended recipients.
15. Paul uses an everyday legal analogy (*kata anthrōpon legō*, 'I speak in human terms'). The word *diathēkē* means both 'covenant' and 'will/testament' in Greek — the legal force of the analogy depends on the irrevocability of a ratified agreement. The verb *kekyrōmenēn* ('having been ratified, confirmed') is a legal term for a document that has been officially validated. The verbs *athetei* ('annuls') and *epidiatassetai* ('adds additional stipulations') describe two ways a ratified covenant cannot be altered.
16. Paul's argument turns on the singular *sperma* ('seed, offspring') versus the hypothetical plural *spermasin* ('seeds'). Grammatically, *sperma* is a collective noun regularly used in the singular for a group of descendants, so Paul's argument has been debated since antiquity. However, Paul may be making a typological rather than strictly grammatical point: the singular 'seed' finds its ultimate fulfillment in one person, Christ, through whom all the other 'seeds' (believers) are incorporated. The quotation draws from Genesis 13:15, 17:8, and 22:18.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 12:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 13:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The 430-year figure comes from Exodus 12:40 (LXX). Paul's argument is chronological: the Abrahamic covenant was established and ratified by God centuries before Sinai. A later addition (the law) cannot override an earlier divine covenant (the promise). The verb *akyroī* ('invalidate, make void') is the legal term for overturning a valid agreement — the law simply does not have that power over God's prior commitment.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 12:40. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verb *kecharistai* ('has graciously given') is from *charizomai*, related to *charis* ('grace'). The inheritance was a gift of grace through promise, not a wage earned through law-keeping. Paul presents law and promise as mutually exclusive bases for inheritance — if one applies, the other is voided. Since God chose promise, law cannot be the operating principle.
19. Paul anticipates the obvious question: if the law cannot justify, what purpose does it serve? His answer: it was 'added' (*prosetethē*) — supplementary, not foundational — 'because of transgressions' (*tōn parabaseōn charin*). This phrase is ambiguous: the law was added to define transgressions, to restrain them, or to provoke them (cf. Romans 5:20). The temporal limit 'until the offspring should come' makes the law a temporary measure, not a permanent arrangement. The reference to angelic mediation draws on Jewish tradition (cf. Acts 7:53; Hebrews 2:2) and Deuteronomy 33:2 LXX. The 'mediator' is Moses.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 33:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. This is one of the most cryptic verses in Paul's letters, generating hundreds of interpretations. The basic logic appears to be: a mediator (*mesitēs*) requires two parties, meaning the law involved a bilateral arrangement (God and Israel, mediated by Moses). But God's promise to Abraham was unilateral — God alone committed himself (Genesis 15, where only God passes between the animal pieces). The promise is therefore more secure than the law because it rests on God alone, not on two parties' faithfulness.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Paul again uses *mē genoito* ('absolutely not!') to reject a false inference. The law is not the enemy of promise — it simply cannot do what promise does. The key verb is *zōopoīēsai* ('to make alive, to give life'). The law can diagnose sin but cannot resurrect; it can define the problem but cannot supply the remedy. The contrary-to-fact conditional (*ei... edothē... an ēn*) makes clear that no such life-giving law exists.
22. The verb *synekleisen* ('shut up together, imprisoned, confined') pictures sin as a prison. Scripture — and by extension the law — functions as a jailer that locks up all humanity (*ta panta*, 'all things, everything') under sin's power. The purpose (*hina*) is redemptive: the imprisonment prepares for the promise's release. The phrase *ek pisteōs Iēsou Christou* again raises the subjective/objective genitive question. We render 'through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ' consistently with 2:16, while noting that *tois pisteuousin* ('to those who believe') again distinguishes Christ's faithfulness from the believers' response of faith.
23. The verb *ephrouroumetha* ('we were being guarded, held in custody') is a military term for being under armed guard. The companion participle *synekleiomenoi* ('being confined, locked up') reinforces the imprisonment metaphor from verse 22. Paul speaks of 'faith' (*tēn pistin*) with the article — not faith as a general concept but the specific faith-era inaugurated by Christ. Before Christ, the law served as a holding cell; with Christ's coming, the cell doors opened.

- 24.** The Greek paidagōgos is not a 'schoolmaster' (KJV) but a household slave who supervised a child's daily conduct — walking the child to school, enforcing discipline, and overseeing behavior until the child reached maturity. The paidagōgos was neither the father nor the teacher but a temporary custodian whose authority ended when the child came of age. Paul's analogy: the law supervised Israel during its minority, but its supervisory role terminated when Christ (the age of maturity) arrived. The phrase eis Christon ('until Christ' or 'toward Christ') indicates both temporal limit and directional purpose.
- 25.** The genitive absolute elthousēs tēs pisteōs ('faith having come') treats faith as a historical event, not merely a personal experience. The coming of Christ inaugurated the age of faith. The adverb ouketi ('no longer') is emphatic: the guardian's role is finished. Returning to the law's supervision after Christ has come would be like a grown adult returning to the care of a childhood custodian.
- 26.** The shift from 'we' to 'you' (este, second person plural) directly addresses the Galatian believers. The term huioi theou ('sons of God') in its cultural context designated full legal heirs with the rights of mature adults, as opposed to minors under a guardian. We render 'children' to capture the inclusive sense, though the legal-heir implication is important: the Galatians are no longer minors under the law's custody but full heirs of God.
- 27.** The clothing metaphor (enedysasthe, 'you clothed yourselves with, you put on') may reflect the early Christian practice of new clothing at baptism, but the theological meaning goes deeper: to 'put on Christ' is to take on his identity. The phrase eis Christon ('into Christ') indicates that baptism effects a transfer of identity — the baptized person is now 'in Christ,' bearing Christ's identity rather than their former social markers. This prepares for the radical equality statement of verse 28.
- 28.** This verse likely preserves an early baptismal confession. The three pairs dismantle the three fundamental divisions of the ancient world: ethnic (Jew/Greek), social (slave/free), and gender (male/female). The shift from oude ('nor') to kai ('and') in the third pair echoes Genesis 1:27 LXX ('male and female he created them'), suggesting that in Christ even the creation-order distinction is transcended in terms of covenant status. The word heis ('one') is masculine singular — the Galatians are not merely united but constitute one entity in Christ. Paul's immediate context is covenant membership (who belongs to Abraham's family), though the implications extend further.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 1:27 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** Paul's argument comes full circle: Christ is Abraham's singular 'seed' (v. 16); those who are 'in Christ' (v. 28) share his identity; therefore those in Christ are Abraham's seed and heirs of the Abrahamic promise. The chain is Abraham promise Christ believers. Circumcision, Torah observance, and ethnic identity play no role in this chain of inheritance. The word klēronomoi ('heirs') carries full legal weight — these are not honorary members but rightful inheritors of everything God promised Abraham.

4

Summary: *Galatians 4 develops the heir/guardian analogy from chapter 3, arguing that before Christ came, God's people were like minor children under guardianship, subject to the 'elemental principles' of the world. But when the fullness of time arrived, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law and grant them adoption as children. Paul then appeals personally to the Galatians, reminding them of their initial warm reception of him despite his physical ailment. He warns that the agitators' attention is self-serving. The chapter culminates in an allegorical reading of Abraham's two sons — Ishmael (born of the slave Hagar, representing the Sinai covenant) and Isaac (born of the free woman Sarah, representing the promise) — concluding that believers are children of the free woman.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The 'fullness of time' passage (vv. 4-7) is one of the most important christological and soteriological texts in the New Testament, compressed into four verses. The Abba cry (v. 6) preserves the Aramaic word Jesus himself used in prayer (Mark 14:36). The Hagar-Sarah allegory (vv. 21-31) is Paul's most sustained use of allegorical interpretation and has been enormously influential — and controversial — in Jewish-Christian relations. Paul's identification of 'the present Jerusalem' with Hagar/slavery and 'the Jerusalem above' with Sarah/freedom inverts the expected categories.*

Translation Friction: *Paul's use of stoicheia tou kosmou ('elemental principles of the world,' vv. 3, 9) is debated — it could refer to basic religious principles, cosmic spiritual powers, or the physical elements. The Hagar-Sarah allegory (vv. 21-31) has been criticized for anti-Jewish implications, though Paul's target is not Judaism per se but the specific demand that Gentile believers submit to circumcision. The textual tradition varies between 'God sent the Spirit of his Son' and 'God sent the Spirit of the Son' in verse 6.*

Connections: The adoption (huiiothesia) language connects to Romans 8:14-17, 23. The 'Abba, Father' cry appears also in Romans 8:15 and Mark 14:36. The Hagar-Sarah typology draws on Genesis 16-21 and anticipates the 'Jerusalem above' concept developed in Hebrews 12:22 and Revelation 21. The 'born of a woman' phrase (v. 4) echoes Job 14:1 and the 'born under the law' connects to the circumcision of Jesus (Luke 2:21).

¹What I am saying is this: as long as the heir is a minor, he is no different from a slave, even though he is owner of everything. ²Instead, he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. ³In the same way, when we were minors, we were enslaved under the elemental principles of the world. ⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵Indeed, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might accept the adoption of sons. ⁶And because you are children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child, then an heir through God. ⁸Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to things that by nature are not gods. ⁹But now that you have come to know God — or rather, to be known by God — how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental principles? Do you want to be enslaved to them all over again? ¹⁰You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! ¹¹I am afraid for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. ¹²I beg you, brothers and sisters, become as I am, for I also became as you are. You have done me no wrong. ¹³You know that it was because of a physical ailment that I first proclaimed the gospel to you. ¹⁴And though my physical condition was a trial to you, you did not despise or scorn me. Instead, you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus himself. ¹⁵What then has become of your joy? For I testify that, if possible, you would have torn out your own eyes and given them to me. ¹⁶So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth? ¹⁷Those people are zealous to win you over, but not with good intentions. They want to shut you out so that you will be zealous for them. ¹⁸It is always good to be courted for a good purpose, and not only when I am present with you. ¹⁹My children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! ²⁰I wish I could be present with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you. ²¹Tell me, you who want to be under the law: do you not listen to the law? ²²For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and one by the free woman. ²³But the son of the slave woman was born according to the flesh, while the son of the free woman was born through the promise. ²⁴Now these things are to be understood allegorically: the women represent two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children into slavery — this is Hagar. ²⁵Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia, and she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. ²⁷For it is written: "Rejoice, barren woman who does not bear! Break forth and shout, you who are not in labor! For the children of the desolate woman are more than those of the woman who has a husband." ²⁸Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of the promise. ²⁹But just as at that time the one born according to the flesh persecuted the one born according to the Spirit, so also it is now. ³⁰But what does the Scripture say? "Drive out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman will certainly not inherit with the son of the free woman." ³¹Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman but of the free woman.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul extends the guardian analogy from 3:23-25 into Roman inheritance law. The Greek *nēpios* ('infant, minor, one who cannot yet speak for himself') describes a legal minor who possesses the title of heir but cannot exercise any rights. The paradox is striking: the heir owns everything (*kyrios pantōn*) yet experiences the life of a slave (*doulos*). This is Paul's picture of Israel under the law — rightful heirs living under restriction.
2. The *epitropoi* ('guardians') and *oikonomoi* ('trustees, estate managers') are legal terms from Roman law for those who managed a minor's person and property respectively. The *prothesmia* ('appointed date, deadline') is a specific legal term for the date fixed by the father's will when the child would come into his inheritance. Paul's point: the period of law-supervision had a divinely predetermined expiration date.
3. The phrase *stoicheia tou kosmou* ('elements/principles of the world') is one of the most debated expressions in Paul. *Stoicheia* can mean: (1) the physical elements (earth, water, air, fire); (2) basic or elementary principles (the ABCs); (3) cosmic or spiritual powers (astral deities or angelic forces); (4) the basic regulatory principles of pre-Christian religion (both Jewish and pagan). Paul may intend a deliberate overlap between these senses — any system of religious obligation that enslaves, whether Jewish Torah or pagan worship, functions as *stoicheia*. The perfect participle *dedoulōmenoi* ('having been enslaved') emphasizes the completed state of bondage.

4. The phrase to plērōma tou chronou ('the fullness of time') means the moment when God's appointed time reached its completion — the prothesmia of verse 2 arrived. The verb exapesteilen ('sent forth') implies prior existence: God sent the Son from his own presence. Two participial phrases define the Son's entry into human existence: genomenon ek gynaikos ('born of a woman') affirms full humanity, and genomenon hypo nomon ('born under the law') places him within the system he came to dismantle. The Son submitted to the very bondage he came to end.
5. Two purpose clauses (hina... hina...) state the double goal of the incarnation: (1) redemption (exagorasē, the same marketplace term from 3:13) of those enslaved under the law, and (2) adoption (huiiothesian) as children. The word huiiothesia ('adoption, placement as sons') is a Roman legal term for the formal adoption of an heir — the adopted child received all the rights, privileges, and inheritance of a natural-born son. Paul's theology: believers are not merely forgiven slaves but adopted heirs.
6. The structure parallels verse 4: God 'sent forth' (exapesteilen) the Son (v. 4) and 'sent forth' the Spirit of the Son (v. 6). The Spirit's cry is not the believer's prayer but the Spirit praying through the believer — the Spirit himself cries (krazon, a strong verb suggesting an involuntary shout). The Aramaic Abba is the intimate family address for 'father' — the same word Jesus used in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36). Its preservation in a Greek letter to Gentile believers suggests it was a recognized liturgical formula. The shift from 'you are sons' (este huiioi) to 'our hearts' (hēmōn) unites Paul with the Galatians in shared experience.
7. Paul shifts to the singular 'you' (ei, second person singular), making the declaration personal to each believer. The progression is slave child heir. The phrase dia theou ('through God') is unusual — most manuscripts and translations expect 'through Christ' or 'of God,' but the SBLGNT reading attributes the entire transaction to God's agency. Some manuscripts read 'heir of God through Christ' (klēronomos theou dia Christou), but we follow the SBLGNT text.
8. Paul addresses the Galatians' pre-conversion pagan past. The phrase tois physei mē ousin theois ('to those which by nature are not gods') echoes Old Testament polemic against idols (Isaiah 37:19; Jeremiah 2:11). The dative tois... theois could indicate service to or slavery under these false gods. Paul will argue in verse 9 that returning to Torah observance would be equivalent to returning to this pagan servitude — a provocative equation.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 37:19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 2:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Paul's self-correction is theologically significant: 'you have come to know God — or rather, to be known by God.' Divine initiative precedes human knowledge. The adjectives asthenē ('weak, powerless') and ptōcha ('poor, destitute, beggarly') are devastating descriptors for either the Torah or pagan religion — both are impoverished systems compared to the riches of knowing God. Paul's equation of Torah observance with stoicheia places it in the same category as the Galatians' former paganism — a shocking rhetorical move.
10. The calendar observances likely include Sabbaths (days), new moons (months), Jewish festivals (seasons/kairos), and sabbatical or jubilee years. Paul views these calendar regulations as part of the stoicheia system. The present tense paratēreisthe ('you are observing') indicates this practice has already begun among the Galatians — the defection is not hypothetical.
11. The verb phohoumai ('I fear') with mē pōs ('lest perhaps') expresses anxious concern. The perfect kekopiaka ('I have labored') indicates sustained effort with ongoing results now threatened. Paul's missionary labor may be wasted if the Galatians complete their defection to law observance.
12. Paul shifts from theological argument to personal appeal. 'Become as I am' (ginesthe hōs egō) — Paul, a Jew, lives free from the law; the Galatians, Gentiles, should not take up the law's yoke. 'I also became as you are' (kagō hōs hymeis) — when Paul came to them, he lived as a Gentile among Gentiles (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:21). The assurance 'you have done me no wrong' prepares for the warm reminiscence that follows.
13. The phrase di' astheneian tēs sarkos ('because of a weakness of the flesh') indicates that Paul's initial visit to Galatia was occasioned or prolonged by some physical condition — illness, injury, or chronic ailment. The nature of this ailment is unknown; proposals include malaria, eye disease (suggested by v. 15), or epilepsy. The phrase to proteron ('the first time, formerly') may imply more than one visit.
14. The verb exeptysate ('you did not spit out, you did not scorn') is vivid — spitting was an ancient gesture of contempt and also a magical act to ward off evil or disease. Paul's condition could have provoked revulsion, but the Galatians received him with extraordinary honor. The ascending comparison — 'as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus' — recalls 1:8, where even an angel's gospel could be false. Here the Galatians treated Paul as bearing divine authority.
15. The word makarismos ('blessing, happiness, congratulating oneself') recalls their initial joy at receiving the gospel. The reference to tearing out eyes (tous ophthalmous hymōn exoryxantes) has fueled speculation that Paul suffered from an eye condition. Whether literal or proverbial (an expression of extreme devotion), it highlights the dramatic contrast between their former warmth and their current coolness.
16. The participial phrase alētheuōn hymin ('telling you the truth, being truthful with you') contrasts with the flattery of the agitators (v. 17). Paul's truth-telling has earned him suspicion, while the agitators' flattery has gained them admiration. The irony is bitter: the one who speaks plainly is treated as an enemy.
17. The verb zēlousin ('they are zealous for, they court') describes the agitators' energetic pursuit of the Galatians' loyalty. The verb ekkleisai ('to shut out, to exclude') reveals the agitators' strategy: by making circumcision a requirement, they create a new boundary that excludes the Galatians unless they comply — generating dependence on the agitators as gatekeepers.

18. Paul acknowledges that zeal and attention are not inherently wrong — what matters is the motive (*en kalō*, 'in a good thing, for a good purpose'). The phrase 'not only when I am present' gently chides the Galatians for their fickleness: they were devoted when Paul was there but wavered when the agitators arrived.
19. Paul adopts maternal imagery: he is a mother in labor (*ōdinō*, 'to suffer birth pangs'). The word *palin* ('again') is striking — Paul already labored to birth them once; their defection has thrown him back into labor pains. The goal is *morphōthē Christos en hymin* ('Christ be formed in you') — not mere belief about Christ but Christ's character taking shape within them. The verb *morphoō* ('to form, to shape') suggests an organic, developmental process.
20. The verb *aporoumai* ('I am perplexed, I am at a loss') expresses genuine bewilderment — Paul cannot understand how the Galatians could abandon the gospel. The desire to 'change my tone' (*allaxai tēn phōnēn mou*) may mean he wishes he could speak more gently in person, or that he wants to adapt his approach to their specific situation. A letter is a blunt instrument; Paul would prefer the nuance of face-to-face conversation.
21. Paul's rhetorical question is pointed: the Galatians want to submit to the Torah, but have they actually read it? The verb *akouete* ('hear, listen to') implies not just hearing but understanding. Paul will now show that the Torah itself, properly read, argues against law-submission for Gentile believers. He uses the law against the law — a brilliant forensic strategy.
22. Paul draws on Genesis 16 and 21. The *paidiskē* ('slave girl, female servant') is Hagar, the Egyptian slave. The *eleuthera* ('free woman') is Sarah, though Paul does not name her until verse 31. The legal status of the mothers — slave versus free — determines the legal status of the children, which becomes the foundation for Paul's allegory.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The contrast is between *kata sarka* ('according to the flesh' — natural human effort) and *di' epangelias* ('through a promise' — divine intervention). Ishmael was conceived through normal means when Abraham and Sarah tried to fulfill God's promise by their own strategy (Genesis 16). Isaac was conceived through divine promise when both parents were beyond natural capacity for childbearing (Genesis 18:11-14; 21:1-2). The pattern maps onto law (human effort) versus grace (divine promise).
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 18:11-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. The verb *allēgoroumena* ('being allegorized, being spoken allegorically') is the only use of this term in the New Testament. Paul signals he is reading the Genesis narrative typologically — the historical events carry a deeper, prophetic meaning. His identification of Hagar with the Sinai covenant is startling: the law given at Sinai produces slavery, just as Hagar's children are born into her slave status. The word *diathēkai* ('covenants') here distinguishes two divine arrangements — the Sinai covenant of law and the Abrahamic covenant of promise.
25. The verb *systoichei* ('corresponds to, stands in the same column as') is a mathematical term for items in the same column — Hagar, Sinai, and the present Jerusalem all line up on the 'slavery' side. Paul's identification of present-day Jerusalem with Hagar/slavery would have been deeply provocative — the holy city, the temple, the center of Jewish identity, aligned with the slave woman. Paul's target is not Jerusalem itself but the Jerusalem-based insistence on law observance for Gentile believers.
26. The 'Jerusalem above' (*hē anō Ierousalēm*) draws on Jewish apocalyptic tradition of a heavenly Jerusalem that exists as the archetype of the earthly city (cf. Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 21:2). This heavenly city corresponds to Sarah/freedom/promise on the allegory's other column. Paul's 'our mother' includes all believers — both Jewish and Gentile Christians are children of the free woman, citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.
27. Paul quotes Isaiah 54:1, a promise of restoration after exile. In its original context, the 'barren woman' is Zion, temporarily desolate but destined for abundant offspring. Paul applies it to Sarah — barren, then miraculously fruitful — and by extension to the free woman's covenant community. The promise-children (Gentile believers born through faith) now outnumber the law-children. The connection between Paul's labor pains (v. 19) and this text about labor is not coincidental.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 54:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. Paul draws the application: the Galatian believers correspond to Isaac, not Ishmael. They are children *kata Isaak* ('according to the pattern of Isaac') — born through divine promise, not human effort. This identification carries immense implications: the Galatians, as Gentiles, occupy the position of the promised heir, while those insisting on law observance occupy the position of the slave woman's child.
29. Paul refers to the conflict between Ishmael and Isaac (Genesis 21:9, where Ishmael 'laughed' or 'mocked' — the Hebrew *tsachaq* is ambiguous). Paul reads this as persecution and applies it to the present: the agitators' pressure on Gentile believers mirrors Ishmael's harassment of Isaac. The pattern is structural: flesh persecutes spirit, law-children harass promise-children.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 21:9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
30. Paul quotes Genesis 21:10, originally Sarah's demand to Abraham. By attributing it to 'Scripture' rather than Sarah, Paul elevates it to divine command. The double negative *ou mē* ('certainly not, by no means') with the future *klēronomēsei* makes the exclusion emphatic and final. The

implied application is that the agitators and their law-based system must be expelled from the community — the slave-woman covenant has no share in the inheritance.

30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 21:10 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. The chapter's conclusion reaffirms the believers' identity: they belong to Sarah's line, not Hagar's — to promise, not law; to freedom, not slavery. The word *dio* ('therefore, for this reason') draws the final inference from the allegory. This declaration sets up the exhortation to freedom that opens chapter 5.

5

Summary: *Galatians 5 transitions from theological argument to ethical exhortation. Paul begins with a ringing declaration of Christian freedom and warns that accepting circumcision obligates one to the entire law, separating them from Christ and grace. He contrasts the law-based approach with faith working through love. After warning about the agitators' corrupting influence, Paul describes the life of freedom: not as license for the flesh, but as love-driven service to one another. He then presents his famous contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit — a catalog of vices followed by a ninefold list of virtues produced by the Spirit's transforming work.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The fruit of the Spirit (vv. 22-23) is one of the most memorized and beloved passages in Paul's letters. Notably, 'fruit' is singular (karpos), not plural — the nine qualities form a unified whole, not a menu of options. The declaration 'against such things there is no law' (v. 23) is both a legal observation and a profound theological statement: the Spirit produces what the law demanded but could never generate. Paul's ethics are pneumatological — moral transformation comes not from rule-keeping but from the Spirit's presence.*

Translation Friction: *The 'works of the flesh' catalog (vv. 19-21) reflects first-century moral categories. The Greek term pharmakeia (v. 20) is rendered 'sorcery' — its connection to modern 'pharmacy' is etymological, not semantic. The phrase 'will not inherit the kingdom of God' (v. 21) raises questions about the security of believers that Paul does not resolve here. The relationship between human effort ('walk by the Spirit,' v. 16) and divine agency ('the Spirit produces fruit,' v. 22) is held in tension.*

Connections: *The freedom declaration (v. 1) echoes the allegory conclusion of 4:31. The law fulfilled in love (v. 14) connects to Romans 13:8-10 and Jesus's teaching in Matthew 22:39. The flesh/Spirit contrast parallels Romans 8:5-13. The fruit of the Spirit echoes the qualities of love in 1 Corinthians 13. The 'crucified the flesh' language (v. 24) connects to 2:20 and 6:14.*

¹For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. ²Look — I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you at all. ³I testify again to every person who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to keep the entire law. ⁴You who are trying to be justified by the law have been severed from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. ⁵For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly await the hope of righteousness. ⁶For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love. ⁷You were running well. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? ⁸This persuasion is not from the one who calls you. ⁹A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough. ¹⁰I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. But the one who is disturbing you will bear the judgment, whoever he is. ¹¹But brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. ¹²I wish those who are unsettling you would go all the way and castrate themselves! ¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love. ¹⁴For the entire law is fulfilled in a single statement: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. ¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh desires what is opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is opposed to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do whatever you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰Idol worship, sorcery, hostility, quarreling,

jealousy, outbursts of anger, rivalry, division, false teaching,. ²¹Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like — of the which I tell you prior to, as I have also informed you in time past, that they which do such things will not inherit God's kingdom. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³Meekness, temperance — opposed to such there is no law. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The dative *tē eleutheria* ('for freedom') is emphatic by position — freedom is both the means and the goal of Christ's liberation. The verb *ēleutherōsen* ('set free') is aorist, pointing to a definitive past act (the cross). The imperative *stēkete* ('stand firm') demands active resistance: freedom must be maintained, not passively enjoyed. The 'yoke of slavery' (*zygō douleias*) pictures the law as an animal yoke — the very metaphor used for Torah in Acts 15:10 and by the rabbis themselves, though they viewed it positively ('the yoke of the kingdom of heaven').
2. Paul speaks with full apostolic weight: 'I, Paul' (*egō Paulos*) puts his personal authority behind the warning. The conditional *ean peritemnēsthe* ('if you are circumcised') uses the present subjunctive, indicating a real and imminent possibility. The verb *ōphelēsei* ('will benefit, will profit') with *ouden* ('nothing') makes the stakes absolute: accepting circumcision as a requirement for covenant membership empties Christ of all saving value. Paul is not opposing circumcision as a cultural practice but as a soteriological requirement.
3. The verb *martyromai* ('I solemnly testify, I declare under oath') is a legal term. Paul's logic: circumcision is not a standalone act but an entry point into the entire Torah system. You cannot adopt one requirement in isolation — accepting circumcision means accepting the whole package (*holon ton nomon*, 'the whole law'). The word *opheiletēs* ('debtor, one under obligation') frames law-keeping as a debt that can never be fully paid.
4. The verb *katērgēthēte* ('you have been severed, you have been cut off, you have been rendered ineffective') is devastatingly ironic — those who seek circumcision (cutting) end up being cut off from Christ. The verb *exepesate* ('you have fallen out of') gives us the theological concept of 'falling from grace' — not losing salvation through moral failure, but abandoning the grace principle in favor of the law principle. The two systems are mutually exclusive: grace or law, not both.
5. Paul contrasts the law-based approach (v. 4) with the Spirit-faith approach. The verb *apekdechometha* ('we eagerly await, we look forward to') indicates patient, expectant hope. The 'hope of righteousness' (*elpida dikaiosynēs*) looks forward to final vindication — the full realization of right standing with God. Paul's ethics are eschatological: believers live between the 'already' of justification and the 'not yet' of final righteousness.
6. This verse is the hinge of Galatians' theology. The phrase *pistis di' agapēs energoumenē* ('faith working through love') prevents faith from becoming mere intellectual assent. Faith is not passive but active — and its activity is love. The verb *energoumenē* can be middle ('expressing itself, working') or passive ('being energized, being activated'). If middle: faith naturally expresses itself through love. If passive: faith is activated by love, or by the Spirit's power. Either way, faith and love are inseparable. This verse has been central to Protestant-Catholic dialogue on faith and works.
7. The athletic metaphor returns (cf. 2:2). The verb *enekopsen* ('cut in on, hindered, impeded') was used for cutting into a road to block an army's advance or for breaking into a runner's lane. The question is rhetorical — Paul knows who the agitators are — but the athletic imagery emphasizes that the Galatians were making progress until someone illegally interfered.
8. The word *peismonē* ('persuasion') occurs only here in the New Testament. The 'one who calls' (*tou kalountos*) is God (cf. 1:6, 15). Whatever arguments the agitators are using, they do not originate from God. The verse is terse and devastating — a one-sentence verdict on the agitators' theology.
9. A proverbial saying Paul also uses in 1 Corinthians 5:6. Yeast (*zymē*) works invisibly but transforms everything it touches. The agitators' teaching — even a 'small' requirement like circumcision — will eventually corrupt the entire gospel. The metaphor warns against compromising on what seems minor: in theology, small concessions produce total transformation.
10. Paul expresses confidence (*pepoitha*, 'I have come to trust') qualified by 'in the Lord' — his confidence is in God's work in them, not in their character. The singular *ho tarassōn* ('the one disturbing') may point to a specific ringleader among the agitators. The phrase *hostis ean ē* ('whoever he may be') suggests the person has some status or authority — Paul dismisses it as irrelevant before divine judgment (*krima*).
11. Paul apparently faced the accusation that he still preached circumcision (perhaps based on his circumcision of Timothy, Acts 16:3). His response: if he were preaching circumcision, no one would persecute him — the persecution itself proves he is not. The word *skandalon* ('stumbling block, offense, trap') applied to the cross: a crucified Messiah is inherently offensive because it eliminates human achievement as the basis for standing with God. Adding circumcision would remove this offense — and gut the gospel.
12. The verb *apokopsontai* ('cut off, mutilate') is a shocking escalation of the circumcision vocabulary. Paul's caustic wit: if cutting a little flesh is so beneficial, why not cut off the whole thing? The reference to castration also connects to pagan practices — the priests of Cybele, a goddess worshipped in Galatia, practiced ritual castration. Paul suggests the agitators' obsession with genital cutting has more in common with paganism than with the gospel. The verb *anastatountes* ('unsettling, stirring up, disturbing') is stronger than *tarassontes* (1:7) — these people are turning the community upside down.

13. Paul pivots from defending freedom to defining it. Freedom is not autonomy (doing whatever the flesh desires) but is redirected into voluntary service (*douleuete*, 'serve as slaves' — deliberately using the slavery vocabulary). The paradox of Christian freedom: truly free people choose to serve. The word *aphormē* ('base of operations, launching point, opportunity') is a military term — the flesh looks for any foothold to exploit. Freedom from the law does not mean freedom from love's obligations.
14. Paul quotes Leviticus 19:18. The verb *peplērōtai* ('has been fulfilled, has been brought to completion') is perfect passive — the law finds its full expression in love, not through rule-by-rule obedience but through the love that animates every genuine command. This does not abolish the law but reveals its true purpose. The same argument appears in Romans 13:8-10. Paul the opponent of law-righteousness affirms that love accomplishes what the law intended.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 19:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The verbs escalate: *daknete* ('bite'), *katesthiēte* ('devour, eat up'), *analōthēte* ('be consumed, be destroyed'). The imagery is of animals tearing each other apart. This suggests the circumcision controversy has already caused serious community conflict in Galatia. Paul's warning: the agitators' teaching is not only theologically wrong but practically destructive — it is tearing the community apart.
16. The imperative *peripateite* ('walk') is Paul's standard term for daily conduct — the ongoing pattern of life, not a single decision. Walking 'by the Spirit' (*pneumati*, dative of means or sphere) means allowing the Spirit to direct one's steps. The double negative *ou mē* with the aorist subjunctive *telesēte* is the strongest negation in Greek: 'you will certainly not, you will by no means.' The promise is emphatic: Spirit-directed living is genuinely effective against the flesh's desires.
17. The verb *epithumei* ('desires, longs for') is used for both flesh and Spirit — both exert active desire. The preposition *kata* ('against') indicates direct opposition. The verb *antikeitai* ('stands opposed, is set against') describes a permanent state of war. The purpose clause *hina mē... poiēte* ('so that you may not do') can be read two ways: (1) the flesh prevents you from doing what the Spirit wants, or (2) the Spirit prevents you from doing what the flesh wants. Paul may intend both — the believer lives in the tension of conflicting desires.
18. The passive *agesthe* ('you are being led') indicates the Spirit's active guidance — believers follow, the Spirit leads. Being Spirit-led and being under law are mutually exclusive conditions. This verse answers the practical question: if not the law, then what guides behavior? Answer: the Spirit. The law was the guardian for minors (3:24-25); the Spirit is the guide for mature heirs.
19. The adjective *phanera* ('visible, obvious, evident') contrasts with the hidden work of the Spirit (v. 22, 'fruit'). The flesh produces visible, identifiable behaviors. The first cluster is sexual: *porneia* ('sexual immorality' — a broad term covering all sexual conduct outside marriage), *akatharsia* ('impurity' — ritual and moral uncleanness), *aselgeia* ('sensuality, debauchery, lack of self-restraint'). Note: the SBLGNT does not include 'adultery' (*moicheia*), which appears in some later manuscripts.
20. The second cluster covers religious deviance: *eidōlōlatia* ('idolatry') and *pharmakeia* ('sorcery, the use of drugs/potions in magical arts'). The third and largest cluster addresses social-communal sins: *echthra* ('hostilities, enmity'), *eris* ('strife, contention'), *zēlos* ('jealousy, envious rivalry'), *thymoi* ('outbursts of rage'), *eritheiai* ('selfish ambition, political manipulation' — originally meant 'working for hire'), *dichostasiai* ('dissensions, divisions'), *haireseis* ('factions, sects' — later 'heresies'). Many of these social sins were likely manifesting in the Galatian congregations as a direct result of the circumcision controversy.
21. The final cluster: *phthonoi* ('envy'), *methai* ('episodes of drunkenness'), *kōmoi* ('carousing, drinking parties'). The phrase *kai ta homoia toutois* ('and things similar to these') makes the list representative, not exhaustive. The verb *prassontes* ('practicing, habitually doing') is present participle indicating a lifestyle pattern, not isolated incidents. The verb *prolegō* ('I warn in advance') with the aorist *proeipon* ('I already warned') indicates Paul gave this warning during his original visit — this is not new teaching. The warning about not inheriting the kingdom (*basileian theou ou klēronomēsousin*) is the most severe: the inheritance language connects to the heir/adoption theme of chapters 3-4.
22. The singular *karpos* ('fruit') — not 'fruits' — indicates these nine qualities form an organic unity, not a list of separate items. Unlike the 'works' (*erga*) of the flesh, which are produced by human effort, 'fruit' grows naturally from the Spirit's life within the believer. The first triad (love, joy, peace) describes the believer's relationship with God. The second triad (patience, kindness, goodness) describes the believer's posture toward others. The third triad (faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) describes the believer's inner character. *Makrothymia* ('patience, long-suffering') is literally 'long-fused' — slow to anger. *Chrēstotēs* ('kindness') is grace expressed in action. *Agathōsynē* ('goodness') is moral excellence that benefits others.
23. *Prautēs* ('gentleness, meekness') is not weakness but strength under control — the quality Aristotle described as the mean between excessive anger and the inability to be angry at all. *Enkrateia* ('self-control, mastery over one's desires') was a central Greek philosophical virtue. The concluding statement *kata tōn toioutōn ouk estin nomos* ('against such things there is no law') operates on multiple levels: (1) obviously, no law prohibits love, joy, or peace; (2) more profoundly, where the Spirit produces these qualities, the law's regulatory function becomes unnecessary; (3) most pointedly for the Galatian context, the Spirit achieves what the law aimed for but could not produce.
24. The verb *estaurōsan* ('crucified') is aorist active — believers are the agents who crucified the flesh, yet this act is possible only because they participate in Christ's crucifixion (2:20). The flesh is not merely restrained but executed — crucifixion is lethal, not temporary. The 'passions' (*pathēmasin*) and 'desires' (*epithymiais*) are the flesh's driving forces. Paul's ethic requires the decisive death of the flesh's power, not its gradual improvement.
25. Paul uses a different word for 'walk' here: *stoichōmen* ('let us keep in step, let us walk in line, let us march in formation') rather than the general *peripateō* of verse 16. *Stoicheō* means to walk in a line, to keep rank — the military metaphor suggests disciplined, orderly following of the Spirit's lead. The conditional *ei zōmen* ('if we live') is a first-class condition assumed to be true: since we do live by the Spirit, we should therefore walk in

step with the Spirit.

26. The adjective *kenodoxoi* ('vainglorious, conceited, empty of glory') literally means 'having empty glory.' The two participles describe the twin expressions of conceit: *prokalomenoi* ('provoking, challenging' — used for challenging someone to a contest) directed at those perceived as lower, and *phthonountes* ('envying') directed at those perceived as higher. Both attitudes destroy community. This verse likely reflects actual dynamics in the Galatian churches, where the circumcision debate had produced competitive factions.

6

Summary: *Galatians 6 concludes the letter with practical instructions for community life: restoring those caught in sin with gentleness, bearing one another's burdens (thus fulfilling 'the law of Christ'), avoiding self-deception, and the principle of sowing and reaping. Paul then takes the pen himself for a final, emphatic summary — the agitators want circumcision for their own glory, but Paul boasts only in the cross, through which the world has been crucified to him. He closes with a blessing of peace and mercy on 'the Israel of God.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The phrase 'the law of Christ' (v. 2) is striking from the apostle who has spent five chapters arguing against the law. Paul distinguishes between the Torah as a system of justification and Christ's own 'law' of love and burden-bearing. The 'large letters' (v. 11) indicate Paul is writing the conclusion in his own hand, possibly due to the eye condition hinted at in 4:15. The 'marks of Jesus' (v. 17) — the stigmata — refers to the physical scars from Paul's persecution, which he contrasts with the circumcision mark the agitators prize. The closing phrase 'the Israel of God' (v. 16) is one of the most debated in the letter.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'Israel of God' (v. 16) is debated: does it refer to ethnic Israel, to the church as the new Israel, or specifically to Jewish believers? The grammar (kai epi) allows multiple readings. Paul's instruction about supporting teachers financially (v. 6) seems abruptly placed. The 'new creation' language (v. 15) compressed here is developed more fully in 2 Corinthians 5:17.*

Connections: *The 'law of Christ' (v. 2) connects to 1 Corinthians 9:21 and the love command of 5:14. The sowing/reaping principle (vv. 7-8) echoes Proverbs 22:8 and Hosea 8:7. The 'new creation' (v. 15) connects to 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Isaiah 65:17. The 'marks of Jesus' (v. 17) connect to 2 Corinthians 4:10 and 11:23-27. Paul's autograph (v. 11) parallels 1 Corinthians 16:21 and Colossians 4:18.*

¹Brothers and sisters, if anyone is caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual should restore that person in a spirit of gentleness — but watch yourself, so that you too are not tempted. ²Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³For if anyone thinks they are something when they are nothing, they deceive themselves. ⁴Let each person examine their own work, and then their reason to boast will be in themselves alone, and not in comparison with someone else. ⁵For each one will carry their own load. ⁶Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. ⁷Do not be deceived: God is not mocked. Whatever a person sows, that they will also reap. ⁸The one who sows to their own flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit. ⁹Let us not grow weary of doing good, for at the proper time we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who belong to the household of faith. ¹¹See what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand! ¹²Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised — only so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³For not even those who are circumcised keep the law themselves, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh. ¹⁴But as for me, may I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶And as for all who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. ¹⁷From now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. ¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *prolēmphthē* ('be caught, be overtaken, be surprised by') suggests the person was caught off guard by the sin rather than deliberately pursuing it. The verb *katartizete* ('restore, mend, put in order') was used for setting a broken bone or mending a torn net — the goal is repair, not punishment. The phrase *hoi pneumatikoi* ('you who are spiritual') is not an elite class but describes all who walk by the Spirit (5:25). The shift from plural 'you' to singular 'yourself' (*seauton*) makes the warning intensely personal.
2. The word *barē* ('burdens, heavy loads') includes moral failures (v. 1), suffering, and any weight that crushes a person. The phrase *ton nomon tou Christou* ('the law of Christ') is remarkable — Paul who has argued against the law now speaks of Christ's law. This is not a new legal code but the love command (5:14) embodied in Christ's own life of self-giving (2:20). The verb *anaplērōsete* ('you will fulfill, you will fill up completely') intensifies the simple *plēroō* — the law of Christ is super-abundantly fulfilled through mutual burden-bearing.
3. The verb *phrenapatā* ('deceive one's own mind') is a compound: *phrēn* ('mind') + *apataō* ('deceive'). Self-deception is the flesh's most effective strategy. The phrase *einai ti* ('to be something') echoes Paul's ironic use of *dokountes* ('those who seem to be something') for the Jerusalem leaders in 2:6. Conceit — thinking oneself too important to serve — prevents the burden-bearing of verse 2.
4. The verb *dokimazetō* ('let him examine, let him test') was used for assaying metals — testing for genuineness. Paul redirects the Galatians from comparing themselves with others (which feeds conceit or envy) to honest self-examination. The *kauchēma* ('ground for boasting, reason for pride') when properly directed is not competitive but based on one's own work before God.
5. The word *phortion* ('load, pack') is different from *barē* ('burdens') in verse 2. *Barē* suggests crushing weights that require communal support; *phortion* is a soldier's personal pack or a ship's individual cargo — the normal responsibilities each person must carry. There is no contradiction: we share each other's crushing burdens (v. 2) while each carrying our own personal responsibilities (v. 5).
6. The verb *katēchoumenos* ('being instructed, being catechized') gives us the English word 'catechism.' It implies systematic teaching of the faith. The verb *koinōneitō* ('let him share, let him have fellowship in') indicates material support — the student should share financial resources with the teacher. The phrase *en pasin agathois* ('in all good things') likely means material goods. This instruction about supporting teachers is a practical application of burden-bearing.
7. The verb *myktērizetai* ('is mocked, is treated with contempt') literally means 'to turn up the nose at.' The agricultural metaphor of sowing and reaping is a universal wisdom principle (cf. Proverbs 22:8; Hosea 8:7; Job 4:8). Paul applies it specifically to the flesh/Spirit contrast that follows in verse 8. The warning *mē planasthe* ('do not be deceived, do not wander astray') suggests the Galatians may think they can adopt the flesh's system without consequences.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Proverbs 22:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Hosea 8:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Job 4:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The preposition *eis* ('into, toward') with 'sowing' indicates the field in which one invests: sowing into the flesh means investing one's life in the flesh's priorities. The harvest (*therizo*) corresponds to the field: flesh produces *phthora* ('decay, corruption, destruction') and Spirit produces *zōēn aiōnion* ('life of the age to come, eternal life'). In the Galatian context, 'sowing to the flesh' includes the circumcision party's investment in external religious performance.
9. The verb *enkakōmen* ('grow weary, become discouraged, lose heart') acknowledges the real difficulty of persevering in good works when the harvest is delayed. The phrase *kairō idiō* ('at the proper time, in its own season') assures that God's timing, though often frustrating, is precise. The participial condition *mē eklyomenoi* ('not giving up, not becoming exhausted') uses a word that means 'to become slack, to faint' — the image is of a runner whose muscles give out before the finish line.
10. The phrase *hōs kairon echomen* ('as we have opportunity/time') treats the present moment as a limited window for action. The exhortation extends 'to everyone' (*pros pantas*) — not just fellow believers — but prioritizes 'the household of faith' (*tous oikeious tēs pisteōs*). The word *oikeios* ('belonging to the household, family member') pictures the believing community as a family or household. The priority is not exclusion of outsiders but special care for the faith family.
11. The phrase *pēlikois grammasin* ('with what large letters') refers to the size of the handwriting, not the length of the letter. Paul typically dictated his letters to a secretary (*amanuensis*) and added a personal note in his own handwriting at the end (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:21; 2 Thessalonians 3:17). The large letters may indicate Paul's poor eyesight (4:15), his emphasis (writing large for rhetorical effect), or simply unfamiliarity with writing (he was a speaker, not a scribe). From this point to the end of the letter, Paul writes personally.
12. The verb *euprosōpēsai* ('to make a good face, to put on a good appearance') occurs only here in the New Testament. The agitators' motive is exposed: they push circumcision not from theological conviction but to avoid persecution. If they can show Jewish authorities that their Gentile converts are being circumcised, they can present their movement as a Torah-observant sect rather than a law-free community — and escape the hostility that the cross provokes.

- 13.** Paul's charge is hypocrisy: the agitators demand circumcision but do not themselves observe the whole law (cf. 5:3). Their true motive is *kauchēsōntai* ('that they may boast') — they want to collect Gentile foreskins as trophies. The phrase *en tē hymetera sarki* ('in your flesh') is bitterly literal: the circumcised flesh of the Galatians would become the agitators' badge of missionary success.
- 14.** Paul's *mē genoito* ('may it never be!') here is not a response to an objection but a vow. The cross is the only legitimate ground for boasting — the very thing that is an offense (5:11) and foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:23) to the world. The double crucifixion — 'the world to me, and I to the world' — indicates mutual death: Paul is dead to the world's value system, and the world's attractions have lost their power over him. The pronoun *hou* ('through which/whom') is ambiguous — it could refer to the cross or to Christ. The meaning converges either way.
- 15.** The phrase *kainē ktisis* ('new creation') is Paul's most radical category. Circumcision versus uncircumcision — the issue tearing the Galatian churches apart — is rendered utterly irrelevant by the new creation that Christ inaugurates. The word *kainē* means 'new in quality' (not *neos*, 'new in time'). This is not renovation but transformation — a new order of existence. The concept draws on Isaiah 65:17 ('new heavens and new earth') and is developed more fully in 2 Corinthians 5:17.
- 15.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 65:17 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 16.** The word *kanōn* ('rule, standard, measuring rod') refers to the new-creation principle of verse 15. The verb *stochēsousin* ('will walk in line with') echoes 5:25. The blessing *eirēnē... kai eleos* ('peace... and mercy') echoes Jewish synagogue blessings. The phrase *kai epi ton Israēl tou theou* ('and upon the Israel of God') is heavily debated: (1) *kai* is exegetical ('that is, the Israel of God'), making 'Israel of God' synonymous with 'all who walk by this rule'; (2) *kai* is additive ('and also upon the Israel of God'), adding a separate blessing on ethnic Israel or on Jewish Christians. The grammar supports both readings. Given Paul's argument throughout Galatians, reading (1) seems contextually stronger, but we preserve the ambiguity.
- 17.** The word *stigmata* ('marks, brands, tattoos') refers to the scars Paul carries from beatings, stonings, and other persecutions (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:23-27). In the ancient world, *stigmata* were brands placed on slaves, soldiers, or devotees of a deity to indicate ownership. Paul's scars are his brand of belonging to Jesus — far more significant than the circumcision mark the agitators promote. The irony: they boast in a mark on others' flesh; Paul boasts in marks on his own flesh, received in service to Christ.
- 18.** Paul closes with grace — the letter that opened with astonishment (1:6) ends with benediction. The word *adelphoi* ('brothers and sisters') — placed at the end for emphasis — is a final act of reconciliation: despite the sharp rebukes, Paul still considers the Galatians family. The phrase *meta tou pneumatos hymōn* ('with your spirit') is more intimate than the standard 'with you' — Paul prays that grace will penetrate to the deepest level of their being.

Ephesians

1

Summary: *Ephesians 1 opens with Paul's greeting and immediately launches into one of the most expansive theological statements in the New Testament — a single sentence in Greek (vv. 3-14) that sweeps from eternity past (predestination before the foundation of the world) through the present (redemption, forgiveness, the revelation of God's mystery) to eternity future (the summing up of all things in Christ). The chapter then transitions to a prayer of thanksgiving for the Ephesians' faith and a petition that they would know the hope of God's calling, the riches of his inheritance, and the surpassing greatness of his power — the same power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him at God's right hand, far above every authority, with all things under his feet.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verses 3-14 constitute the longest sentence in the Greek New Testament — a cascading doxology with three movements: the Father's election (vv. 3-6), the Son's redemption (vv. 7-12), and the Spirit's sealing (vv. 13-14). Each section concludes with a refrain about God's glory. The cosmic scope is breathtaking: God's plan encompasses the reconciliation of 'all things in heaven and on earth' (v. 10). The prayer section (vv. 15-23) reaches its climax in a vision of Christ's authority over all cosmic powers and his headship over the church, which is his body.*

Translation Friction: *The words 'in Ephesus' (en Ephesō, v. 1) are absent from important early manuscripts (P46, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus), suggesting this may have been a circular letter. Paul's predestination language (vv. 4-5, 11) has generated centuries of theological debate between Calvinist and Arminian traditions. We render the Greek faithfully without resolving these disputes. The cosmic language of 'rulers and authorities' (v. 21) reflects first-century Jewish angelology.*

Connections: *The blessing formula (v. 3) echoes Jewish berakah prayers. The predestination language connects to Romans 8:28-30. The 'mystery' (v. 9) is developed throughout Ephesians (3:3-6, 5:32, 6:19). The 'all things under his feet' (v. 22) quotes Psalm 8:6, also used in 1 Corinthians 15:27. The church as Christ's body (v. 23) develops the theme of 1 Corinthians 12 and Colossians 1:18.*

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: ²And from the lord jesus christ, grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father. ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴According as he has chosen us in him prior to the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame prior to him in love:. ⁵After

predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, in keeping with to the good pleasure of his will,. ⁶Indeed, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he has made us accepted in the dear. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸In which he has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. ⁹After appointed known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself:. ¹⁰That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather as one in one all matters in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth. Indeed in him:. ¹¹In him we have also been claimed as God's own, having been predestined according to the purpose of the one who accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²Indeed, that we should be to the praise of all his splendor, who first trusted in Christ. ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴Indeed, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of all his splendor. ¹⁵For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Parent of splendor, may provide to you the inner life of insight and revelation in the knowledge of him:. ¹⁸The sight of your understanding while enlightened. That you may recognize what is the confident expectation of his calling, and what the riches of the splendor of his inheritance in the saints,. ¹⁹What is the exceeding greatness of his authority to us-ward who trust, according to the working of his mighty authority,. ²⁰Indeed, which he wrought in Christ, when he brought him back to life, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,. ²¹Far beyond all principality, power, might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this present age, but also in that which is to come:. ²²And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³The church is his body, the full expression of him who fills everything in every way.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase 'in Ephesus' (en Ephesō) is absent from several of the earliest and best manuscripts, suggesting this may have been a circular letter with a blank space for the destination. The SBLGNT includes it. The word *hagiois* ('saints, holy ones') does not mean morally perfect people but those 'set apart' — consecrated to God's purposes. The qualifier *pistois* ('faithful, believing') further identifies them as the believing community.
2. Paul's standard greeting combining *charis* ('grace') and *eirēnē* ('peace'). The single preposition *apo* ('from') governs both God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, presenting them as coordinate sources of grace and peace.
3. The opening *eulogētos* ('blessed') begins a Jewish-style *berakah* (blessing formula) that extends through verse 14 in a single Greek sentence. The phrase *en tois epouraniois* ('in the heavenly places') is distinctive to Ephesians (1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12) — it designates the spiritual dimension where believers already exist 'in Christ.' The triple use of *eulog-* words (blessed, blessed, blessing) creates emphasis: God is blessed because he has blessed us with blessings. The phrase *en Christō* ('in Christ') is the letter's keynote — appearing about thirty-five times in Ephesians.
4. The verb *exelexato* ('chose, elected') is aorist middle — God chose for himself. The temporal marker *pro katabolēs kosmou* ('before the foundation of the world') places the election in eternity past, before creation itself. The purpose of election is holiness: *einai hēmas hagious kai amōmous* ('that we should be holy and blameless'). The word *amōmos* ('without blemish') is sacrificial language — a sacrificial animal had to be without defect. The phrase *en agapē* ('in love') is grammatically ambiguous — it could modify 'blameless before him in love' (describing the believer's character) or 'in love he predestined us' (describing God's motive). We punctuate it with verse 5 (God's love as the motive for predestination), though noting the ambiguity.
5. The verb *proorisas* ('having predestined, having determined beforehand') is from *pro* ('before') + *horizō* ('to set a boundary, to determine'). God established the boundary of his people before time. The goal of predestination is *huiōthesia* ('adoption') — the same Roman legal concept Paul used in Galatians 4:5. The phrase *kata tēn eudokian tou thelēmatos autou* ('according to the good pleasure of his will') grounds predestination in God's sovereign delight, not in human merit or foreseen faith.
6. The first refrain: *eis epainon doxēs tēs charitos autou* ('to the praise of the glory of his grace'). The chain of genitives piles glory upon glory. The verb *echarītōsen* ('graced, favored, freely bestowed grace') is from the same root as *charis* ('grace') — God 'graced us with grace.' The title *ho ēgapēmenos* ('the Beloved') for Christ echoes the baptismal voice: 'This is my beloved Son' (Matthew 3:17). This refrain closes the first movement (the Father's election).
7. The second movement begins: the Son's redemption. The word *apolytrōsis* ('redemption, release through ransom') echoes the Old Testament *go'el* concept — ransom of a kinsman from bondage. The phrase *dia tou haimatos autou* ('through his blood') specifies the ransom price. The appositive *tēn aphesin tōn paraptōmatōn* ('the forgiveness of trespasses') defines redemption's content: release from guilt. The phrase *to ploutos tēs charitos* ('the riches of grace') — grace is not meager but lavish.
8. The verb *eperisseusen* ('caused to abound, lavished, poured out in excess') indicates overflowing abundance — God does not meter grace but floods it. The phrase *en pasē sophia kai phronēsei* ('with all wisdom and understanding') can modify either God (he lavished grace wisely) or the believers (he gave us wisdom and insight along with grace). Both readings are theologically sound; the latter connects to the revelation in verse 9.

9. The word *mystērion* ('mystery') in Paul does not mean 'mysterious' or 'unknowable' but refers to a divine plan once hidden but now revealed. The content of this mystery is disclosed in verse 10. The verb *proetheto* ('set forth, planned beforehand, purposed') indicates a deliberate, prior decision. The phrase *en autō* could refer to God himself ('in himself') or to Christ ('in him'). Given Ephesians' persistent *en Christō* theme, the christological reading is preferred.
10. The word *oikonomia* ('administration, plan, management of a household') pictures God as a master steward implementing his cosmic household plan. The phrase *tou plērōmatos tōn kairōn* ('of the fullness of the times') echoes Galatians 4:4 but extends it cosmically. The verb *anakephalaiōsasthai* ('to sum up, to bring together under one head, to recapitulate') is the theological center of Ephesians. It combines *ana* ('again') + *kephalē* ('head') — literally 'to re-head,' to bring everything back under its proper headship. God's plan is the reunification of a fractured cosmos under Christ's authority. The scope is total: *ta panta* ('all things'), *ta epi tois ouranois kai ta epi tēs gēs* ('things in heaven and things on earth').
11. The verb *eklērōthēmen* is debated: it could mean 'we obtained an inheritance' (active sense) or 'we were made an inheritance' (passive sense — God claimed us as his possession). The passive reading aligns with Deuteronomy 32:9 ('the LORD's portion is his people') and is preferred here. The phrase *tou ta panta energountos* ('the one who works all things') asserts God's comprehensive sovereignty. The phrase *kata tēn boulēn tou thelēmatos autou* ('according to the counsel of his will') layers purpose upon purpose — God's actions are deliberate, not arbitrary.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 32:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The second refrain: *eis epainon doxēs autou* ('for the praise of his glory'). The participle *proēlpikotas* ('having hoped beforehand, having been the first to hope') likely distinguishes Jewish believers (who hoped in the Messiah before his coming) from Gentile believers (addressed in v. 13). This closes the second movement (the Son's redemption).
13. The third movement begins: the Spirit's sealing. The sequence is hear believe be sealed. The 'word of truth' is defined as 'the gospel of your salvation' — two phrases in apposition. The verb *esphragisthēte* ('you were sealed') uses the image of a seal (*sphragis*) pressed into wax — marking ownership, authenticity, and security. In the ancient world, a seal guaranteed that a document or container had not been tampered with. The Spirit is the seal that marks believers as God's property. The phrase *tō pneumati tēs epangelias tō hagiō* ('with the Holy Spirit of the promise') identifies the Spirit as the fulfillment of God's promise (cf. Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:33).
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Joel 2:28-29 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The word *arrabōn* ('down payment, deposit, guarantee') is a commercial term — a first installment that guarantees the full payment to come. The Spirit is not the complete inheritance but the preview that guarantees the rest. The phrase *eis apolytrōsin tēs peripoiēseōs* ('until the redemption of the possession') likely means 'until God fully redeems those he has acquired as his own.' The third refrain closes the doxology: *eis epainon tēs doxēs autou* ('to the praise of his glory'). The Trinitarian structure is complete: Father (vv. 3-6), Son (vv. 7-12), Spirit (vv. 13-14), each section ending in praise.
15. The phrase *dia touto* ('for this reason') links the prayer to the doxology: because of everything God has done (vv. 3-14), Paul prays. The mention of 'hearing about' their faith (*akousas*) may support the circular letter theory — Paul would not need to hear about the faith of a church he founded. Some manuscripts omit 'love' (*agapēn*), but the SBLGNT includes it.
16. The present tense *ou pauomai* ('I do not cease') indicates continuous, habitual prayer. The phrase *mneian poioumenos* ('making mention, remembering') is a standard epistolary convention, but Paul's extended prayer (vv. 17-23) shows it is more than formula.
17. The title *ho patēr tēs doxēs* ('the Father of glory') is unique — God is the source and origin of all glory. The phrase *pneuma sophias kai apokalypseōs* ('a spirit of wisdom and revelation') could refer to the Holy Spirit or to a disposition of wisdom — the lowercase 'spirit' is deliberately ambiguous. The word *epignōsis* ('full knowledge, deep recognition') is stronger than *gnōsis* ('knowledge') — it implies experiential, relational knowledge, not merely intellectual.
18. The phrase *tous ophthalmous tēs kardias* ('the eyes of the heart') combines seeing and feeling — the heart in Hebrew/biblical thought is the center of understanding and will, not merely emotion. Paul prays for illumination of their deepest perception. Three 'what' (tis) clauses follow, each more expansive: (1) the hope of his calling, (2) the riches of his inheritance, (3) the greatness of his power (v. 19). The phrase 'his inheritance among the saints' is ambiguous: either the inheritance God gives to the saints or God's own inheritance in the saints (i.e., the saints themselves are God's treasured possession).
19. Paul piles four power-words: *dynamis* ('power, ability'), *energeia* ('working, effective operation'), *kratos* ('might, dominion, ruling power'), *ischys* ('strength, force'). The accumulation is deliberate — no single word can capture the magnitude of God's power directed toward believers. The participle *hyperballon* ('surpassing, exceeding, going beyond') suggests that this power overflows every container. This is not theoretical power but power 'toward us who believe' (*eis hēmas tous pisteuontas*).
20. The power Paul prays about is not abstract — it has a specific historical demonstration: the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. The verb *enērgēsēn* ('exerted, worked, put into operation') is the verbal form of the noun *energeia* from verse 19. The phrase *kathisas en dexia autou* ('having seated at his right hand') echoes Psalm 110:1, the most quoted Old Testament verse in the New Testament. The right hand is the position of authority, honor, and power.

- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 110:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** The four terms — archē ('ruler, principality'), exousia ('authority'), dynamis ('power'), kyriotēs ('dominion, lordship') — likely refer to ranks of spiritual beings in first-century Jewish angelology. Christ is exalted hyperanō ('far above') all of them. The phrase pantos onomatos onomazomenou ('every name that is named') extends the scope beyond known categories — whatever power exists, named or unnamed, in any era, Christ is above it. The temporal extension 'not only in this age but also in the one to come' closes every loophole: Christ's supremacy is permanent.
- 22.** The phrase panta hypetaxen hypo tous podas autou ('put all things under his feet') quotes Psalm 8:6, applied to Christ as the true human who fulfills humanity's intended dominion over creation. The phrase kephalēn hyper panta ('head over all things') establishes Christ's universal lordship. But this cosmic head is 'given to the church' (edōken tē ekklēsia) — the church receives Christ as its head. The implication: the church is the community under Christ's direct authority, benefiting from his cosmic rule.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 8:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** The church is identified as Christ's sōma ('body') — not merely an organization but an organic extension of Christ's presence. The word plērōma ('fullness, completeness') is a dense theological term: the church is the plērōma of Christ. This could mean the church fills up Christ (the church is what completes Christ's presence in the world) or Christ fills the church (the church is full of Christ). The participle plēroumenou can be middle ('who fills') or passive ('who is being filled'). The active sense — Christ fills all things in every way — best fits the context's emphasis on Christ's cosmic authority. The church is where the cosmos-filling Christ is most fully present.

2

Summary: *Ephesians 2 moves from the cosmic heights of chapter 1 to the personal and corporate experience of salvation. The first section (vv. 1-10) describes humanity's condition — dead in trespasses, enslaved to the world, the flesh, and the devil — and God's response: making them alive with Christ, raising them with him, and seating them with him in the heavenly places. The pivot comes in verses 8-9, the definitive statement of grace-based salvation through faith. Verse 10 grounds the believer's new identity as God's 'workmanship, created for good works.' The second section (vv. 11-22) addresses the Jew-Gentile divide: Gentiles who were once excluded from the covenants of promise have been brought near through Christ's blood. Christ himself is their peace, breaking down the dividing wall of hostility, creating one new humanity, and reconciling both groups to God through the cross. The chapter climaxes with the image of the church as a holy temple, built on the foundation of apostles and prophets, with Christ as the cornerstone.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verses 8-9 are among the most quoted verses in all of Scripture and the cornerstone of Reformation soteriology. The 'dividing wall of hostility' (v. 14) may allude to the physical barrier in the Jerusalem temple that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the inner courts — a wall with inscriptions threatening death to any Gentile who crossed it. The 'one new humanity' (v. 15) is a radical concept: God does not assimilate Gentiles into Israel or Jews into a Gentile church, but creates something entirely new. The temple imagery (vv. 19-22) presents the church as the new dwelling place of God — replacing the Jerusalem temple with a living structure.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'the law of commandments in ordinances' (v. 15) is debated: does Christ abolish the Mosaic law itself, or only the law as a barrier between Jews and Gentiles? The relationship between this text and Romans 3:31 ('we uphold the law') requires careful reading. The 'dividing wall' reference is historically specific — the temple barrier — but its theological application is broader.*

Connections: *The death-to-life movement (vv. 1-6) parallels Romans 6:1-11 and Colossians 2:13. Grace through faith (vv. 8-9) condenses the argument of Romans 3:21-28. The 'brought near' language (v. 13) echoes Isaiah 57:19. The temple imagery (vv. 19-22) connects to 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 and 1 Peter 2:4-5. The 'cornerstone' (v. 20) draws on Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22.*

¹And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ²Wherein in moment past you walked according to the course of this age, according to the prince of the authority of the air, the inner life that now worketh in genuine offspring of disobedience:. ³Among them we all also once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and we were by nature children of wrath, just like the rest of humanity. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵Not even when we were no longer alive in wrongdoings, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace

you are saved;). ⁶Has raised us up as one, and fashioned us take a seat together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:. ⁷Indeed, that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us by way of Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹Indeed, not of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance so that we would walk in them. ¹¹Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh — called "the uncircumcision" by what is called "the circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands — ¹²That at that occasion you were apart from Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and apart from God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the dividing wall of hostility, in his flesh, ¹⁵By his sacrifice he set aside the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create one new humanity out of two groups, making peace. ¹⁶That he might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, after slain the enmity thereby:. ¹⁷And he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For by way of him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's household, ²⁰Are built upon the foundation of the messengers and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. ²¹In whom every one of the building fitly framed together groweth to an holy temple in the Lord:. ²²In whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God by way of the Spirit.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The sentence that begins here does not reach its main verb until verse 5 ('made us alive'). The accusative hymas ('you') is the object held in suspension — 'you who were dead.' The word nekrous ('dead') is not metaphorical softening but a real theological claim: apart from God's intervention, the human condition is spiritual death. The plural paraptōmasin ('trespasses, false steps') and hamartiais ('sins, failures to hit the mark') describe two aspects of the same reality.
2. Three powers controlled the pre-Christian life: (1) ton aiōna tou kosmou toutou ('the age/course of this world') — the present evil age's value system; (2) ton archonta tēs exousias tou aeros ('the ruler of the power of the air') — a personal spiritual adversary; (3) the spirit (pneuma) at work in 'the children of disobedience' (tois huiōis tēs apeitheias — a Hebraism meaning 'those characterized by disobedience'). The 'air' (aeros) was believed in ancient cosmology to be the domain of spiritual beings between earth and heaven.
3. The shift from 'you' (Gentiles, vv. 1-2) to 'we all' (hēmeis pantes, including Jewish believers) universalizes the indictment — everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, was in the same condition. The phrase tekna physei orgēs ('children by nature of wrath') means that this condition was not incidental but inherent — humanity's default state. The word orgēs ('wrath') refers to God's settled opposition to sin, not emotional anger. The universality ('just like the rest') prevents any Jewish claim to exemption.
4. The two-word pivot ho de theos ('but God') is among the most dramatic transitions in Scripture. After the comprehensive indictment of verses 1-3, the subject changes from human failure to divine initiative. God's mercy is not scarce but plousios ('rich, abundant, overflowing'). The motive is agapē — not human merit or potential but God's own love. The verb ēgapēsen ('he loved') is aorist, pointing to the definitive act of love in Christ.
5. The main verb finally arrives: synezōpoiēsen ('made alive together with'). The syn- prefix ('together with') is the first of three 'co-' verbs (made alive with, raised with, seated with) that define the believer's participation in Christ's experience. The parenthetical chariti este sesōsmenoi ('by grace you have been saved') is a compressed version of verses 8-9, inserted as if Paul cannot wait to state the principle. The perfect participle sesōsmenoi ('having been saved and remaining saved') indicates a completed action with permanent results.
6. The second and third 'co-' verbs: synēgeiren ('raised together with') and synekathisen ('seated together with'). What happened to Christ (1:20) has happened to believers 'in Christ.' The present tense of the believer's existence is described in past tenses — they have already been raised and seated. This is 'realized eschatology': the believer's spiritual position is already in the heavenly places, even while they live on earth. The en Christō Iēsou ('in Christ Jesus') is the key — apart from Christ, none of this is real.
7. The purpose of salvation extends into eternity: God saved us to put his grace on permanent display. The phrase en tois aiōsin tois eperchomenois ('in the ages that are coming upon us') indicates endless future ages — an infinite gallery in which redeemed humanity is the exhibit of divine grace. The verb endeixētai ('might display, might demonstrate, might prove') was used for putting evidence on display in a courtroom. The saved are God's evidence of grace.
8. This verse is the compressed theological center of Ephesians and one of the most important soteriological statements in the New Testament. The dative tē chariti ('by grace') indicates the ground or basis. The prepositional phrase dia pisteōs ('through faith') indicates the means or channel. The phrase kai touto ouk ex hymōn ('and this not from yourselves') has been debated: what does 'this' (touto, neuter) refer to? Since both charis and pistis are feminine, touto likely refers to the entire salvific event — the grace-faith-salvation complex — rather than to faith alone. Theou to dōron ('God's

gift') is emphatic by position: the gift belongs to God, not to human effort.

9. The negative *ouk ex ergōn* ('not from works') excludes human effort as the basis for salvation. The purpose clause *hina mē tis kauchēsetai* ('so that no one might boast') reveals the reason for the exclusion: salvation by works would create grounds for human pride. Grace eliminates boasting by making salvation entirely God's initiative. This echoes Romans 3:27 ('Where then is boasting? It is excluded.').
10. The word *poiēma* ('workmanship, thing made, masterpiece') is from *poieō* ('to make') — we get 'poem' from this word. Believers are God's crafted work, his artistic creation. The verb *ktisthentes* ('having been created') is creation language — salvation is new creation, not self-improvement. Good works are the purpose (*epi ergois agathois*, 'for good works') but not the cause of salvation. The verb *proētoimasen* ('prepared beforehand, pre-arranged') indicates that even the good works were divinely planned — believers walk a path God laid out before they existed.
11. The section shifts from the individual experience of salvation (vv. 1-10) to its corporate, ethnic dimension: Jew-Gentile reconciliation. The verb *mnēmoneuete* ('remember') is an imperative — they must not forget where they came from. The labels 'uncircumcision' and 'circumcision' are introduced with double irony: both are 'called' (*legomenoi*) these names — they are conventional labels. The modifier *cheiropoiētou* ('made by hands') subtly relativizes physical circumcision — it is a human-made distinction (cf. 'not made by hands' in Colossians 2:11).
12. Five deprivations are listed: (1) *chōris Christou* ('without Christ, separated from the Messiah'); (2) *apēllotriōmenoi tēs politeias tou Israēl* ('alienated from Israel's citizenship' — excluded from the covenant community); (3) *xenoi tōn diathēkōn tēs epangelias* ('strangers to the covenants of promise' — the plural 'covenants' likely includes the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic); (4) *elpida mē echontes* ('having no hope'); (5) *atheoi en tō kosmō* ('without God in the world' — *atheoi* means 'godless,' the only use of this word in the New Testament). The catalog moves from the theological (no Messiah) to the existential (no hope, no God).
13. The pivot *nyni de* ('but now') parallels the 'but God' of verse 4. The far/near language (*makran/engys*) echoes Isaiah 57:19 ('Peace, peace, to the far and to the near'). In Jewish usage, 'those who are far' referred to Gentiles, 'those who are near' to Israel. The instrument of this approach is *en tō haimati tou Christou* ('by the blood of Christ') — Christ's sacrificial death removes the barrier. The verb *egenēthēte* ('you were made, you became') indicates a definitive change of status.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 57:19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Christ is not merely the peacemaker but is himself *hē eirēnē hēmōn* ('our peace'). The phrase *ta amphotera hen* ('the two things one') refers to Jew and Gentile made into a single entity. The *mesotoichon tou phragmou* ('the middle wall of the partition/fence') likely alludes to the physical barrier in the Jerusalem temple — the *soreg*, a stone wall with inscriptions in Greek and Latin warning Gentiles that crossing it meant death. Archaeologists have recovered two of these inscriptions. Christ's body (*en tē sarki autou*) is the instrument of demolition. The word *echthran* ('hostility, enmity') is in apposition to 'the wall' — the wall is the hostility.
15. The phrase *ton nomon tōn entolōn en dogmasin* ('the law of the commandments in/consisting of ordinances') specifies what was abolished: the law in its function as a barrier between Jew and Gentile — the specific regulations (*dogmasin*, 'decrees, ordinances') that separated the two communities. The verb *katargēsas* ('having rendered inoperative, having abolished') is strong. The purpose is creation: *ktisē* ('might create') — the same verb used for divine creation. The 'one new humanity' (*hena kainon anthrōpon*) is not Jews becoming Gentiles or Gentiles becoming Jews, but a new category entirely. The word *kainos* ('new in kind') indicates something unprecedented.
16. The verb *apokatallaxē* ('might fully reconcile') has the double prefix *apo-kata-* intensifying the reconciliation — thorough, complete restoration. The reconciliation is double: horizontal (Jew with Gentile, 'both') and vertical (both groups with God, *tō theō*). The instrument is the cross (*dia tou staurou*). The phrase *apokteiras tēn echthran en autō* ('having killed the enmity in/by it') is brilliantly paradoxical: on the cross, Christ was killed, but the enmity was the real casualty. The hostility died with Christ.
17. Paul echoes Isaiah 57:19 ('Peace, peace, to the far and to the near'). The repetition of *eirēnēn* ('peace') — once for each group — emphasizes that the same peace is offered to both. Christ's 'coming' (*elthōn*) may refer to his earthly ministry, his post-resurrection appearances, or his coming through the apostolic proclamation. The far/near categories of verse 13 return: Gentiles (far) and Jews (near) both receive the same gospel of peace.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 57:19. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verse is implicitly Trinitarian: through Christ (*di' autou*), in the Spirit (*en heni pneumatī*), to the Father (*pros ton patera*). The word *prosagōgē* ('access, introduction, approach') was used for being formally introduced into the presence of a king. Both Jew and Gentile now have royal audience with the Father — through the same Christ, by the same Spirit. The word *amphoteroi* ('both') is emphatic: neither group has privileged access.
19. The status change reverses verse 12: *xenoi* ('strangers') becomes *sympolitai* ('fellow citizens'); *paroikoi* ('resident aliens, sojourners without full rights') becomes *oikeioi tou theou* ('members of God's household, family members'). The movement is from outsider to insider, from excluded to integrated. The two images — citizenship and household — combine political and familial belonging.
20. The building metaphor begins. The *themelion* ('foundation') is 'of the apostles and prophets' — likely meaning the foundation that the apostles and prophets laid (their teaching), though some read it as the foundation consisting of the apostles and prophets themselves. The *akrogōniaios* ('cornerstone' or 'capstone') is the stone that determines the alignment of the entire structure. Whether this is a foundation cornerstone (setting the building's angle) or a capstone (crowning the arch) is debated; either way, Christ is the structurally decisive element.

- 21.** The verb *synarmologoumenē* ('being fitted together, being joined together') is an architectural term for precisely joining stones without mortar — each piece is cut to fit. The present tense indicates ongoing construction. The verb *auxei* ('grows') is striking — buildings do not normally grow. The mixture of architectural and organic metaphors (fitted structure that grows) suggests a living building. The goal is *naon hagion* ('a holy temple') — the church replaces the Jerusalem temple as God's dwelling place. The word *naos* (inner sanctuary) rather than *hieron* (whole temple complex) specifies the most sacred space.
- 22.** The verb *synoikodomeisthe* ('you are being built together') has the *syn-* prefix again — Gentile believers are co-built with Jewish believers into a single structure. The word *katoikētērion* ('dwelling place, permanent residence') is stronger than *paroikia* ('temporary lodging'). God does not visit this temple — he lives there. The phrase *en pneumati* ('by/in the Spirit') identifies the Spirit as the agent or atmosphere of this construction. The chapter ends where it began — with God's initiative — but the focus has shifted from individual salvation (vv. 1-10) to corporate, cosmic reconciliation (vv. 11-22).

3

Summary: *Ephesians 3 reveals the content of the 'mystery' introduced in 1:9 — that Gentiles are fellow heirs with Israel, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise through the gospel. Paul describes his unique commission to proclaim this mystery and marvels that God's wisdom is now made known through the church even to cosmic powers. The chapter concludes with one of Paul's most majestic prayers: that believers would be strengthened by the Spirit in their inner being, that Christ would dwell in their hearts through faith, that they would comprehend the incomprehensible dimensions of Christ's love, and that they would be filled with all the fullness of God. A doxology closes the prayer.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The mystery of Gentile inclusion (vv. 5-6) is the theological heart of Ephesians. The church's role as God's classroom for cosmic powers (v. 10) is one of the most extraordinary ecclesiological claims in the New Testament. The prayer (vv. 14-21) is among the most theologically rich passages Paul ever wrote, with its four-dimensional love (breadth, length, height, depth) and the paradox of knowing what surpasses knowledge. The doxology (vv. 20-21) employs a double comparative: God can do 'exceedingly abundantly beyond' (*hyperekekperissou*) what we ask or imagine.*

Translation Friction: *Paul begins a sentence in verse 1 that he does not complete until verse 14 — the digression in verses 2-13 is one of the longest parenthetical passages in the New Testament. The phrase 'holy apostles and prophets' (v. 5) is sometimes cited as evidence against Pauline authorship, since Paul elsewhere does not call the apostles 'holy.' The cosmic powers in verse 10 are debated — angelic beings, demonic forces, or both.*

Connections: *The mystery revealed connects to Colossians 1:26-27. Paul's imprisonment (v. 1) links to Philippians 1:12-14 and Colossians 4:3. The prayer for inner strengthening parallels Colossians 1:9-12. The 'fullness of God' (v. 19) echoes 1:23. The doxology's 'in the church and in Christ Jesus' (v. 21) binds ecclesiology and Christology together.*

¹For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles — ²If you have listened to of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:. ³He made the mystery known to me by direct revelation, as I briefly described earlier. ⁴When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, ⁵Which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed to his sacred messengers and prophets by the Spirit. ⁶Here is the mystery: through the gospel, the Gentiles are fellow heirs with Israel, members of one body, and sharers together in the promise that comes through Christ Jesus. ⁷Of this gospel I was made a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. ⁸To me — the very least of all the saints — this grace was given: to proclaim to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, ⁹To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the present age has been hid in God, who created all matters by Jesus Christ:. ¹⁰God's intent was that now, through the church, the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms would come to know his wisdom in all its rich variety. ¹¹This was according to the eternal purpose that he carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, ¹²In him, and through faith in him, we may approach God with freedom and confidence. ¹³So I ask you not to lose heart over my sufferings for you, which are your glory. ¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵Of whom the entire family in the heavens above and earth is named,.

¹⁶That he would grant you, in keeping with to the riches of all his splendor, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;. ¹⁷Indeed, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by way of faith. That you, being rooted and grounded in love,. ¹⁸May be able to grasp together with all of God's people what is the breadth, length, depth, and height;. ¹⁹To know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that you might be overflowing with every one of the fulness of God. ²⁰Now to the one who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹To him be splendor in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, present age without end. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul begins a prayer ('for this reason... I bow my knees') but interrupts himself with a lengthy digression about his ministry (vv. 2-13) before resuming the prayer in verse 14. The title *desmios tou Christou Iēsou* ('prisoner of Christ Jesus') reframes his Roman imprisonment as Christ's assignment: he is Christ's prisoner, not Rome's. The phrase *hyper hymōn tōn ethnōn* ('on behalf of you Gentiles') identifies the cause of his imprisonment — his Gentile mission provoked the hostility that led to his arrest.
2. The conditional *ei ge ēkousate* ('if indeed you have heard') is not expressing doubt but invoking known information — 'as you surely have heard.' The word *oikonomia* ('stewardship, administration, management') pictures Paul as a household manager entrusted with distributing God's grace to the Gentiles. Grace is not just Paul's personal possession but a trust to be administered.
3. The phrase *kata apokalypsin* ('by revelation') echoes Galatians 1:12 — the mystery came through direct divine disclosure, not human instruction. The phrase *kathōs proegrapsa en oligō* ('as I wrote briefly before') likely refers to the earlier section of this same letter (1:9-10; 2:11-22) rather than to a separate earlier letter.
4. The phrase *tēn synesin mou* ('my understanding, my insight') is not self-congratulation but a claim to genuine comprehension of the mystery through revelation. The phrase *en tō mystērīō tou Christou* ('in/regarding the mystery of Christ') specifies the content: this is Christ's mystery — it belongs to him and concerns him.
5. The comparison *hōs nyn* ('as it has now') does not say the mystery was completely unknown before, but that it was not known with the clarity it now possesses. The phrase *hagiois apostolois kai prophētais* ('holy apostles and prophets') has been debated — some find 'holy' applied to apostles to be un-Pauline. The 'prophets' are likely New Testament prophets (cf. 2:20; 4:11) rather than Old Testament figures. The means of revelation is the Spirit (*en pneumati*).
6. The mystery's content is finally stated in three syn- compounds: *synklēronoma* ('co-heirs'), *syssōma* ('co-bodied, members of the same body'), and *symmetocha* ('co-sharers'). Each prefix *syn-* ('together with') emphasizes full participation alongside Jewish believers. The word *syssōma* appears only here in Greek literature — Paul likely coined it. Gentiles are not second-class members or honorary additions but fully integrated into the one body. The instrument is the gospel (*dia tou euangeliou*); the sphere is Christ (*en Christō Iēsou*).
7. The verb *egenēthēn* ('I was made, I became') is passive — Paul did not choose this ministry; he was appointed. The word *diakonos* ('servant, minister') carries no hierarchical weight here — Paul is a servant of the gospel. The phrase *kata tēn energeian tēs dynamēōs autou* ('according to the working of his power') attributes Paul's entire ministry to divine empowerment, not personal ability.
8. The word *elachistoterō* is a grammatical impossibility — a comparative form of a superlative ('leastest than the least'). Paul intensifies 'least' beyond normal grammar to express how undeserving he feels, likely in view of his persecution of the church (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:9). The adjective *anexichniaston* ('untraceable, unfathomable, inscrutable') was used for footprints that cannot be followed — Christ's riches are too vast to track to their source.
9. The verb *phōtīσαι* ('to illuminate, to bring to light') continues the light/darkness theme. The mystery was *apokekrymmenou* ('having been hidden') — perfect participle indicating long concealment — *apo tōn aiōnōn* ('from the ages, since eternity'). The mystery's hiding place was *en tō theō* ('in God') — only God knew the plan. The participial phrase *tō ta panta ktisanti* ('who created all things') connects the mystery of redemption to creation — the same God who made everything now reveals his plan for reuniting everything.
10. This is one of the most remarkable verses in Ephesians: the church is God's instrument for instructing cosmic powers. The adjective *polypoikilos* ('many-colored, multi-faceted, richly varied') is extremely rare — used for elaborately embroidered fabric. God's wisdom is not monochrome but endlessly complex and beautiful. The 'rulers and authorities in the heavenly places' (*tais archais kai tais exousiais en tois epouraniois*) are spiritual beings who learn about God's wisdom by observing what he does in the church. The reconciliation of Jew and Gentile into one body is the curriculum.
11. The phrase *prothesin tōn aiōnōn* ('purpose of the ages, eternal purpose') frames God's plan as spanning all of history. The verb *epoiēsen* ('he made, he carried out') indicates that this eternal purpose has been realized — it is accomplished fact, not merely intention. Christ Jesus is both the sphere and the agent of this accomplishment.
12. The word *parrēsia* ('boldness, freedom of speech, confidence') was used for the right of a citizen to speak openly in the assembly. The word *prostagōgē* ('access, introduction') repeats from 2:18. The phrase *en pepoiēsei* ('with confidence, in trust') intensifies the access — believers approach God not with cringing fear but with bold assurance. The phrase *dia tēs pisteōs autou* ('through his faithfulness/through faith in him') again raises the subjective/objective genitive question.

13. The verb *aitoumai* ('I ask, I request') closes the digression and prepares for the return to prayer. Paul's concern is not his own suffering but the Galatians' potential discouragement at it. The phrase *hētis estin doxa hymōn* ('which is your glory') reframes Paul's imprisonment: his suffering for their sake is their badge of honor — proof that God considers them worth suffering for.
14. Paul resumes the prayer interrupted at verse 1. The phrase *kamptō ta gonata mou* ('I bend my knees') is notable because Jews typically stood to pray; kneeling indicated extraordinary intensity or urgency. The preposition *pros* ('toward, before') indicates movement toward the Father in prayer.
15. There is a wordplay between *patēr* ('father') and *patria* ('family, clan, lineage'). Every family — heavenly and earthly, angelic and human — takes its identity from the one Father. The phrase *en ouranois kai epi gēs* ('in heaven and on earth') encompasses the entire created order.
16. The first petition: inner strengthening. The phrase *kata to ploutos tēs doxēs autou* ('according to the riches of his glory') sets the scale of God's giving — he gives according to the measure of his infinite glory, not according to human capacity. The phrase *eis ton esō anthrōpon* ('in the inner person') refers to the deepest level of human identity — the self that is being renewed by the Spirit (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:16; Romans 7:22).
17. The second petition: Christ's indwelling. The verb *katoikēsai* ('to dwell, to take up permanent residence') is stronger than *paroikeō* ('to sojourn temporarily'). Christ does not visit the heart — he moves in permanently. The perfect participles *errizōmenoi* ('having been rooted') and *tethemeliōmenoi* ('having been established on a foundation') mix botanical and architectural metaphors: love is both the soil and the foundation of the Christian life.
18. The third petition: comprehension of Christ's love. The verb *exischysēte* ('may have full strength, may be empowered') suggests this comprehension requires supernatural enablement. The four dimensions — *platos* ('breadth'), *mēkos* ('length'), *hypsos* ('height'), *bathos* ('depth') — describe something immeasurable. The object is unstated — what is four-dimensional? Most likely Christ's love (specified in v. 19), though some suggest the mystery, God's plan, or Christ himself. The phrase *syn pasin tois hagiois* ('with all the saints') indicates this is not private mysticism but communal knowledge.
19. The deliberate paradox: *gnōnai* ('to know') the love that *hyperballousan tēs gnōseōs* ('surpasses knowledge'). Paul prays for experiential knowledge of something that transcends intellectual comprehension. The final petition reaches the summit: *hina plērōthēte eis pan to plērōma tou theou* ('that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God'). The preposition *eis* ('unto, toward') indicates a goal that is never fully reached — believers are being filled toward God's own fullness. The scope of this prayer is staggering: nothing less than God's own fullness as the measure of human transformation.
20. The doxology opens with one of Paul's most exuberant expressions: *hyperekerisrou* ('super-abundantly beyond, immeasurably more'). This compound adverb piles prefix upon prefix: *hyper* ('beyond') + *ek* ('out of') + *perissou* ('abundance'). God's ability exceeds both our requests (*aitoumetha*, 'we ask') and our imagination (*nooumen*, 'we conceive, we think'). The power standard is not theoretical but experiential: *kata tēn dynamin tēn energoumenēn en hēmin* ('according to the power working in us'). The same power that raised Christ (1:19-20) is presently at work in believers.
21. The doxology's unique feature: glory is ascribed *en tē ekklēsia kai en Christō Iēsou* ('in the church and in Christ Jesus'). The church and Christ are paired as the dual venue of God's glory — an extraordinary elevation of the church's significance. The temporal phrase *eis pasas tas geneas tou aiōnos tōn aiōnōn* ('unto all the generations of the age of the ages') extends the doxology through all human history and beyond into eternity.

4

Summary: *Ephesians 4 marks the transition from theology (chapters 1-3) to ethics (chapters 4-6), opened by Paul's appeal to 'walk worthy of the calling.'* The chapter addresses church unity through a sevenfold confession (one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God), the diversity of spiritual gifts given by the ascended Christ, and the purpose of those gifts — building up the body until it reaches maturity. The second half contrasts the old way of life ('the old self') with the new ('the new self'), calling believers to put off falsehood, anger, stealing, corrupt speech, and bitterness, and to put on truth, generosity, edifying speech, kindness, and forgiveness.

What Makes This Remarkable: *The sevenfold unity formula (vv. 4-6) may preserve an early baptismal confession. The quotation from Psalm 68:18 in verse 8 is modified from the original ('received gifts from people' becomes 'gave gifts to people'), a reading that follows an interpretive tradition also found in the Aramaic Targum. The 'descending/ascending' passage (vv. 9-10) is one of the most debated christological texts — does Christ descend to earth (incarnation), to Hades (descent to the dead), or is this the Spirit's descent at Pentecost? The 'speaking the truth in love' phrase (v. 15) has become proverbial.*

Translation Friction: The modification of Psalm 68:18 raises questions about Paul's exegetical method. The phrase 'lower parts of the earth' (v. 9) is ambiguous. The list of ministry gifts (v. 11) is debated in terms of whether these are permanent offices or temporary functions. The relationship between 'apostles' here and modern claims to apostleship is contested across traditions.

Connections: The 'worthy walk' echoes Colossians 1:10 and Philippians 1:27. The gift lists connect to Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. The old self/new self language parallels Colossians 3:9-10. The ethical instructions share material with the vice/virtue catalogs of Galatians 5:19-23. The 'sealed with the Holy Spirit' (v. 30) echoes 1:13.

¹I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ²With all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love; ³Endeavouring to observe the unity of the Inner life in the bond of wholeness. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit — just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call — ⁵One baptism,, one Lord, one faith. ⁶And in you all, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all. ⁷But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. ⁸Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to people." ⁹(Now the phrase "he ascended" — what does it mean except that he also descended to the lower regions, namely the earth? ¹⁰The one who descended is the same one who also ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) ¹¹And he himself gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip God's people for the work of ministry, so that the body of Christ would be built up, ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, becoming mature and growing to the full measure of Christ himself. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be like infants, tossed back and forth by waves, and blown around by every new teaching and by the cunning trickery of people who scheme to deceive. ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶Indeed, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love. ¹⁷So this I say and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to the hardness of their hearts. ¹⁹Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity with a continual craving for more. ²⁰But that is not how you learned Christ! ²¹If so be that you have listened to him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:. ²²That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt in keeping with to the deceitful lusts;. ²³Let your thinking be made completely new;. ²⁴That you put on the new man, which following God is created in righteousness and true holiness. ²⁵Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each of you speak truth with your neighbor, for we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷Neither give location to the devil. ²⁸Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹Let no unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is good for building up, as the need arises, so that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ forgave you.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word *oun* ('therefore') connects the ethical exhortation to the theological foundation of chapters 1-3. The verb *parakaleō* ('I urge, I appeal, I exhort') is not a command but a pastoral appeal. Paul again identifies himself as *desmios* ('prisoner'), lending moral authority to his exhortation. The phrase *axiōs peripatēsai* ('to walk worthily') uses the standard Pauline metaphor for daily conduct. The calling (*klēseōs*) refers to God's call described in chapters 1-3.
2. Four qualities define the worthy walk: *tapeinophrosynē* ('humility' — a virtue despised in Greco-Roman culture but prized in Christianity), *prautēs* ('gentleness, meekness' — strength under control), *makrothymia* ('patience, long-suffering' — a slow fuse), and *anechomenoi allēlōn en agapē* ('bearing with one another in love' — tolerating others' weaknesses because love absorbs offense). These are the same qualities that characterize the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

3. The verb *spoudazontes* ('making every effort, being diligent, being zealous') indicates that unity requires active work, not passive agreement. The 'unity of the Spirit' (*tēn henotēta tou pneumatos*) is unity created by the Spirit — it already exists and must be maintained (*tērein*, 'to keep, to guard'), not manufactured. The 'bond of peace' (*syndesmō tēs eirēnēs*) is the ligament that holds the community together — peace is the binding agent.
4. The sevenfold confession begins. The first triad relates to the Spirit's work: one body (the church), one Spirit (the Holy Spirit who animates it), one hope (the eschatological expectation the Spirit generates). The number seven — the biblical number of completeness — may be deliberate: the unity is total.
5. The second triad relates to the Son's work: one Lord (Jesus Christ), one faith (the faith response to the one Lord), one baptism (the rite of initiation into the one body). 'One baptism' may be stated to counter the idea that different types of baptism produce different levels of membership. The creedal rhythm suggests this may be a pre-Pauline confessional formula.
6. The confession climaxes with the Father: one God who is *epi pantōn* ('over all' — sovereign), *dia pantōn* ('through all' — pervasive), *en pasin* ('in all' — immanent). The three prepositions describe God's relationship to creation and to the community from three angles: transcendence, pervasion, and indwelling. The Trinitarian structure of the confession is clear: Spirit (v. 4), Son (v. 5), Father (v. 6).
7. Paul pivots from unity to diversity: *heni de hekastō* ('but to each one'). Unity does not mean uniformity. The passive *edothē* ('was given') attributes the gift to divine initiative. The phrase *kata to metron tēs dōreas tou Christou* ('according to the measure of Christ's gift') indicates Christ determines the distribution — each person receives a measured portion appropriate to their role.
8. Paul quotes Psalm 68:18, but with a significant change: the Hebrew and Greek OT read 'received gifts from/among people,' while Paul writes 'gave gifts to people.' This may follow an interpretive tradition preserved in the Aramaic Targum of Psalm 68, which also reads 'gave.' Paul applies the psalm to Christ's ascension: as a conquering king who distributes spoils to his people, Christ ascended and distributed gifts (the ministry roles of v. 11) to the church.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 68:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The phrase *ta katōtera merē tēs gēs* ('the lower parts of the earth') is debated: (1) the earth as the lower region compared to heaven — 'the lower regions, namely the earth' (genitive of apposition), referring to the incarnation; (2) the regions beneath the earth — Hades/Sheol, referring to a descent to the dead between crucifixion and resurrection. Reading (1) is preferred by most modern commentators because the context focuses on incarnation and ascension, not a descent to the dead. We render with the appositional reading while noting the alternative.
10. The identity statement is emphatic: *ho katabas autos estin kai ho anabas* ('the one who descended is himself also the one who ascended'). One person encompasses the full trajectory from highest heaven to lowest earth and back again. The purpose clause *hina plērōsē ta panta* ('so that he might fill all things') connects to 1:23 — Christ fills the entire cosmos with his presence and authority.
11. Christ's gifts to the church are not things but people — he gave persons to serve in specific roles. Five roles (or four, if 'pastors and teachers' is one combined role — the Greek structure *tous de poimenas kai didaskalous* shares a single article, suggesting one role with two functions) are listed. These are not exhaustive (cf. Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12) but emphasize leadership gifts for the church's growth. The word *euangelistas* ('evangelists') appears only here, in Acts 21:8, and in 2 Timothy 4:5.
12. The noun *katartismos* ('equipping, preparing, training') was used for setting a broken bone or outfitting a ship for a voyage. The leaders' purpose is not to do all the ministry themselves but to equip the saints (*tous hagious*) to do the work (*ergon diakonias*). Ministry belongs to the entire community; leaders prepare the community for it. The goal is *oikodomēn tou sōmatos tou Christou* ('building up the body of Christ') — growth and maturation of the church.
13. Three goals define the church's maturity: (1) unity in faith and knowledge, (2) mature personhood (*andra teleion* — *teleios* means 'complete, having reached the goal, mature'), (3) the measure of Christ's fullness (*metron hēlikias tou plērōmatos tou Christou*). The third standard is breathtaking: the church's growth target is nothing less than Christ's own fullness. The word *hēlikia* can mean 'stature' or 'maturity/age' — both senses apply.
14. The negative purpose: growth prevents childishness (*nēpioi*, 'infants' — the same word as 'minors' in Galatians 4:1). Two nautical metaphors describe doctrinal instability: *klydōnizomenoi* ('tossed by waves') and *peripheromenoi* ('carried about, driven off course'). The source of the instability is false teachers characterized by *kybeia* ('dice-playing, trickery' — loaded dice), *panourgia* ('craftiness, unscrupulousness'), and *methodeia* ('scheming, stratagems' — from *methodos*, 'a pursuing after, a method of attack').
15. The participle *alētheuontes* ('truthing, being truthful') is broader than just speech — it means living authentically, dealing honestly, being genuine in all things. The qualifier *en agapē* ('in love') prevents truth from becoming a weapon. Growth is directional: *eis auton* ('into him') — the church grows toward and into Christ, its head. The word *kephalē* ('head') carries both authority ('the one in charge') and origin ('the source of life').
16. An anatomical description of the church as Christ's body. The verb *synarmologoumenon* ('being fitted together') repeats from 2:21. The verb *symbibazsomenon* ('being held together, being knit together') adds the idea of organic connection. The phrase *dia pasēs haphēs tēs epichorēgias* ('through every joint/ligament of supply') pictures the body's connective tissue — each joint or ligament supplies what the neighboring parts need. The phrase *kat' energeian en metrō henos hekastou merous* ('according to the working in the measure of each individual part') means every single member contributes according to their proportion. The result: growth and self-building in love.

17. The verb *martyromai* ('I insist, I testify, I solemnly declare') intensifies the exhortation. The phrase *en mataiotēti tou noos autōn* ('in the futility/emptiness of their mind') diagnoses the root problem: pagan life is characterized by disordered thinking. The word *mataiotēs* ('futility, emptiness, pointlessness') echoes Romans 1:21 ('they became futile in their thinking'). The ethical collapse Paul describes in verses 17-19 is rooted in intellectual and spiritual dysfunction.
18. A chain of spiritual dysfunction: darkened understanding (*eskotōmenoi tē dianoia*) alienation from God's life (*apēllotriōmenoi tēs zōēs tou theou*) ignorance (*agnoian*) hardness of heart (*pōrosin tēs kardias*). The word *pōrosis* ('hardening, callousness') was a medical term for the calcification of bone around a fracture — the heart has become calcified, unable to feel or respond. The chain moves from symptom (darkness) to root cause (hardness).
19. The verb *apēlgēkotes* ('having become callous, having ceased to feel pain') describes moral numbness — the conscience no longer registers wrongdoing. The verb *paredōkan* ('they handed themselves over') echoes Romans 1:24, 26, 28 where God 'hands them over' — here the Gentiles actively surrender themselves. The triad of *aselgeia* ('sensuality'), *akatharsia* ('impurity'), and *pleonexia* ('greed, insatiable desire for more') describes a moral spiral: sensuality leads to impurity, driven by a craving that is never satisfied.
20. The phrase *emathete ton Christon* ('you learned Christ') is unusual — one normally learns about someone or from someone, not learns a person. Christ himself is the content of Christian education, not merely its subject. The emphatic *hymeis de ouch houtōs* ('but you — not in this way!') draws a sharp line between the Gentile lifestyle just described and the believers' new reality.
21. The conditional *ei ge* ('if indeed, assuming that') presumes the condition is met. The phrase *auton ēkousate* ('you heard him') suggests they heard Christ himself through the apostolic proclamation. The phrase *en autō edidachthēte* ('you were taught in him') means their instruction took place within the sphere of Christ's reality. The phrase *kathōs estin alētheia en tō Iēsou* ('just as truth is in Jesus') is striking — Paul rarely uses the bare name 'Jesus' without 'Christ' or 'Lord.' Here the human name may emphasize the concrete, historical reality of Jesus's life and teaching as the standard of truth.
22. The infinitive *apothesthai* ('to put off, to lay aside') uses the clothing metaphor — the old self is a garment to be removed. The *ton palaion anthrōpon* ('the old person, the old self') is not merely old habits but the entire pre-Christian identity. The present participle *phtheiromenon* ('being corrupted, being destroyed') indicates the old self was in a process of active decay — it was not merely flawed but disintegrating. The desires are *tēs apatēs* ('of deception') — they promise satisfaction but deliver destruction.
23. The infinitive *ananeousthai* ('to be renewed') is present tense — renewal is an ongoing process, not a one-time event. The passive voice indicates God's agency in the renewal. The phrase *tō pneumati tou noos hymōn* ('in the spirit of your mind') targets the deepest level of mental and spiritual orientation — the mindset, the inner disposition, the controlling attitudes that shape all thinking and behavior.
24. The clothing metaphor continues: *endysasthai* ('to put on, to clothe yourself with') the *ton kainon anthrōpon* ('the new self'). This new self is not self-generated but *kτισtenta* ('created') — the same creation language as 2:10. The phrase *kata theon* ('according to God, in God's likeness') echoes Genesis 1:26-27 — the new creation restores the divine image. The qualities are *dikaïosynē* ('righteousness' — right relationship) and *hosiōtēs* ('holiness, devout integrity') *tēs alētheias* ('of truth' — genuine, not counterfeit).
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 1:26-27. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. Paul applies the old self/new self principle to specific behaviors. The first: replace *to pseudos* ('falsehood, the lie') with *alētheia* ('truth'). Paul quotes Zechariah 8:16. The motivation is body-theology: *esmen allēlōn melē* ('we are members of one another'). Lying to a fellow believer is like one body part deceiving another — it is self-destructive absurdity.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 8:16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. Paul quotes Psalm 4:4 (LXX). The imperative *orgizesthe* ('be angry') may be permissive ('if you become angry') or genuine ('anger is appropriate in some circumstances'). The qualifier *mē hamartanete* ('do not sin') separates anger from sin — anger itself is not inherently sinful, but it easily becomes so. The sun-going-down image imposes a time limit: anger must be resolved daily, not allowed to fester overnight. The word *parorgismō* ('anger, provocation, irritation') suggests the simmering variety.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 4:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The word *topon* ('place, room, opportunity') pictures unresolved anger as a beachhead — a foothold from which the devil (*tō diabolō*, 'the slanderer, the accuser') can expand his influence in the community. The connection between anger and the devil suggests that prolonged anger opens the door to evil's work in relationships.
28. The transformation is threefold: from stealing to honest labor to generous sharing. The ethic does not merely stop a negative behavior but redirects the energy toward a positive purpose. The motivation for work is not self-enrichment but *hina echē metadidonai* ('so that he may have something to share'). The entire economic orientation shifts from taking to giving.
29. The adjective *sapros* ('rotten, putrid, unwholesome') was used for rotten fruit or spoiled fish. The replacement is speech that is *agathos pros oikodomēn* ('good for building up') — constructive, timely, grace-giving. The phrase *hina dō charin tois akouousin* ('so that it may give grace to those who hear') makes speech a vehicle of grace — words are not neutral but carry either corruption or grace to their hearers.

30. The verb *lypeite* ('grieve, cause sorrow') attributes personal emotion to the Holy Spirit — the Spirit can be grieved by believers' conduct. This presupposes the Spirit's personhood. The reference to sealing (*esphragisthēte*) recalls 1:13. The phrase *eis hēmeran apolytrōseōs* ('for/until the day of redemption') indicates the seal holds until the final day — the Spirit's presence is the guarantee of complete, future redemption. The ethical implications are profound: the Spirit who guarantees salvation is wounded by the very sins Paul has been cataloging.
31. Six vices are expelled: *pikria* ('bitterness' — resentment that poisons), *thymos* ('wrath' — explosive fury), *orgē* ('anger' — settled hostility), *kraugē* ('clamor' — loud quarreling, shouting), *blasphēmia* ('slander, abusive speech' — not only against God but against people), and *kakia* ('malice' — the general disposition of ill will). The imperative *arthētō* ('let it be removed') is passive — these are to be taken away, eliminated from the community.
32. Three replacement virtues: *chrēstōi* ('kind, good, generous' — related to *Christos* by sound, a connection early Christians noticed), *eusplanchnoi* ('tenderhearted, compassionate' — literally 'good bowels,' since the intestines were considered the seat of deep emotion), and *charizomenoi heautois* ('forgiving one another' — from *charizomai*, 'to give freely, to grace'). The standard for forgiveness is divine: *kathōs kai ho theos en Christō echarisato hymin* ('just as God in Christ forgave you'). God's forgiveness is both the model and the motivation for human forgiveness.

5

Summary: *Ephesians 5 continues the ethical exhortation, calling believers to imitate God and walk in love as Christ loved them. Paul warns against sexual immorality, impurity, greed, and coarse talk — behaviors that have no place among 'children of light.' He contrasts the darkness of the old life with the fruit of light. The chapter then addresses wise living: making the most of every opportunity, understanding the Lord's will, being filled with the Spirit (expressed through psalms, hymns, thanksgiving, and mutual submission). The final section introduces the household code, beginning with the husband-wife relationship, which Paul elevates to a profound mystery about Christ and the church.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The command to 'be filled with the Spirit' (v. 18) is followed not by charismatic manifestations but by worship, thanksgiving, and mutual submission — the Spirit's fullness is expressed communally. The husband-wife passage (vv. 22-33) contains Paul's deepest reflection on marriage as an image of Christ's relationship with the church. The quotation of Genesis 2:24 ('the two shall become one flesh') is called a 'profound mystery' (v. 32) that Paul applies to Christ and the church. The 'Awake, O sleeper' fragment (v. 14) may preserve an early Christian hymn or baptismal formula.*

Translation Friction: *The household code (vv. 22-33) reflects patriarchal assumptions of the first-century Greco-Roman world. Paul both works within and subverts these structures: the call for wives to submit is framed by mutual submission (v. 21) and matched by the radical demand that husbands love their wives as Christ loved the church — sacrificially unto death. We render the text faithfully without either flattening or amplifying its cultural context. The verb 'submit' in verse 22 is not actually present in the Greek — it is carried over from verse 21.*

Connections: *Walking in love (v. 2) echoes 1 John 4:7-12. The light/darkness contrast parallels Romans 13:11-14 and 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8. The Spirit-filling connects to Acts 2 and Galatians 5:16-25. The household code parallels Colossians 3:18-4:1 and 1 Peter 3:1-7. The Christ-church marriage typology draws on Old Testament imagery of God as Israel's husband (Hosea 2; Isaiah 54; Ezekiel 16).*

¹Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²Conduct your lives in devotion, as Christ as well has loved us, and has granted himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour. ³But sexual immorality and any kind of impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is fitting for saints. ⁴Obscene language, foolish talk, and crude joking have no place among you. Instead, let there be thanksgiving. ⁵For you can be sure of this: no sexually immoral or impure or greedy person — such a person is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience. ⁷Therefore do not become partners with them. ⁸For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, ⁹(For the fruit of the Inner life is in all goodness and moral integrity and truth;). ¹⁰Indeed, proving what is acceptable to the Lord. ¹¹Take no part in the fruitless works of darkness, but instead expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to speak of the things they do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴For this reason he says, Awake

you that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. ¹⁵Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise people but as wise, ¹⁶Indeed, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that leads to reckless living. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord. ²⁰Giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ;. ²¹Submit to one another out of reverence for God. ²²Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, ²³For the husband is the skull of the wife, indeed as Christ is the head of the church — then he is the saviour of the body. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶Indeed, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the message,. ²⁷That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any these people thing. But that it should be sacred and without blemish. ²⁸In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰Indeed, since we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. ³¹"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³²This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. ³³However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife respect her husband.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word *mimētai* ('imitators') gives us the English word 'mimic.' Children naturally imitate their parents — believers imitate their Father. The standard is breathtaking: imitate God. The phrase *hōs tekna agapēta* ('as beloved children') provides the relational basis: imitation flows from the security of being loved, not from the anxiety of earning approval.
2. Christ's self-giving love defines the content of the 'walk in love' command. The verb *paredōken heauton* ('gave himself over') echoes Galatians 2:20. Christ is both priest and offering. The phrase *prosphoran kai thysian* ('offering and sacrifice') uses Old Testament sacrificial terminology. The phrase *eis osmēn euōdias* ('for a fragrant aroma') quotes the language of acceptable sacrifice from Leviticus 1:9, 13, 17 — Christ's self-offering is the sacrifice God receives with pleasure.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 1:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The triad *porneia* ('sexual immorality'), *akatharsia* ('impurity'), and *pleonexia* ('greed') groups sexual and economic sin together — both involve taking what belongs to another. The phrase *mēde onomazesthō* ('must not even be named') indicates these behaviors should be so absent from the community that they are not even a topic of conversation. The standard is *kathōs prepei hagiois* ('as is fitting for holy ones') — the believers' identity as 'saints' defines what is appropriate.
4. Three speech vices: *aischrotēs* ('obscenity, shameful speech'), *mōrologia* ('foolish talk, silly speech'), and *eutrapelia* ('coarse wit, crude joking'). The last word (*eutrapelia*) was considered a virtue in Greek rhetoric — 'ready wit' — but Paul regards it as inappropriate when it crosses into sexual or degrading humor. The replacement is *eucharistia* ('thanksgiving') — speech directed upward rather than downward.
5. The equation *pleonektēs, ho estin eidōlōlatrēs* ('the greedy person, who is an idolater') identifies greed as a form of idolatry — the worship of material acquisition (cf. Colossians 3:5). The phrase *tē basileia tou Christou kai theou* ('the kingdom of Christ and of God') uses a single article governing both nouns, closely associating Christ and God as joint rulers of the kingdom. This is one of the strongest christological statements in Ephesians.
6. The 'empty words' (*kenois logois*) may refer to those who argued that grace covers all behavior — a libertine distortion of Paul's own teaching. The phrase *tous huiōus tēs apeitheias* ('the children of disobedience') repeats from 2:2, forming an inclusion: the lifestyle described in 2:1-3 brings divine wrath, and believers must not return to it.
7. The word *symmetochoi* ('co-partners, co-sharers') warns against participation in the behaviors of verse 3-5, not against all contact with unbelievers. The command is about shared practice, not social isolation.
8. Paul does not say they were 'in darkness' but that they were darkness (*ēte skotos*) — darkness was their identity, not merely their environment. Similarly, they do not merely have light — they are light (*phōs en kyriō*). The transformation is ontological, not merely behavioral. The qualifier *en kyriō* ('in the Lord') prevents this from becoming self-congratulation: they are light only in connection with the Lord.
9. The SBLGNT reads 'fruit of the light' (*phōtos*) rather than 'fruit of the Spirit' (*pneumatōs*) found in some manuscripts. The triad *agathōsynē* ('goodness'), *dikaioōsynē* ('righteousness'), and *alētheia* ('truth') describes the harvest produced by a life lived in the light.
10. The verb *dokimazontes* ('testing, discerning, approving after testing') indicates active moral discernment — not following rules mechanically but testing what genuinely pleases the Lord in each situation. This is mature Christian ethics: not a codebook but a relationship with the Lord that develops discernment.

11. The command has two parts: non-participation (*mē synkoinōneite*, 'do not co-participate') and active exposure (*elenchete*, 'reprove, expose, bring to light'). The adjective *akarpōis* ('fruitless, unproductive') contrasts with the 'fruit of the light' in verse 9. Darkness produces nothing of lasting value. The verb *elenchō* means both verbal rebuke and the act of exposing something to the light.
12. The phrase *ta krypte ginomena* ('the things done in secret') suggests practices too degrading to describe publicly. Paul's reticence stands in contrast to the Greco-Roman cultural tolerance — or celebration — of such behavior. The verb *legein* ('to speak of') indicates that detailed description would itself be a form of participation.
13. Light's function is revelation: *elenchomena hypo tou phōtos phaneroutai* ('things exposed by the light are made visible'). The light does not destroy but reveals — making the hidden visible. This is both a statement about moral truth (sin cannot hide from light) and about the community's prophetic function (believers' lives expose darkness).
14. The quotation is not from any known Old Testament text. It may be: (1) a free adaptation of Isaiah 60:1 ('Arise, shine, for your light has come'), (2) an early Christian hymn, or (3) a baptismal formula sung when candidates emerged from the water. The imagery of waking from sleep and rising from the dead suggests baptism as a transition from death/darkness to life/light. The promise *epiphausei soi ho Christos* ('Christ will shine on you') makes Christ the source of the light.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 60:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The adverb *akribōs* ('carefully, precisely, accurately') modifies either *blepete* ('look carefully') or *peripatite* ('walk carefully'). Either way, the point is deliberate attention to one's conduct. The wisdom/foolishness contrast echoes Old Testament wisdom literature (Proverbs, Ecclesiastes) and connects to the earlier warning about being 'tossed about' (4:14).
16. The participle *exagorazomenoi* ('buying up, redeeming, making the most of') uses marketplace language: snapping up a bargain before it disappears. The word *kairos* ('opportunity, critical moment') denotes not clock-time (*chronos*) but moments of significance. The reason for urgency: *hai hēmerai ponērai eisin* ('the days are evil'). The present era is hostile territory; opportunities for good must be seized.
17. The contrast between *aphrones* ('senseless, foolish') and *syniete* ('understand, put together') frames Christian living as an exercise in discernment. The goal is understanding to *thelēma tou kyriou* ('the will of the Lord') — not abstract theological knowledge but practical perception of what God wants in each situation.
18. The contrast between wine-intoxication and Spirit-filling is not merely illustrative but substitutionary: where pagans sought ecstasy through wine (particularly in Dionysian worship), believers find genuine fullness through the Spirit. The word *asōtia* ('reckless living, dissipation, debauchery' — literally 'unsaved-ness') describes the waste that drunkenness produces. The imperative *plērousthe* ('be filled') is present tense (continuous: 'keep on being filled'), passive (the Spirit does the filling, not the believer), and plural (this is a community experience). The four participles that follow (vv. 19-21) describe how Spirit-filling manifests.
19. The first expression of Spirit-filling is communal worship. The three categories — *psalmois* ('psalms' — possibly the Old Testament Psalter), *hymnois* ('hymns' — compositions praising God), and *ōdais pneumatikais* ('spiritual songs' — Spirit-inspired compositions) — may overlap. The phrase *tē kardia hymnōn* ('with your heart') indicates that external singing must be accompanied by internal reality. Worship is directed *tō kyriō* ('to the Lord').
20. The second expression: thanksgiving. The scope is *pantote* ('always') and *hyper pantōn* ('for everything'). The phrase *en onomati* ('in the name of') indicates that thanksgiving is offered through Christ's mediation and on his authority. Thanksgiving is directed *tō theō kai patri* ('to God the Father').
21. The third expression of Spirit-filling: mutual submission. The participle *hypotassomenoi* ('submitting, placing yourselves under') is reciprocal — *allēlois* ('to one another'). This verse functions as both the conclusion of the Spirit-filling section and the heading for the household code that follows (5:22-6:9). The phrase *en phobō Christou* ('in the fear/reverence of Christ') provides the motive: submission to others flows from reverence for Christ, not from inferiority.
22. The verb 'submit' does not appear in the Greek of this verse — it is carried over from the participle *hypotassomenoi* in verse 21. This grammatical link means the wife's submission to her husband is a specific instance of the mutual submission all believers owe one another. The phrase *hōs tō kyriō* ('as to the Lord') sets the analogy: the husband-wife relationship is patterned on the Christ-church relationship. The word *idiois* ('own') distinguishes this from a general submission of all women to all men.
23. The word *kephalē* ('head') is debated: it can mean 'authority over' or 'source of.' In context, the Christ-church analogy emphasizes sacrificial care more than hierarchical authority (see vv. 25-27). The additional phrase *autos sōtēr tou sōmatos* ('he himself is Savior of the body') applies uniquely to Christ — the husband is not the wife's savior. The analogy has limits, and Paul here acknowledges one.
24. The comparison is drawn: the church's submission to Christ provides the pattern for the wife's submission to her husband. The phrase *en panti* ('in everything') is comprehensive but must be read in light of the analogy's controlling context — submission to Christ is never dehumanizing, and submission 'as to the Lord' (v. 22) sets Christ, not the husband's will, as the ultimate authority.
25. The husband's obligation is staggering: *agapate tas gynaikas* ('love your wives') with the standard *kathōs kai ho Christos ēgapēsen tēn ekklēsia* ('just as Christ loved the church'). Christ's love for the church was expressed in total self-sacrifice (*heauton paredōken hyper autēs*, 'he gave himself up for her'). The husband is called not to command but to die — to sacrifice his own interests for his wife's well-being. In the patriarchal context, this demand was revolutionary.

- 26.** The purpose of Christ's self-giving: *hagiasē* ('to make holy, to sanctify'). The means: *tō loutrō tou hydatos* ('by the washing of water') — almost certainly a reference to baptism — *en rhēmati* ('with the word, in connection with the word'). The word (*rhēma*) may refer to a spoken baptismal confession, to the gospel proclaimed, or to Christ's authoritative word. Christ's sanctifying work combines water (the physical act) and word (the verbal/spiritual reality).
- 27.** The image shifts to a bridal presentation: Christ prepares the church like a bride being prepared for her wedding day. The verb *parastēsē* ('present, place alongside') was used for presenting a bride to the groom. The adjectives describe bridal perfection: *endoxon* ('glorious, splendid'), without *spilon* ('spot, stain'), *rhytida* ('wrinkle'), or any blemish. The goal is *hagia kai amōmos* ('holy and blameless') — the same words used of believers in 1:4. Christ's sanctifying work completes what election purposed.
- 28.** Paul shifts from the Christ-church analogy to a body-analogy: since husband and wife are 'one flesh' (v. 31), loving one's wife is loving oneself. The verb *opheilousin* ('ought, owe, are obligated') frames love not as optional generosity but as marital duty. The logic is profoundly practical: self-interest and spousal love converge in the one-flesh union.
- 29.** The verbs *ektrephei* ('nourishes, feeds, raises to maturity') and *thalpei* ('cherishes, warms, tenderly cares for') describe intimate, nurturing care. The argument from nature: since everyone naturally cares for their own body, and since husband and wife share one body, spousal care is an extension of self-care. The Christ-church analogy returns: Christ nourishes and cherishes the church as his own body.
- 30.** The simple statement *melē esmen tou sōmatos autou* ('we are members of his body') grounds the entire discussion: believers' union with Christ is bodily, intimate, and real. Some manuscripts add 'of his flesh and of his bones' — echoing Genesis 2:23 (Eve from Adam's body) and strengthening the marriage typology. The SBLGNT does not include this addition.
- 30.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 2:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 31.** Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 (LXX). The verb *proskollēthēsetai* ('will be joined, will be glued, will cleave') indicates permanent, inseparable attachment. The phrase *eis sarka mian* ('into one flesh') describes a new unity that transcends the original family bond. Paul quotes this not primarily to teach about marriage (though it does) but to reveal the deeper reality to which marriage points — as he explains in verse 32.
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 2:24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 32.** The word *mystērion* ('mystery') here does not mean 'puzzling' but 'a hidden reality now revealed.' The Genesis text about husband and wife becoming one flesh contains a deeper meaning (a 'mystery'): it prophetically describes the union of Christ and the church. Marriage is a living parable of the gospel. The Vulgate translated *mystērion* as *sacramentum*, which led to marriage being classified as a sacrament in Western Christianity. Paul's point is christological: marriage's deepest meaning is found in Christ's union with his people.
- 33.** Paul returns from the cosmic typology to practical application. The verb *agapatō* ('let him love') reiterates the husband's primary obligation. The word *phobētai* ('respect, revere') for the wife is debated — *phobos* can mean 'fear' or 'deep respect.' In context (where the controlling image is reverence for Christ, v. 21), 'respect' captures the sense. The summary is asymmetric: husbands are told to love; wives to respect. This may reflect different temptations in first-century marriage, not a permanent hierarchy of duties.

6

Summary: *Ephesians 6 completes the household code with instructions for children and parents, then slaves and masters. The chapter's climax is the armor of God passage (vv. 10-20), one of the most vivid and beloved sections in Paul's letters. Paul identifies the true battle — not against flesh and blood but against cosmic spiritual forces — and equips believers with divine armor: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. The chapter closes with personal notes about Tychicus and a final benediction.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The armor of God passage draws on Isaiah's description of God's own armor (Isaiah 59:17; 11:5) — believers wear God's equipment, not their own. The list of spiritual enemies (v. 12) is the fullest taxonomy of evil powers in the New Testament. The only offensive weapon in the armor is 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God' (v. 17). Prayer (vv. 18-20) is not a separate piece of armor but the atmosphere in which all the armor functions. Paul's request for prayer that he might speak boldly 'in chains' (v. 20) is poignant — the ambassador is in prison.*

Translation Friction: *The slave-master instructions (vv. 5-9) operate within the institution of slavery without explicitly condemning it. Paul subverts slavery from within (masters and slaves have the same Master in heaven, v. 9) but does not call for abolition. The spiritual warfare language (vv. 10-20) raises questions about how literally to read the cosmic powers. We render the text as given without either literalizing or*

demythologizing.

Connections: The children/parents instruction parallels Colossians 3:20-21. The slave/master code parallels Colossians 3:22-4:1 and Philemon. The armor imagery draws on Isaiah 59:17 and 11:5, and parallels 1 Thessalonians 5:8 and Romans 13:12. Tychicus also appears in Colossians 4:7-8, Acts 20:4, 2 Timothy 4:12, and Titus 3:12.

¹Because this was right, children, obey your parents in the Lord:. ²"Honor your father and mother" — this is the first commandment with a promise — ³so that it may go well with you and that you may live long on the earth." ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. ⁵Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would obey Christ, ⁶Do not work only when they are watching, just to win their approval. Instead, work as servants of Christ, carrying out God's will wholeheartedly. ⁷With upright will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men. ⁸Indeed, knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same will he accept of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. ⁹And masters, treat them the same way. Stop threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him. ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the full armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having fastened the belt of truth around your waist and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵Your ankles shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the message of God:. ¹⁸Praying always with all prayer and earnest prayer in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and earnest prayer for all saints;. ¹⁹For me, that utterance may be granted to me, that I may unlock my lips boldly, to render known the mystery of the gospel,. ²⁰For which I am an ambassador in bonds — that in it I may speak boldly, as I anything to speak. ²¹So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord will tell you everything. ²²I am sending him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts. ²³Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb hypakouete ('obey, listen to, respond to') is stronger than hypotassō ('submit'): children are to obey, not merely defer. The phrase en kyriō ('in the Lord') qualifies the obedience — it is rendered within the context of the Lord's authority, not unconditionally. The word dikaion ('right, just') appeals to a universal moral principle recognized across cultures.
2. Paul quotes the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16). The designation 'first commandment with a promise' (entolē prōtē en epangelia) is debated — the second commandment also contains a promise of sorts. Paul may mean 'first' in sequence among the commandments that regulate human relationships, or 'first in importance.' The verb tima ('honor') encompasses more than obedience — it includes respect, care, and financial support in old age.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 20:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 5:16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The promise is twofold: eu soi genētai ('it may go well with you') and esē makrochronios epi tēs gēs ('you may be long-lived on the earth'). The original Deuteronomy text refers to 'the land' (the promised land of Israel). Paul universalizes it to 'the earth' (tēs gēs), applying the promise to all believers regardless of geography.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 20:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The counter-instruction to fathers (pateres, which could include both parents) limits parental authority: mē parorgizete ('do not provoke to anger, do not exasperate'). Harsh, arbitrary, or demeaning treatment drives children to frustration and resentment. The positive instruction: ektrephete ('bring up, nourish, raise to maturity') en paideia kai nouthesia kyriou ('in the discipline and instruction of the Lord'). Paideia ('discipline, training,

- education') and nouthesia ('instruction, admonition, correction') together cover the full range of child-rearing — the Lord's standards, not the parents' whims, set the curriculum.
5. The word *douloi* ('slaves') refers to actual enslaved persons, not employees. The qualifying phrase *kata sarka* ('according to the flesh') relativizes the master's authority — they are masters only in the physical realm, not spiritually. The phrase *meta phobou kai tromou* ('with fear and trembling') is the same phrase Paul uses for approaching God's work (Philippians 2:12) — it suggests conscientious seriousness, not cringing terror. The phrase *en haplotēti tēs kardias* ('in sincerity of heart') means without duplicity.
 6. The compound *ophthalmoduleian* ('eye-service, working only when watched') may be a Pauline coinage. The contrast: *anthrōpareskoi* ('people-pleasers') versus *douloi Christou* ('slaves of Christ'). The true master is Christ, and his 'eye' is always present. The phrase *ek psychēs* ('from the soul, from the heart') demands interior motivation, not merely external compliance.
 7. The phrase *met' eunoias* ('with good will, with genuine enthusiasm') transforms compulsory labor into willing service. The phrase *hōs tō kyriō kai ouk anthrōpōis* ('as to the Lord and not to people') reframes the entire master-slave relationship: every act of service, however menial, is rendered to Christ. This does not endorse slavery but radically transforms the slave's experience of it.
 8. The verb *komisetai* ('will receive back, will be repaid') promises divine recompense for all good work. The equalizer *eite doulos eite eleutheros* ('whether slave or free') demolishes the social distinction before the Lord's judgment seat: at the final accounting, social status is irrelevant. The Lord evaluates and rewards the substance of the work, not the status of the worker.
 9. The command to masters is revolutionary for its context: *ta auta poieite pros autous* ('do the same things toward them') — treat slaves with the same good will and sincerity required of slaves. The imperative *anientes tēn apeilēn* ('stop the threatening') uses the present participle suggesting an ongoing practice that must cease. The theological grounding is devastating to the institution: *kai autōn kai hymōn ho kyrios estin en ouranois* ('both their Lord and yours is in heaven'). Master and slave share the same Master. The word *prosōpolēmpsia* ('favoritism, partiality, respect of persons') literally means 'face-taking' — the heavenly Master does not judge by social face.
 10. The phrase *tou loipou* ('finally, henceforth') signals the letter's closing section. The passive imperative *endynamousthe* ('be empowered, be made strong') indicates that the strength is not the believer's own but is received from outside — *en kyriō* ('in the Lord'). The phrase *en tō krati tēs ischyos autou* ('in the strength of his might') reuses two of the four power-words from 1:19, connecting the armor passage to the resurrection-power prayer. The same divine power that raised Christ is now the believer's equipment for spiritual battle.
 11. The word *panoplian* ('full armor, complete equipment') is a military term for the complete outfit of a heavily armed soldier — not piecemeal protection but comprehensive equipment. It is *tou theou* ('of God') — God's own armor, not human manufacture. The purpose is *stēnai* ('to stand, to hold your ground'). The enemy's strategy is *methodeias* ('schemes, stratagems, cunning tactics') — the devil attacks through deception, not merely through force. The word *methodeias* (from *methodos*, 'a following after, a pursuit') suggests systematic, calculated attack plans.
 12. The word *palē* ('wrestling, struggle') denotes hand-to-hand combat. The fourfold repetition of *pros* ('against') identifies the real enemies: (1) *archas* ('rulers, principalities'), (2) *exousias* ('authorities'), (3) *kosmokratoras tou skotous toutou* ('world-rulers of this darkness' — *kosmokratōr* is a title used for powerful gods and emperors), (4) *pneumatika tēs ponērias en tois epouraniois* ('spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places'). The phrase 'flesh and blood' (*haima kai sarka* — note the reversed order) means other human beings. The real enemy is never the person in front of you but the spiritual forces behind them.
 13. The imperative *analabete* ('take up, pick up') pictures a soldier reaching for weapons laid out before him. The phrase *en tē hēmera tē ponēra* ('in the evil day') could mean the final eschatological battle, a particularly intense season of testing, or any day of spiritual conflict. The goal is twice stated: *antistēnai* ('to resist, to withstand') and *stēnai* ('to stand'). The phrase *hapanta katergasamenoi* ('having accomplished everything, having done all') means after exhausting every effort — when the battle is over, still standing.
 14. The first two pieces: (1) The belt (*perizōsamenoi tēn osphyn*, 'having girded the waist') of truth (*en alētheia*). The Roman soldier's belt held the tunic in place for movement and supported the scabbard — everything depended on it. Truth (both doctrinal integrity and personal honesty) is the foundation that holds all else together. (2) The breastplate (*thōraka*) of righteousness (*tēs dikaioynēs*). The breastplate protected vital organs. Righteousness — both the imputed righteousness of Christ and the lived righteousness of the believer — protects the heart. This draws on Isaiah 59:17 where God puts on righteousness as a breastplate.
 14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 59:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
 15. The third piece: military sandals (*caligae*) that gave soldiers sure footing on any terrain. The word *hetoimasia* ('readiness, preparation, firm footing') suggests either readiness to proclaim the gospel or the firm footing that the gospel provides. The phrase *tou euangeliou tēs eirēnēs* ('of the gospel of peace') is striking in a military context — the soldier's weapon is a message of peace. This echoes Isaiah 52:7 ('How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of peace').
 15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 52:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
 16. The fourth piece: the *thyreon* ('large shield, door-shaped shield') — the Roman *scutum*, a full-body shield that could be interlocked with others to form a wall. Faith as shield provides comprehensive protection. The phrase *ta belē tou ponērou ta pepyromēna* ('the flaming arrows/missiles of the evil one') refers to arrows dipped in pitch and ignited — designed to set targets on fire. The verb *sbesai* ('to extinguish, to quench') suggests the shield soaks the fire-arrows, absorbing their destructive power.

- 17.** The fifth piece: the helmet (perikephalaian) of salvation (tou sōtēriou). The helmet protects the head — salvation guards the mind. This echoes Isaiah 59:17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:8. The sixth piece: the sword (machairan) of the Spirit (tou pneumatos) — the only offensive weapon. It is identified as rhēma theou ('the word of God'). The word rhēma (a specific spoken word) rather than logos (the broader concept of word/message) may emphasize the specific, situational application of Scripture — the right word at the right moment, wielded by the Spirit's guidance.
- 17.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 59:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 18.** Prayer is not a seventh piece of armor but the atmosphere in which the armor functions — the breath of the warrior. Four 'all' words emphasize comprehensiveness: dia pasēs proseuchēs ('with every prayer'), en panti kairō ('at every opportunity'), en pasē proskarterēsei ('with all perseverance'), peri pantōn tōn hagiōn ('for all the saints'). The phrase en pneumatī ('in the Spirit') indicates Spirit-empowered prayer. The verb agrypnountes ('staying alert, keeping watch') is a military term for sentinel duty — spiritual warfare demands constant vigilance.
- 19.** Paul requests prayer for himself — not for release from prison but for effective proclamation. The passive dothē logos ('words may be given') attributes effective speech to divine gift. The phrase en parrēsia ('with boldness, with freedom of speech') echoes 3:12. The content is to mystērion tou euangelīou ('the mystery of the gospel') — the full truth about Christ's universal reconciliation, the letter's central theme.
- 20.** The phrase presbeuō en halysei ('I am an ambassador in chains') is magnificently ironic. An ambassador (presbeuō) carries the authority and dignity of the sovereign who sent him; a prisoner (en halysei, 'in a chain') has no authority or dignity. Paul is both — a royal envoy in shackles. The phrase hōs dei me lalēsai ('as it is necessary for me to speak, as I ought to speak') indicates that bold proclamation is not optional but obligatory.
- 21.** Tychicus is described as agapētos adelphos ('beloved brother') and pistos diakonos ('faithful servant/minister'). He serves as the letter carrier and Paul's personal representative. The nearly identical wording in Colossians 4:7 suggests these letters were sent together. Tychicus would supplement the letter with firsthand reports about Paul's situation.
- 22.** The dual purpose: (1) information about Paul (hina gnōte ta peri hēmōn, 'so that you may know about us'), and (2) encouragement (parakalesē tas kardias hymōn, 'that he may encourage your hearts'). The verb parakaleō here carries its comforting, encouraging sense — the Ephesians may have been anxious about Paul's imprisonment.
- 23.** The benediction is unusual in its third-person form ('peace to the brothers') rather than the typical second-person ('peace to you'). This may support the circular-letter theory — the blessing addresses a wider audience. The triad eirēnē ('peace'), agapē ('love'), and pistis ('faith') summarizes the letter's major themes. The source is double: apo theou patros kai kyriou Iēsou Christou ('from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ').
- 24.** The final word is en aphtharsia ('in incorruptibility, with an imperishable love'). The word aphtharia is typically used for immortality or imperishability (1 Corinthians 15:42, 50, 53-54). Applied to love for Christ, it describes a love that does not decay, fade, or end. The letter that began with grace (1:2) ends with grace — the alpha and omega of the Christian life.

Philippians

1

Summary: *Paul and Timothy write to the believers in Philippi, expressing gratitude for their partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Paul describes his imprisonment as having advanced the gospel rather than hindered it, reports that Christ is being proclaimed even by rivals, and declares his famous conviction: 'to live is Christ and to die is gain.' He urges the Philippians to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel, standing firm in one spirit.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Philippians is the warmest of Paul's letters, written from prison yet saturated with joy. The word 'joy' and its cognates appear sixteen times across four chapters. Paul's relationship with Philippi was uniquely close — they were the only church from whom he accepted financial support (4:15). The theological climax of chapter 1 is the 'to live is Christ' declaration (v. 21), which frames existence itself as participation in Christ. Paul's candid reflection on preferring death yet choosing to remain for the Philippians' sake reveals a pastoral theology shaped by self-giving love.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of Paul's opponents in verses 15-17 is debated. Some preached Christ from envy and rivalry, hoping to afflict Paul in his imprisonment. Whether these are rival missionaries, Judaizers, or local preachers is unclear from the text alone. We render the Greek without resolving this ambiguity. The location of Paul's imprisonment — Rome, Ephesus, or Caesarea — is likewise debated; the text itself does not specify, though the mention of the praetorium (v. 13) suggests Rome.*

Connections: *The letter connects to Acts 16, which narrates the founding of the Philippian church through Lydia's conversion and the jailer's baptism. Paul's language of 'partnership in the gospel' (koinonia tou euangelion) echoes the covenant fellowship vocabulary of the Old Testament. The citizenship language in verse 27 anticipates the explicit heavenly citizenship declaration of 3:20.*

¹Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ³I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴Always in every petition of mine for you all making request with joy, ⁵Since your fellowship in the gospel from the foremost day until now. ⁶I am confident of this very thing, that the one who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, because I hold you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, all of you are partners with

me in grace. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer: that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰That you may approve things that are excellent. So you can become sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; ¹¹Indeed, being overflowing with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. ¹²Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel, ¹³As a result, it has become widely known throughout the whole imperial guard — and to everyone else — that I am in chains for the sake of Christ. ¹⁴Numerous of the brothers and sisters in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the message without fear. ¹⁵Some indeed proclaim Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of good will. ¹⁶The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. ¹⁸What then? Only this: that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹For I know that this will turn to my salvation by way of your petition, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰According to my earnest expectation and my confident expectation, that in nothing I will be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. ²¹And to die is gain, and for to me to live is Christ. ²²If I am to go on living in the body, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I will choose I cannot tell. ²³I am hard-pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. ²⁴But to remain in the body is more necessary for your sake. ²⁵Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶Then when I come to you again, you will have even more reason to be proud in Christ Jesus because of me. ²⁷Only this: live as citizens worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear that you are standing firm in one spirit, contending side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸In nothing intimidated by those who oppose you — which is to them a clear sign of their destruction, but to you of salvation, and that of God. ²⁹For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake, ³⁰Having the same conflict which you noticed in me, and now hear to be in me.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *douloi* ('slaves, servants') denotes total allegiance. Paul identifies himself not by apostolic title but as a slave of Christ — unusual for his letter openings and perhaps reflecting the intimate tone of this letter. The term *episkopoi* ('overseers') is rendered 'overseers' rather than the KJV's 'bishops,' which carries later ecclesiastical connotations absent from the first-century context. *Diakonoi* ('deacons, servants') refers to recognized servants of the congregation.
2. Paul's standard greeting fuses the Greek *charis* ('grace') with the Hebrew *shalom*-equivalent *eirene* ('peace'). The pairing of God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ as co-source of grace and peace is a high christological claim embedded in an ordinary salutation.
3. The phrase *epi pase tee mneia hymōn* can mean either 'upon every remembrance of you' (each time Paul thinks of them) or 'for all your remembrance of me' (their remembering him through gifts). The former reading is more natural in context and is followed here.
4. The repetition of *pas* ('all, every') is characteristic of Philippians — Paul uses the word more frequently here than in any other letter relative to length. Joy (*chara*) appears for the first time, establishing the letter's dominant theme.
5. The Greek *koinōnia* ('partnership, fellowship, sharing') is richer than the English 'fellowship' suggests. It denotes active participation and mutual sharing — the Philippians were not passive recipients of the gospel but active partners in its advancement, including through their financial support of Paul's mission.
6. The verb *enarchomai* ('to begin') and *epiteleo* ('to bring to completion') form a deliberate pair — what God initiated, God will finish. The 'day of Christ Jesus' (*hemeras Christou Iesou*) is an eschatological reference to Christ's return, adapted from the Old Testament 'day of the LORD' (*yom YHWH*).
7. The phrase *echein me en tee kardia hymas* is ambiguous — it could mean 'I hold you in my heart' or 'you hold me in your heart.' Both are grammatically possible; we follow the former as the more natural subject-object order. The compound *synkoinōnos* ('co-partners, fellow-sharers') intensifies the *koinōnia* theme of verse 5.
8. The Greek *splanchna* ('intestines, inner organs') was the ancient seat of deep emotion, equivalent to the modern 'heart.' The KJV's literal 'bowels' is misleading in modern English. Paul claims that his longing for the Philippians originates not from natural affection but from Christ's own love working through him.

9. Paul prays not merely for love but for love informed by epignōsis ('full knowledge, deep understanding') and aisthēsis ('perception, discernment, moral insight'). This is not sentimentality but a love that sees clearly and acts wisely.
10. The verb dokimazein ('to test, examine, approve') means to distinguish what truly matters from what merely appears important. The adjective eilikrineis ('pure, sincere') may derive from heilē ('sunlight') and krinō ('to judge') — that which is judged genuine when examined in full light.
11. The singular 'fruit' (karpon) follows the SBLGNT against the KJV's plural 'fruits.' Righteousness here is both status and conduct — the right standing before God that produces right living, all mediated through Christ. The phrase 'to the glory and praise of God' marks the goal of all Christian ethics in Paul's thought.
12. The Greek adelphoi ('brothers') is used inclusively here for the entire congregation, hence 'brothers and sisters.' The word prokopē ('advancement, progress') was a Stoic term for moral progress; Paul repurposes it for the spread of the gospel. His imprisonment, which might seem a setback, has paradoxically furthered the mission.
13. The praitōrion ('praetorium') could refer to the praetorian guard in Rome, the governor's residence in Caesarea, or a provincial headquarters in Ephesus. If Rome, Paul's chains have become a witness to the imperial guard itself. The phrase en Christō ('in Christ') modifies the imprisonment — his bonds are recognized as being 'for Christ' rather than for criminal activity.
14. Paul's suffering has had the opposite of its intended effect: rather than silencing the movement, his imprisonment has emboldened other believers. The verb tolmaō ('to dare, to be bold') suggests courage in the face of real danger — these believers preach knowing that imprisonment is a real possibility.
15. Paul acknowledges a painful reality: not all who preach Christ do so with pure motives. The pair phthonon ('envy') and erin ('rivalry, strife') suggests personal antagonism toward Paul rather than doctrinal error — these preachers proclaim the true Christ but from corrupt motives.
16. The SBLGNT reverses the order found in the KJV's underlying text (Textus Receptus), placing the love-motivated group in verse 16 and the rivalry-motivated group in verse 17. We follow the SBLGNT order. The verb keimai ('I am placed, I am appointed') suggests Paul views his imprisonment as a divine assignment rather than a misfortune.
17. The Greek eritheia ('selfish ambition, self-seeking') originally referred to working for hire and came to mean partisan, self-interested maneuvering. These preachers aim to increase Paul's suffering by highlighting his confinement while they enjoy freedom. Despite their malice, Paul will rejoice that Christ is preached (v. 18).
18. Paul's response to rivalrous preachers is astonishing generosity: as long as Christ is proclaimed, he rejoices regardless of the preacher's motives. The Greek prophasei ('pretext, false motive') contrasts with aletheia ('truth'). The shift from present chairō ('I rejoice') to future charēsomai ('I will rejoice') extends his joy from the present crisis into the future.
19. Paul echoes Job 13:16 (LXX: touto moi apobēsetai eis sōtērian). The word sōtēria here may mean spiritual salvation, physical release from prison, or vindication at trial. The 'supply' (epichorēgia, 'generous provision') of the Spirit is not a meager trickle but an abundant provision.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Job 13:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The rare compound apokaradokia ('eager expectation') literally suggests craning the neck forward in anticipation. Paul's singular concern is not his own survival but that Christ be 'magnified' (megalyntēsetai) in his body — whether that body lives or dies. The phrase 'whether by life or by death' sets up the extraordinary meditation in verses 21-26.
21. This is one of the most compressed and profound statements in the Pauline corpus. The Greek lacks a verb — literally 'to me the living Christ and the dying gain.' Life is not merely lived for Christ or with Christ but is Christ — existence itself is absorbed into Christ's person. If living is already Christ, then death can only bring more of him, hence 'gain' (kerdos). The logic is airtight: Paul cannot lose.
22. The syntax is notoriously difficult. Paul seems to say: if continued life in the body means productive ministry ('fruit of labor'), then he genuinely does not know which to prefer — death with Christ or fruitful service. The verb hairēsomai ('I will choose') is striking, as if the choice were actually his to make.
23. The verb synechomai ('I am pressed, constrained') conveys being squeezed from both sides. The verb analysai ('to depart, to break camp, to set sail') is a metaphor for death — either striking a tent (a soldier's image) or loosing a ship from its moorings. Paul's conviction that death means being 'with Christ' (syn Christō) reflects a personal eschatology of immediate presence with Christ after death.
24. Paul resolves the tension of verses 21-23 in favor of continued life — not because life is better for him, but because it is more necessary (anangkaioteron) for the Philippians. His pastoral love overrides his personal preference. The shift from 'flesh' (sarx) to 'body' in our rendering avoids the negative connotations 'flesh' carries elsewhere in Paul.
25. The verbs menō ('remain') and paramenō ('continue alongside') are nearly synonymous, creating emphasis through repetition. Paul expresses confidence in his release, though this is pastoral assurance rather than prophetic certainty. The pair prokopē ('progress') and chara ('joy') captures Paul's dual goal for the Philippians — growth and gladness.
26. The Greek kauchēma ('boast, ground of boasting') is not sinful pride but legitimate exultation — and it is 'in Christ Jesus,' not in human achievement. Paul envisions his return to Philippi as occasion for the church to celebrate God's faithfulness in preserving his life.

27. The verb *politeuesthe* ('live as citizens, conduct yourselves as citizens') is loaded with meaning for the Philippians, who held Roman citizenship as residents of a Roman colony. Paul calls them to a higher citizenship — one defined by the gospel rather than by Rome. The athletic metaphor *synathlēō* ('to contend together, to compete as teammates') pictures the church as a team striving in unified effort.
28. The verb *ptyromai* ('to be frightened, startled') is used of horses shying at danger. The Philippians' fearless stand serves as a double sign: it signals the opponents' destruction (*apōleia*) and the believers' salvation (*sōtēria*). The final phrase 'and that from God' (*kai touto apo theou*) means that both the sign and the salvation originate from God.
29. The verb *echaristhē* ('it has been graciously given') shares the root of *charis* ('grace'). Suffering, like faith, is presented as a gift — a startling claim that reframes persecution as divine privilege rather than misfortune. This theology of suffering as gift is distinctly Pauline.
30. The Greek *agōn* ('struggle, contest, fight') is an athletic term for a competitive event. The Philippians witnessed Paul's struggle firsthand when he was beaten and imprisoned in their city (Acts 16:19-40), and now they hear of his continued imprisonment. Their own suffering mirrors his — they share the same contest.

2

Summary: *Paul appeals for unity and humility in the Philippian church, grounding his appeal in the supreme example of Christ's self-emptying. The Christ Hymn (2:5-11) traces the arc from pre-existent divine equality through incarnation, servanthood, and crucifixion to exaltation and universal lordship. Paul then urges the Philippians to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, commends Timothy and Epaphroditus as models of self-giving service, and prepares to send both to Philippi.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Christ Hymn (2:5-11) is one of the highest christological passages in the New Testament. Whether Paul composed it, adapted an existing hymn, or quoted early liturgy is debated, but its theology is clear: Christ possessed equality with God, voluntarily emptied himself, took the form of a slave, became human, died on a cross, and was exalted to the highest place with the name above every name. The kenosis ('emptying') of verse 7 has generated centuries of theological reflection on how divinity and humanity relate in Christ. The hymn's climax — 'every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord' — echoes Isaiah 45:23, where every knee bows to YHWH alone, making an implicit identification of Jesus with the God of Israel.*

Translation Friction: *The precise meaning of kenosis ('he emptied himself,' v. 7) is a perennial theological question. The text does not say of what Christ emptied himself — it says he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant. We render the Greek without resolving the systematic theology. The phrase *harpagmon* ('something to be grasped/exploited,' v. 6) is one of the most debated words in Pauline studies; we render it as 'something to be exploited' following the majority consensus that Christ did not cling to his divine prerogatives.*

Connections: *The hymn's language echoes Isaiah's Servant Songs (especially Isaiah 52:13-53:12), where the Servant is exalted after humiliation. The universal confession of verse 11 quotes Isaiah 45:23. The 'form of God' / 'form of a servant' contrast recalls the Adam-Christ typology of Romans 5:12-21 — where Adam grasped at being like God, Christ did the opposite. Epaphroditus's near-death illness connects to 2 Corinthians 1:8-10 and Paul's theology of shared suffering.*

¹So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any affection and compassion, ²Fulfil you my delight, that you be likeminded, possessing the same devotion, being of one accord, of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶Though he existed in the very form of God, he did not consider equality with God something to be grasped for his own advantage. ⁷However, made himself of no reputation, and picked up upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and granted him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of matters in heaven, and matters in earth, and things under the world; ¹¹To the glory of god the father, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. ¹²Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, therefore, my dear, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much

more in my absence. ¹³Indeed, since it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. ¹⁴Do all things without grumbling or arguing, ¹⁵So you can become blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the present age;. ¹⁶as you hold firmly to the word of life. Then on the day of Christ I will be able to rejoice, knowing that my effort and hard work were not wasted. ¹⁷But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. ¹⁸In the same way you also should be glad and rejoice with me. ¹⁹I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be encouraged by learning how you are. ²⁰For I have no one like-minded who will genuinely care about your welfare. ²¹For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²²But you know Timothy's proven character, that as a child with a father he has served with me in the gospel. ²³I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how things will go with me, ²⁴However, I trust in the Lord that I also myself will come shortly. ²⁵But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus — my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need — ²⁶Since he longed following you all, and was full of heaviness, because that you had listened to that he had been sick. ²⁷Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. ²⁸I am the more eager to send him, therefore, so that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less anxious. ²⁹So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and hold people like him in honor, ³⁰On account of the fact that for the labor of Christ he was nigh to passing, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The fourfold 'if' (ei tis) is not expressing doubt but stating conditions Paul knows to be true — 'since there is encouragement, since there is comfort...' The rhetorical force is: given all that you have experienced in Christ, act accordingly. The word paraklēsis ('encouragement, exhortation, comfort') is the noun form of the verb from which 'Paraclete' derives.
2. The verb phroneō ('to think, to set one's mind on') appears twice here and is the key verb of Philippians, occurring ten times in the letter. Unity is not uniformity of opinion but a shared orientation of mind and purpose. The compound sympsychoi ('united in soul, of one spirit') appears only here in the New Testament.
3. The word kenodoxia ('empty glory, vain conceit') appears only here in the New Testament. The noun tapeinophrosynē ('humility, lowliness of mind') was generally a negative quality in Greco-Roman culture — it meant 'servile-mindedness.' Paul and the early Christians transformed it into a virtue, modeled on Christ's own self-lowering (vv. 5-8).
4. The verb skopeō ('to look at, to pay attention to, to consider') does not prohibit self-care but redirects primary attention outward. The word 'also' (kai) is important — Paul does not forbid attention to one's own affairs but insists that concern for others must accompany it. This verse provides the ethical principle that the Christ Hymn will illustrate christologically.
5. This verse introduces the Christ Hymn (vv. 5-11). The verb phroneite ('think, have this mindset') connects back to the call for unity in verse 2. The phrase en hymin can mean 'in you' (individually) or 'among you' (corporately) — both senses are likely intended. Christ's mindset is not merely an external example to imitate but an internal reality for those who are 'in Christ Jesus.'
6. The Greek morphē theou ('form of God') does not mean mere appearance but essential character — the outward expression that corresponds to inner reality. Christ's pre-existence in the 'form of God' is an assertion of genuine divinity. The word harpagmon ('something seized, something exploited') is extremely rare and debated. The rendering 'something to be exploited' follows the res rapta interpretation: Christ possessed equality with God but refused to exploit it for his own advantage. The KJV's 'robbery' follows a different interpretation.
7. The verb ekenōsen ('he emptied') is the source of the theological term 'kenosis.' Crucially, the emptying is described not as subtraction (losing divine attributes) but as addition — 'by taking (labōn) the form of a servant.' Christ emptied himself of his prerogatives by adding servanthood to his identity. The 'form of a servant' (morphēn doulou) deliberately contrasts with 'form of God' (morphē theou) in verse 6. The word homoiōma ('likeness') affirms genuine humanity while preserving the distinction that Christ was not merely human.
8. The word schēma ('outward form, appearance, fashion') differs from morphē in verse 7 — schēma refers to the observable, external presentation. The descent continues: from divine form, to servant form, to human likeness, to humiliation, to obedience, to death, and finally to the most degrading form of death — crucifixion. The phrase 'death on a cross' (thanatou de staurou) is added as a shocking afterthought — the em-dash captures the Greek particle de, which introduces an unexpected intensification. Crucifixion was reserved for slaves and the worst criminals; it was so shameful that Roman citizens were exempt from it.
9. The conjunction dio ('therefore, for this reason') marks the turning point of the hymn — the exaltation is God's response to Christ's self-humiliation. The verb hyperypsoō ('to super-exalt, to raise to the highest position') is a compound intensification found only here in the New Testament. The verb echarisato ('graciously gave, granted as a gift') shares the root of charis ('grace'). The 'name above every name' is almost certainly 'Lord' (kyrios) as specified in verse 11, which in the Septuagint translates the divine name YHWH.

10. Paul quotes Isaiah 45:23, where YHWH declares: 'To me every knee shall bow.' By applying this text to Jesus, Paul makes an extraordinary claim: the homage owed to the God of Israel is now rendered to the crucified and exalted Jesus. The threefold cosmos — heaven, earth, and under the earth (epouraniōn, epigeiōn, katachthoniōn) — encompasses every realm of existence. Nothing is excluded from Christ's lordship.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 45:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The confession *kyrios Iesous Christos* ('Jesus Christ is Lord') is the earliest Christian creed. In the Roman Empire, the declaration *kyrios Kaisar* ('Caesar is Lord') was an oath of political allegiance; the Christian confession was therefore both theological and politically subversive. The title *kyrios* ('Lord'), when applied to Jesus in a context quoting Isaiah 45:23, carries the full weight of the divine name YHWH. Yet this exaltation of Jesus is not competitive with the Father — it is 'to the glory of God the Father,' maintaining the unity of divine purpose.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 45:23. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The command *katēgazesthe* ('work out, bring to completion') does not mean 'earn' but 'bring to full expression' — salvation is a reality already given (by God, v. 13) that must be actively lived out in community. The phrase 'fear and trembling' (*phobou kai tromou*) echoes the Old Testament posture before God's holiness (Psalm 2:11; Isaiah 66:2). Paul's absence makes their obedience more significant — they must mature beyond dependence on his physical presence.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 2:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 66:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. This verse completes the paradox of verse 12: work out your salvation because God is the one working in you. Human effort and divine agency are not competitors but partners — God produces both the willing (to *thelein*) and the doing (to *energein*). The word *eudokia* ('good pleasure, delight, purpose') indicates that God's work in believers flows from his own joyful purpose, not reluctant obligation.
14. The word *gongysmōn* ('grumbling, murmuring') echoes Israel's wilderness complaints (Exodus 16:7-12; Numbers 14:27). Paul warns the Philippian church not to repeat Israel's pattern of dissatisfaction with God's provision and leadership. The word *dialogismōn* ('arguments, disputes, questionings') refers to divisive internal debates.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 16:7-12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 14:27. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The phrase 'crooked and twisted generation' (*geneas skolas kai diestrammenēs*) quotes Deuteronomy 32:5 from the Song of Moses, where it describes faithless Israel. Paul applies it to the surrounding pagan culture. The word *phōstēres* ('lights, luminaries, stars') is used in the Septuagint of Genesis 1:14-16 for the celestial bodies — believers are like stars set against the darkness of a corrupt world.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 32:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 1:14-16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The verb *epechō* can mean either 'hold fast' (retain) or 'hold forth' (offer). Both senses may be intended — the Philippians cling to the gospel and display it to the world. Paul's running and laboring metaphors draw from athletics and manual work. His boast (*kauchēma*) on the day of Christ will be the Philippians themselves — their faithfulness will validate his ministry.
17. The verb *spendomai* ('I am being poured out as a libation') is a sacrificial term — Paul pictures his life (or death) as a drink offering poured over the Philippians' faith, which is itself the main sacrifice. The imagery is drawn from Old Testament sacrificial practice where wine was poured as a libation alongside the primary offering (Numbers 15:5-10). Even contemplating martyrdom, Paul rejoices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 15:5-10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. Paul commands mutual rejoicing — even in the face of his possible death. The imperative *chairete* ('rejoice!') is a command, not merely a wish. Joy in Philippians is not dependent on circumstances but on the shared reality of being in Christ.
19. The rare verb *eupsycheō* ('to be encouraged, to be heartened') appears only here in the New Testament. Paul's concern for the Philippians is not one-directional — he needs news of them as much as they need Timothy's visit. The phrase 'in the Lord Jesus' frames even travel plans within the sphere of Christ's lordship.
20. The adjective *isopsychon* ('like-souled, kindred in spirit') appears only here in the New Testament. Timothy is uniquely aligned with Paul's pastoral heart. The adverb *gnēsiōs* ('genuinely, sincerely') comes from *gnēsios* ('legitimate, born in wedlock') — Timothy's care for the Philippians is not performative but authentic.

21. This stark assessment — 'all seek their own' — echoes the warning of verse 4 and contrasts with the Christ of the hymn who sought others' interests above his own. The 'all' is likely hyperbolic, referring to those currently available as potential envoys rather than every believer everywhere.
22. The word dokimē ('proven character, tested quality') means worth demonstrated through testing — Timothy is not untried. Paul starts to say 'as a son serves a father' but corrects the image to 'as a child with a father he served with me' — changing the hierarchical metaphor to one of partnership. Timothy is not Paul's subordinate but his co-laborer.
23. Paul will send Timothy once his own situation becomes clearer — presumably the outcome of his trial. The verb aphidō ('to see from a distance, to perceive clearly') suggests Paul is waiting for clarity about his case before sending his most trusted associate away.
24. Paul's confidence in his own visit is grounded 'in the Lord' — not in legal optimism but in trust in Christ's sovereign purposes. This hope of release aligns with his expectation in 1:25 that he will remain for the Philippians' benefit.
25. Paul introduces Epaphroditus with five titles arranged in two groups: three from Paul's perspective (brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier) and two from the Philippians' perspective (their apostolon — 'sent one, messenger' — and minister to Paul's need). The military metaphor systratiotēs ('fellow soldier') frames gospel ministry as warfare.
26. The verb adēmoneō ('to be distressed, troubled, anxious') is the same word used of Jesus in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:37). Epaphroditus's distress is not about his own illness but about the Philippians' worry — he is upset that they are upset. This other-centered concern exemplifies the mindset Paul commended in verses 3-4.
27. The phrase paraplēsion thanatō ('near to death, close to dying') indicates a life-threatening illness. Paul's candor is striking — he does not attribute the healing to his own prayers or apostolic power but simply to God's mercy (eleēsen). The phrase 'sorrow upon sorrow' (lypēn epi lypēn) suggests Paul already carries grief (perhaps from imprisonment) and would have been overwhelmed by Epaphroditus's death.
28. The comparative spoudaioterōs ('more eagerly, with greater urgency') and alypoteros ('less sorrowful, less anxious') show Paul's pastoral sensitivity — he acts swiftly to relieve both the Philippians' worry and his own. The so-called 'epistolary aorist' (epempsa, 'I sent') refers to the sending that will take place when the letter arrives.
29. The imperative prosdecheste ('receive, welcome') suggests that Epaphroditus might need an advocate — perhaps some in Philippi questioned why he returned without completing his mission to Paul. Paul preemptively defends him and commands the church to honor him.
30. The verb paraboleusamenos ('having risked, having gambled') is a gambling term — Epaphroditus wagered his life on Christ's work. The phrase 'what was lacking in your service' (to hymōn hystērēma tēs leitourgias) is not a criticism of the Philippians but acknowledges that their physical distance prevented personal service to Paul; Epaphroditus bridged that gap at the cost of his own health.

3

Summary: Paul warns the Philippians against Judaizing opponents whom he calls 'dogs' and 'mutilators of the flesh,' then offers his own credentials as a model of what he now considers worthless compared to knowing Christ. He describes his pursuit of Christ in athletic terms — pressing on toward the goal, forgetting what lies behind, straining toward what lies ahead. He contrasts those whose 'god is their belly' with believers whose citizenship is in heaven, from where they await a Savior who will transform their lowly bodies.

What Makes This Remarkable: Paul's autobiographical section (vv. 4-14) is the most detailed account of his Jewish credentials anywhere in his letters: circumcised on the eighth day, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, a Pharisee, blameless under the law. His sweeping renunciation of these credentials as 'rubbish' (skybalon, v. 8) is not self-hatred but a radical revaluation — everything is loss compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus. The athletic metaphor of pressing toward the goal (vv. 12-14) has become one of the most quoted Pauline images, expressing the Christian life as disciplined forward movement rather than passive arrival.

Translation Friction: The sharp warning in verse 2 ('beware of the dogs') represents Paul's most aggressive anti-opponent language outside of Galatians. The identity of these opponents is debated — they may be the same Judaizers addressed in Galatians, or a different group. The term skybalon (v. 8) is deliberately vulgar, ranging from 'refuse' to 'excrement'; we render it as 'rubbish' to preserve the force without gratuitous shock. The phrase 'enemies of the cross' (v. 18) may refer to the same opponents or to a different group focused on libertine behavior.

Connections: Paul's list of Jewish credentials parallels 2 Corinthians 11:22 and Galatians 1:13-14. The athletic imagery of pressing toward the goal connects to 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and 2 Timothy 4:7-8. The heavenly citizenship (politeuma) in verse 20 picks up the citizenship language of 1:27. The transformation of the body (v. 21) anticipates the resurrection theology of 1 Corinthians 15:42-54.

¹Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is a safeguard for you. ²Watch out for the dogs, watch out for the evildoers, watch out for those who mutilate the flesh. ³For we are the circumcision — we who worship by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh — ⁴Though I may as well possess confidence in the physical nature. If any other man thinketh that he has whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: ⁵I was circumcised on the eighth day, born into the people of Israel from the tribe of Benjamin — a Hebrew descended from Hebrews. In regard to the law, I was a Pharisee. ⁶Concerning zeal, persecuting the church. Touching the moral integrity which is in the instruction of Moses, blameless. ⁷But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹Be discovered in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is by way of the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by way of faith: ¹⁰I want to know Christ — to experience the power of his resurrection, to share in his sufferings, and to become like him in his death. ¹¹If by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the no longer alive. ¹²Not that I have already obtained this or have already been made perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Brothers and sisters, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵Let those of us then who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶Only let us hold true to what we have attained. ¹⁷Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹Who will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to his glorious body, in keeping with to the working whereby he is able indeed to subdue all things to himself.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase to loipon ('finally, as for the rest') does not necessarily signal the end of the letter — Paul has two more chapters to go. It functions as a transition marker. The reference to 'the same things' suggests Paul has warned them before, either in person or in a previous letter now lost. The word asphales ('safe, secure, a safeguard') implies that repetition protects against error.
2. The threefold blepete ('watch out, beware') is urgent and aggressive. 'Dogs' (kynas) was a term Jews used for Gentiles; Paul turns it against the Judaizers themselves. The word katatomē ('mutilation, cutting') is a biting pun on peritomē ('circumcision') — Paul reduces their prized covenant sign to mere flesh-cutting. This is among the harshest language in Paul's letters.
3. Paul claims the title 'the circumcision' (hē peritomē) for believers in Christ, redefining the covenant marker from physical surgery to spiritual reality. Three characteristics define true circumcision: worship by God's Spirit, boasting in Christ Jesus (not in credentials), and refusal to trust in the flesh. This echoes the prophetic tradition of 'circumcision of the heart' (Deuteronomy 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4).
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 30:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 4:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Paul pivots from theological principle to personal testimony. His argument is not that flesh-credentials are unattainable but that he possessed them in abundance — and chose to abandon them. This makes his renunciation in verses 7-8 all the more powerful: he is not sour grapes but a man who walked away from genuine wealth.
5. Paul lists seven credentials in ascending order of personal achievement. The first four are inherited: circumcision on the proper day (not a proselyte), Israelite descent, Benjaminites tribal identity (the tribe that gave Israel its first king, Saul — Paul's namesake), and 'Hebrew of Hebrews' (likely meaning Hebrew-speaking from Hebrew-speaking parents, not Hellenized). The last three (vv. 5b-6) are chosen: Pharisee, persecutor, and blameless under law.

6. Paul's zeal (zēlos) manifested as violence against the church — he considers this a credential, not a confession, within the value system he is about to reject. His claim to be 'blameless' (amemptos) under the law does not mean sinless perfection but that he fulfilled the law's external requirements without fault. The rhetorical force is devastating: even flawless Torah observance is 'loss' compared to Christ (v. 7).
7. The commercial metaphor shifts: what was once in the 'profit' column (kerdē, plural 'gains') Paul has transferred to the 'loss' column (zēmian). The perfect tense hēgēmai ('I have counted and still count') indicates a past decision with continuing force. This is not a momentary emotion but a settled conviction.
8. Paul intensifies: not just his Jewish credentials but 'everything' (panta) is loss compared to knowing Christ. The rare word skybala ('refuse, rubbish, excrement, scraps thrown to dogs') is deliberately crude — Paul uses the coarsest available term to express how worthless his former advantages now seem. The phrase 'knowing Christ Jesus my Lord' (tēs gnōseōs Christou Iesou tou kyriou mou) is deeply personal — 'my Lord' is intimate, not merely doctrinal.
9. Paul contrasts two kinds of righteousness: his 'own' (emēn) righteousness based on law-keeping versus the righteousness 'from God' (ek theou) received through faith. The genitive pisteōs Christou ('faith of/in Christ') can be read as 'faith in Christ' (objective genitive) or 'the faithfulness of Christ' (subjective genitive). We follow the objective genitive reading, which is more consistent with Paul's argument here about human response to God's gift.
10. Paul's supreme goal is not theological knowledge about Christ but relational knowledge of Christ — the Greek gnōnai ('to know') carries the Old Testament sense of intimate, experiential knowing. The order is striking: resurrection power first, then suffering. Paul does not romanticize suffering but sees it as inseparable from genuine knowledge of the risen Christ. The verb symmorphizomenos ('being conformed to, being shaped into the pattern of') means taking on the very form (morphē) of Christ's death — echoing the hymn's language of Christ taking the 'form' of a servant (2:7).
11. The rare compound exanastasin ('out-resurrection, resurrection out from among') is more specific than the common anastasis — it may emphasize resurrection out from among the dead, distinguishing the believer's resurrection from a general raising. The conditional 'if by any means' (ei pōs) does not express doubt about salvation but humility before a goal not yet achieved, consistent with the 'not yet perfected' language of verse 12.
12. The verb diōkō ('I press on, I pursue, I chase') is the same verb translated 'persecute' in verse 6 — Paul the former persecutor of the church is now a pursuer of Christ. The verb katalambanō ('to seize, to take hold of, to make one's own') appears twice: Paul pursues in order to grasp what Christ has already grasped in him. The logic is: because Christ seized me, I press on to fully realize what he seized me for.
13. The verb epekteinomenos ('straining forward, stretching out toward') is an athletic term picturing a runner leaning forward with every muscle extended toward the finish line. The 'forgetting' (epilanthanomenos) of what lies behind includes both Paul's former Jewish achievements and his past failures — neither past glory nor past shame determines his forward movement.
14. The skopos ('goal, target, mark') is the finish line toward which the runner strains. The brabeion ('prize') is the victor's wreath awarded at Greek athletic games (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:24). The 'upward call' (anō klēseōs) may mean the call that comes from above (God's heavenly summons) or the call to go upward (the final resurrection). Both senses converge in Paul's thought.
15. The word teleioi ('mature, perfect, complete') is deliberately paradoxical after verse 12, where Paul said he has not been 'made perfect' (teteleiōmai). The mature person is precisely the one who knows they are not yet perfected. Paul trusts God to correct any remaining disagreement — a remarkably patient approach to theological differences within the community.
16. The verb stoichein ('to walk in line, to keep in step, to conform to') is a military term for marching in formation. Whatever level of understanding they have reached, they must live consistently with it. The SBLGNT has a shorter text than the Textus Receptus behind the KJV, which adds 'let us mind the same thing.'
17. The compound symmimētai ('co-imitators, joint imitators') means 'imitate me together' — the imitation is communal, not individual. Paul does not hesitate to offer himself as a model (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1), not from arrogance but because the Christian life is learned through embodied example. The verb skopeite ('observe, watch closely') is related to skopos ('goal') in verse 14.
18. Paul's tears (klaiōn, 'weeping') reveal that his harsh language in verse 2 is not cold fury but grieved love. These 'enemies of the cross' are not outsiders but people within or near the Christian movement who reject the cross's implications — that God's power works through weakness and self-giving rather than through triumphalism.
19. Four damning descriptions: (1) their destination is destruction (apōleia), (2) their god is appetite (koilia, 'belly, stomach'), (3) their boast is in what should shame them, (4) their thinking is earthbound. Whether 'belly' refers to food laws, gluttony, or physical indulgence generally is debated. The verb phroneō ('to set one's mind on') appears again — their fundamental orientation is toward earthly things rather than heavenly realities.
20. The Greek politeuma ('citizenship, commonwealth, colony') is loaded for Philippian readers. Philippi was a Roman colony whose citizens held Roman citizenship and governed themselves by Roman law even while living far from Rome. Paul says believers are a colony of heaven — they live on earth but their governing allegiance, legal identity, and ultimate homeland are heavenly. The verb apekdechometha ('we eagerly await') is used exclusively for Christ's return in Paul's letters.
21. The verb metaschēmatisei ('will transform, will refashion') uses the schēma root from 2:8 — the outward form of our humble bodies will be remade. The compound symmorphon ('conformed to, sharing the same form') uses the morphē root from 2:6-7 — our bodies will share the essential form of Christ's glorified body. The chapter that began with warnings against flesh-confidence ends with the promise that even the physical body will be glorified. The cosmic scope — 'subject all things to himself' — echoes Psalm 8:6 and 1 Corinthians 15:27-28.

21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 8:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

4

Summary: *Paul closes Philippians with pastoral exhortations, beloved promises, and gratitude. He urges Euodia and Syntyche to agree in the Lord, commands the church to rejoice always, and delivers the famous promise that 'the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus' (4:7). He provides a catalogue of virtues worthy of contemplation, declares his contentment in all circumstances through the strength of Christ (4:13), and thanks the Philippians for their generous financial support — the occasion that prompted this letter.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter contains two of the most quoted verses in the Pauline corpus: 'the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding' (v. 7) and 'I can do all things through him who strengthens me' (v. 13). The latter is frequently decontextualized as a promise of unlimited ability; in context, Paul is describing his learned capacity for contentment in both poverty and abundance. The virtue catalogue of verse 8 is remarkable for its overlap with Greco-Roman moral philosophy — Paul affirms pagan ethical vocabulary while grounding it in the gospel. The financial section (vv. 14-20) is a masterclass in gratitude without dependence, expressing deep appreciation while insisting that Paul's true sufficiency comes from God.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'true companion' (gnēsie syzge, v. 3) is unknown — proposals include Luke, Silas, Epaphroditus, or even a proper name ('Syzygus'). We transliterate the options in the notes without resolving the question. The phrase 'I can do all things' (v. 13) must be read in its immediate context of financial contentment, not as a blank check for any endeavor; our notes address this common misapplication.*

Connections: *The peace of God (v. 7) connects to the 'God of peace' (v. 9) and to Christ's peace discourse in John 14:27. The virtue catalogue (v. 8) parallels Wisdom of Solomon 8:7 and broader Stoic lists. Paul's financial language of 'giving and receiving' (v. 15) uses Greco-Roman accounting terminology. The 'fragrant offering' (v. 18) echoes Genesis 8:21 and Leviticus 1:9 — the Philippians' gift is described in sacrificial terms.*

¹Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in this way in the Lord, my beloved. ²I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to agree in the Lord. ³Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, for they have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. ⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable — if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise — think about these things. ⁹What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me — practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. ¹⁰I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. ¹¹Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹²I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³I can do all things through him who strengthens me. ¹⁴Yet you did well to share with me in my affliction. ¹⁵And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. ¹⁶For even in Thessalonica you dispatched once and again to my necessity. ¹⁷Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that accumulates to your account. ¹⁸I have received full payment and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent — a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. ¹⁹And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰To our God and Father be glory forever and ever.

Amen. ²¹Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me greet you. ²²All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. ²³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The warmth of Paul's language is extraordinary — five affectionate terms in one verse: beloved, longed for, joy, crown, beloved again. The *stephanos* ('crown, wreath') is the victor's garland, not a royal crown (*diadēma*) — the Philippians themselves are Paul's prize at the finish line of his apostolic race (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:19).
2. Both names are feminine — these are women leaders in the Philippian church. The repetition of *parakalō* ('I urge') with each name gives equal weight to both, refusing to take sides. The verb *phroneō* ('to think, to have a mindset') appears again — the letter's key verb. Their disagreement apparently affected the whole congregation, warranting a public appeal.
3. The Greek *syzge* ('yokefellow, companion') may be a proper name (*Syzygus*) or a description of an unnamed colleague. The adjective *gnēsie* ('true, genuine, legitimate') would be a pun if *Syzygus* is a name ('truly named Yokefellow'). The women 'labored side by side' (*synēthlēsan*, 'contended together as athletes') with Paul — the same athletic verb used in 1:27, indicating full co-laborer status. The 'book of life' (*biblos zōēs*) is an image drawn from Exodus 32:32-33 and Daniel 12:1.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 32:32-33 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 12:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The double imperative *chairete* ('rejoice!') from a man in prison is the letter's climactic command. The word *pantote* ('always') makes joy a non-negotiable posture, not dependent on favorable circumstances. The deliberate repetition — 'again I will say' — emphasizes that this is not casual advice but an apostolic command.
5. The Greek *epieikes* ('gentleness, forbearance, graciousness, reasonableness') is a quality Aristotle defined as 'justice that goes beyond the letter of the law' — a willingness to yield one's strict rights for the sake of others. The brief declaration *ho kyrios engys* ('the Lord is near') can mean temporal proximity (Christ's return is imminent) or spatial proximity (the Lord is present with you). Both readings are likely intended.
6. The verb *merimnate* ('be anxious, worry') is the same word Jesus used in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:25-34). The antidote to anxiety is not suppression but redirection — prayer, petition, and thanksgiving. The triad of *proseuche* ('prayer,' general worship), *deēsis* ('supplication,' specific requests), and *eucharistia* ('thanksgiving') forms a complete pattern of communication with God.
7. The verb *phrouresei* ('will guard, will garrison') is a military term — God's peace stands sentry over the believer's inner life like a soldier guarding a city. For Philippians living in a Roman garrison city, this image was vivid. The peace 'surpasses all understanding' (*hyperechousa panta noun*) not because it is irrational but because it exceeds what the human mind can produce or comprehend on its own. It guards both 'hearts' (*kardias*, the seat of will and emotion) and 'minds' (*noēmata*, thoughts and purposes).
8. This virtue catalogue is remarkable for its overlap with Greek moral philosophy. The words *aretē* ('excellence, virtue') and *epainos* ('praise') are rare in Paul but common in Hellenistic ethics. Paul does not reject pagan moral insight but baptizes it — whatever is genuinely excellent in human culture is worth a Christian's contemplation. The sixfold 'whatever' (*hosa*) creates a sweeping inclusiveness: truth, honor, justice, purity, loveliness, and good repute are valued wherever they are found.
9. Four verbs of transmission — 'learned' (*emathete*), 'received' (*parelabete*, a technical term for receiving tradition), 'heard' (*ēkousate*), and 'seen' (*eidete*) — cover every mode of instruction. Paul again offers himself as a living example (cf. 3:17). The promise shifts from 'the peace of God' (v. 7) to 'the God of peace' — not merely God's gift but God's presence.
10. The verb *anethalete* ('you have revived, you have blossomed again') is a botanical term for a plant putting forth new growth after winter. Paul immediately softens any hint of reproach — they always cared but lacked opportunity (*ēkaireisthe*, 'you had no favorable occasion'). The delay in sending support was circumstantial, not attitudinal.
11. The word *autarkēs* ('content, self-sufficient') was the supreme Stoic virtue — the wise person who needs nothing external. Paul adopts the term but radically redefines it: his sufficiency comes not from inner philosophical detachment but from Christ's empowering (v. 13). The verb *emathon* ('I have learned') indicates this contentment was not innate but acquired through experience.
12. The verb *memyēmai* ('I have been initiated, I have learned the secret') comes from the mystery religions — it means to be inducted into hidden knowledge through experience. Paul borrows the language of pagan initiation to describe his education in contentment. The four pairs — brought low/about, full/hungry, abundance/need — cover the full spectrum of material circumstances.
13. The Greek *panta ischyō* ('I am strong for all things, I have strength for everything') in context refers to Paul's ability to endure any circumstance — poverty or abundance, hunger or plenty — not a promise of unlimited capability for any endeavor. The SBLGNT does not include 'Christ' (*Christō*), reading simply 'the one who empowers me' (*tō endynamounti me*), though Christ is clearly implied. The verb *endynamōō* ('to empower, to strengthen within') indicates that the power source is internal — Christ working within Paul — yet external in origin.

14. After declaring his self-sufficiency through Christ, Paul immediately affirms the Philippians' gift — his contentment does not make their generosity unnecessary or unappreciated. The compound synkoinōnēsantes ('having shared in, having partnered with') extends the koinōnia theme: their gift was not mere charity but co-participation in Paul's suffering.
15. Paul addresses them by name — 'Philippians' (Philippēsiōi) — the only letter where he does this except Galatians. The phrase logon doseōs kai lēmψεōs ('an account of giving and receiving') uses Greco-Roman commercial bookkeeping language. The Philippians were the sole church to establish a mutual account with Paul — they gave financial support, he gave spiritual ministry. This unique relationship sets Philippi apart from all other churches.
16. Thessalonica was Paul's next stop after Philippi (Acts 17:1). The Philippians supported him even while he was in a neighboring city — their generosity was not a one-time gesture but repeated ('once and again,' hapax kai dis). This is remarkable given that Philippi was likely not a wealthy congregation.
17. Paul maintains his careful balance: he values their gift not for his material benefit but for the spiritual 'profit' (karpon, 'fruit') it produces in their account (logon, 'ledger'). The commercial metaphor continues — the Philippians are building up credit in a heavenly account through their generosity.
18. The verb apechō ('I have received in full') was the standard commercial term for acknowledging full payment — it appeared on receipts. Paul then shifts abruptly from accounting to altar: the Philippians' gift is a fragrant offering (osmēn euōdias), a sacrifice (thysian) acceptable and pleasing to God. The phrase 'fragrant offering' echoes the Hebrew reiaḥ nichoach used for offerings that please God (Genesis 8:21; Leviticus 1:9). Money sent to a prisoner becomes worship offered to God.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 8:21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 1:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. Paul responds to their generosity with a promise: the God who received their sacrifice will supply (plērōsei, 'fill to the full') their every need. The measure of God's supply is 'according to his riches in glory' — not out of his riches (as if taking a portion) but according to the full standard of his wealth. The phrase 'my God' (ho theos mou) is warmly personal.
20. The doxology eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn ('to the ages of the ages') is the strongest Greek expression for eternity — ages multiplied by ages. The letter that began with grace (1:2) ends with glory — the proper destination of all that God gives and all that believers offer back.
21. The greeting is to 'every saint' (panta hagion) — individually and without exception. Paul's companions send their own greetings, indicating a community around him even in imprisonment.
22. The phrase hoi ek tēs Kaisaros oikias ('those of Caesar's household') does not mean members of the imperial family but slaves and freedmen in the vast network of the emperor's administrative staff. That the gospel has penetrated even Caesar's household is a stunning demonstration of 1:12-13 — Paul's imprisonment has advanced the gospel into the heart of Roman power.
23. The SBLGNT reads 'with your spirit' (meta tou pneumatōs hymōn) rather than the Textus Receptus 'with you all.' The letter closes as it opened — with grace (charis). The singular 'spirit' (pneumatōs) may address the congregation as one body. The SBLGNT does not include 'Amen' at the end.

Colossians

1

Summary: *Paul writes to the Colossian church, which he has never visited, expressing gratitude for their faith and love and praying for their spiritual growth. The chapter builds to the magnificent Christ Hymn (1:15-20), which declares Christ as the image of the invisible God, firstborn over all creation, the agent and goal of creation, the head of the church, and the one through whom God reconciles all things. Paul then describes his own suffering as completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of the church, and his commission to make known the mystery hidden for ages — 'Christ in you, the hope of glory.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Christ Hymn (1:15-20) is among the highest christological statements in Scripture. It makes claims about Christ that the Old Testament reserves for God alone: creating all things, sustaining all things, being before all things. The phrase 'image of the invisible God' (eikōn tou theou tou aoratou) does not mean a mere representation but the visible manifestation of the invisible deity — Christ makes God seeable. The dual declaration that 'all things were created through him and for him' (v. 16) and 'in him all things hold together' (v. 17) gives Christ a cosmic role that extends far beyond salvation history. The reconciliation of 'all things' through the blood of the cross (v. 20) is one of the broadest soteriological claims in the New Testament.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'firstborn of all creation' (prōtotokos pasēs ktiseōs, v. 15) has been debated since the Arian controversy. It does not mean Christ was created first but designates his supremacy and preeminence over creation, as the following verses make clear ('all things were created through him'). Paul's statement about 'completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions' (v. 24) is notoriously difficult — it cannot mean Christ's atoning work was insufficient. We render the Greek without resolving the systematic theology, noting the options in the translator notes.*

Connections: *The Christ Hymn echoes Proverbs 8:22-31 (Wisdom as agent of creation), Genesis 1:1 (the beginning), and John 1:1-18 (the Logos hymn). The 'image of God' language connects to Genesis 1:26-27 and 2 Corinthians 4:4. The 'mystery' (mystērion) language anticipates Ephesians 3:3-9. The reconciliation theme extends Romans 5:10-11 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 to cosmic scope.*

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ²To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. ³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴And of the love which you have to all the saints,, and since we heard of your faith in Christ

Jesus. ⁵For the hope which is placed up for you in heaven, whereof you listened to before in the word of the truth of the gospel. ⁶Which is come to you, as it is in every one of the world. And brings forth fruit, as it does also in you, since the day you listened to of it, and recognized the grace of God in truth:. ⁷You learned the gospel from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf. ⁸Indeed, who also declared to us your love in the Spirit. ⁹And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so that you may live in a way that is worthy of the Lord and pleasing to him in every respect: producing fruit through every kind of good work and growing in the knowledge of God. ¹¹Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, to all patience and patience with joyfulness;. ¹²Give thanks with joy to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints who live in the light. ¹³He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴In whom we have redemption by way of his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:. ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell, ²⁰And, possessing fashioned wholeness by way of the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself. By him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. ²¹And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, ²²Indeed, in the body of his flesh by way of death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:. ²³If you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have listened to, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven. Whereof I Paul am made a minister;. ²⁴Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, ²⁵Whereof I am appointed a minister, in keeping with to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;. ²⁶Indeed the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is appointed manifest to his saints:. ²⁷To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Unlike Philippians, Paul leads with his apostolic title — necessary when writing to a church he has not personally founded or visited. The phrase 'by the will of God' (dia thelēmatos theou) grounds Paul's authority not in personal ambition but in divine appointment.
2. Colossae was a small city in the Lycus Valley of Phrygia (modern Turkey), overshadowed by neighboring Laodicea and Hierapolis. The church was likely founded by Epaphras (v. 7), not Paul. The SBLGNT omits 'and the Lord Jesus Christ' found in the KJV's Textus Receptus, ending the greeting with 'from God our Father' alone.
3. The plural 'we' includes Timothy (v. 1). Paul identifies God specifically as 'the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' — God's identity is defined in relation to Christ. The adverb pantote ('always') modifies their thanksgiving, indicating habitual prayer for a church they have never visited.
4. Paul has 'heard' about them — confirming he has not visited Colossae. The twin report of faith and love forms the classic Pauline triad when combined with hope in verse 5. Their love extends to 'all the saints' — not a clique but the entire body of believers.
5. Hope here is not a feeling but an objective reality — something 'laid up' (apokeimenēn, 'stored, reserved') in heaven, waiting to be received. The Colossians first heard about this hope through 'the word of the truth of the gospel' — a threefold description emphasizing the reliability and saving content of the message.
6. The gospel is described as a living, growing organism — 'bearing fruit and increasing' (karpophoroumenon kai auxanomenon) echoes the creation mandate of Genesis 1:28 and the parable of the sower (Mark 4). The phrase 'understood the grace of God in truth' (epegnōte tēn charin tou theou en alētheia) implies genuine, deep knowledge (epignōsis) as opposed to the false 'knowledge' the Colossian heresy may have been promoting.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 1:28. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Epaphras is the likely founder of the Colossian church (cf. 4:12-13). Paul calls him syndoulos ('fellow slave') — placing Epaphras on equal footing with himself under Christ's lordship. The SBLGNT reads 'on your behalf' (hyper hēmōn has the variant hyper hymōn, 'on your behalf'), indicating

Epaphras served the Colossians as Christ's representative.

8. Epaphras serves as the communication bridge between Paul and the Colossians. Their 'love in the Spirit' (agapēn en pneumati) is love produced by the Holy Spirit — the fruit of the Spirit that Paul describes in Galatians 5:22. This is the only explicit reference to the Holy Spirit in Colossians.
9. Paul's prayer is for epignōsis ('full knowledge, deep understanding') of God's will — a pointed term in a letter that will combat a rival 'knowledge' system (the Colossian heresy). The adjective pneumatikē ('spiritual') modifies both wisdom (sophia) and understanding (synesis), indicating that this knowledge comes from the Spirit, not from human speculation or esoteric tradition.
10. The verb peripatēsai ('to walk') is the standard Pauline metaphor for daily conduct (Hebrew halakh). The purpose of knowledge is ethical living, not intellectual attainment alone. 'Bearing fruit and increasing' (karpophorountes kai auxanomenoi) echoes verse 6, creating a parallel: as the gospel bears fruit in the world, so believers bear fruit in good works.
11. The accumulation of power language — dunamei, dynamoumenoi, kratos — emphasizes divine empowerment. But the goal of this power is surprising: not miraculous feats but 'endurance' (hypomonē, 'steadfast perseverance') and 'patience' (makrothymia, 'long-temperedness'). God's power enables believers to hold firm under pressure rather than escape it.
12. The verb hikanōsanti ('who qualified, who made sufficient') emphasizes that believers' share in the inheritance is God's doing, not their achievement. The 'inheritance' (klērou, 'lot, portion, allotment') echoes the land inheritance of Israel in Joshua — believers receive a spiritual allotment in the realm of light. The contrast between light and the 'domain of darkness' in verse 13 reflects the dualistic language common in Second Temple Judaism (cf. the Dead Sea Scrolls' 'sons of light' vs. 'sons of darkness').
13. The verb errysato ('he rescued, he delivered') is the language of military liberation — God has extracted believers from enemy territory. The verb metestēsen ('he transferred, he removed') was used for the deportation of conquered populations; here God 'deports' believers out of darkness and into Christ's kingdom. The phrase 'the Son of his love' (tou huiou tēs agapēs autou) is an unusual construction meaning 'his beloved Son' — the Son who is the object of the Father's love.
14. The word apolytrōsis ('redemption, release through ransom payment') is a slave-market term — the price paid to free a captive. Paul defines this redemption as 'the forgiveness of sins' (tēn aphesin tōn hamartiōn). The SBLGNT omits 'through his blood' (dia tou haimatos autou) found in the parallel passage in Ephesians 1:7 and in some Colossians manuscripts. This verse serves as the transition into the Christ Hymn.
15. The Christ Hymn begins. The word eikōn ('image') in Greek means not a mere picture but a manifestation that participates in the reality it represents — Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God. The term prōtotokos ('firstborn') does not mean 'first created' but denotes supremacy and rank — the firstborn son held preeminence and the right of inheritance. Psalm 89:27 uses 'firstborn' for David's royal status: 'I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth.' Christ holds that rank over all creation.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 1:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 89:27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. Three prepositions define Christ's relation to creation: en autō ('in him,' the sphere), di' autou ('through him,' the agent), eis auton ('for him,' the goal). Creation exists in Christ, was made through Christ, and aims toward Christ. The four terms for spiritual powers — thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities — may address the Colossian heresy's preoccupation with angelic hierarchies. Whatever powers exist, Christ created them and outranks them all.
17. The phrase pro pantōn ('before all things') asserts both temporal priority (he existed before creation) and positional supremacy (he ranks above all things). The verb synestēken ('hold together, cohere, are sustained') is a perfect tense indicating ongoing reality — the universe's coherence at this moment depends on Christ's sustaining power. Without him, creation would disintegrate. This is one of the strongest statements of Christ's cosmic significance in the New Testament.
18. The hymn pivots from creation (vv. 15-17) to new creation (vv. 18-20). Christ's headship (kephalē, 'head') of the church parallels his supremacy over creation. The word archē ('beginning, origin, first principle') echoes Genesis 1:1. As 'firstborn from the dead' (prōtotokos ek tōn nektrōn), Christ holds the same rank over the new creation that he holds over the original creation. The purpose clause — 'that in everything he might be preeminent' (prōteuōn) — states the hymn's thesis: Christ holds first place in absolutely everything.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 1:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The word plērōma ('fullness, completeness') is a key term in Colossians. It may have been a term used by the false teachers to describe the totality of divine powers; Paul claims it entirely for Christ. 'All the fullness' of God — not a fraction, not a partial manifestation, but the complete divine reality — permanently resides in Christ. The verb katoikēsai ('to dwell, to take up permanent residence') indicates not a temporary visit but an abiding presence.
20. The verb apokatallaxai ('to reconcile fully') is an intensified form found only in Colossians and Ephesians. The scope is staggering: 'all things' (ta panta) — the same phrase used for creation in verse 16 — are reconciled through Christ. The means is specified: 'the blood of his cross' (tou haimatos tou staurou autou), anchoring this cosmic vision in a brutal historical event. The hymn that began with creation's origin in Christ ends with creation's restoration through Christ.

21. Paul applies the cosmic reconciliation of verse 20 to the Colossians' personal experience. They were 'alienated' (apēllotriōmenous, 'estranged, made foreign') and 'hostile' (echthrous) — their minds were actively opposed to God, expressed through evil deeds. The transition from 'once' (pote) to 'now' (nyni, v. 22) marks the before-and-after of redemption.
22. The phrase 'in his body of flesh through death' (en tō sōmati tēs sarkos autou dia tou thanatou) emphasizes the physicality of Christ's atoning work — against any tendency to spiritualize or mythologize the cross. Three adjectives describe the intended result: 'holy' (hagious), 'blameless' (amōmous, a sacrificial term for animals without defect), and 'above reproach' (anengklētous, a legal term meaning no charge can be brought). The language spans temple, courtroom, and daily life.
23. The conditional 'if indeed' (ei ge) is not expressing doubt but emphasizing the necessity of perseverance. Three architectural metaphors reinforce stability: 'grounded' (tethemeliōmenoi, 'having a foundation laid'), 'steadfast' (hedraioi, 'firmly seated, immovable'), and 'not shifting' (mē metakinoumenoi). The claim that the gospel 'has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven' is hyperbolic, expressing the gospel's universal scope and unstoppable advance.
24. This is one of Paul's most debated statements. The verb antanaplēroō ('I fill up in turn, I complete in response') is found only here in the New Testament. Paul does not mean Christ's atoning death was insufficient — that would contradict verse 20. Rather, the Messianic afflictions that must precede the end times (a Jewish eschatological concept) still have a 'quota' to be filled, and Paul's sufferings contribute to completing that quota. His suffering is vicarious ('for your sake') and ecclesial ('for the sake of his body').
25. The word oikonomia ('stewardship, administration, management of a household') frames Paul's apostleship as a trust — he has been given responsibility for God's household, specifically to bring the gospel to the Gentiles (including the Colossians). The verb plērōsai ('to fulfill, to make fully known') means Paul's task is to ensure the complete proclamation of God's word.
26. The word mystērion ('mystery') in Paul does not mean something mysterious or unknowable but a divine secret that was hidden and has now been disclosed. The temporal contrast is dramatic: 'hidden from ages and generations' versus 'now revealed' (nyn ephanerōthē). The long concealment heightens the significance of the revelation — what God planned from eternity is now made known.
27. The mystery is now named: 'Christ in you, the hope of glory' (Christos en hymin, hē elpis tēs doxēs). The pronoun 'you' (hymin) is plural and addressed to Gentiles — the shocking content of the mystery is that Christ now dwells among and within Gentile believers, making them heirs of eschatological glory. This was the great scandal of Paul's gospel — that God's Messiah would take up residence in non-Jewish communities.
28. The threefold repetition of panta anthrōpon ('every person') emphasizes the universal scope of the gospel against any elitist tendency in the Colossian heresy that offered 'advanced' knowledge to a select few. Paul's goal — presenting everyone 'mature' (teleion) in Christ — is available to all, not a spiritual aristocracy. The word teleion means 'mature, complete, fully developed,' not sinlessly perfect.
29. The verb kopiaō ('I toil, I labor to exhaustion') and agōnizomai ('I struggle, I contend') describe intense effort — Paul does not coast on grace. Yet the energy (energeia) behind his effort is not his own but God's, 'powerfully working' (energoumenēn en dýnamei) within him. The paradox of divine empowerment and human exertion — identical to Philippians 2:12-13 — closes the chapter.

2

Summary: *Paul describes his struggle for the Colossians and Laodiceans, urging them to find all treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ. He warns against being deceived by persuasive but empty philosophy, declares that 'in Christ the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily' and that believers have been filled in him. He describes baptism as spiritual circumcision and co-burial with Christ, proclaims that God has canceled the record of debt that stood against them by nailing it to the cross, and warns against submitting to regulations about food, festivals, or angel worship that are merely shadows of the substance found in Christ.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter contains Paul's most direct engagement with the 'Colossian heresy' — a syncretistic system combining Jewish regulations (food laws, sabbath observance), mystical practices (angel worship, visionary experiences), and ascetic disciplines. Rather than refuting each element individually, Paul makes one devastating argument: Christ is the fullness of God, believers are complete in Christ, therefore nothing needs to be added. The image of God nailing the 'record of debt' (cheirographon) to the cross (v. 14) is one of Paul's most vivid atonement metaphors. The disarming and public shaming of cosmic powers (v. 15) portrays the cross as a Roman triumph in reverse — the crucified one is the conquering general.*

Translation Friction: *The exact nature of the Colossian heresy is reconstructed from Paul's polemics, since we have no independent description of it. Scholars debate whether it was Jewish mysticism, proto-gnostic speculation, syncretistic philosophy, or local Phrygian religious practice. We render Paul's warnings without committing to a single reconstruction. The phrase 'worship of angels' (thrēskeia tōn angelōn, v.*

18) could mean 'worship directed to angels' or 'worship performed by angels (which humans try to join)' — both readings are noted.

Connections: The 'fullness' (plērōma) language continues from 1:19. The circumcision/baptism connection (vv. 11-12) parallels Romans 6:3-4. The 'record of debt' (cheirographon) echoes the cancelled debt imagery of Matthew 18:23-35. The shadow/substance contrast (v. 17) resonates with Hebrews 8:5 and 10:1. The triumph over powers (v. 15) connects to the principalities and authorities of 1:16 and Ephesians 6:12.

1For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, 2My goal is that their hearts would be encouraged, being joined together in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding and may know the mystery of God, namely Christ. 3In whom are hid every one of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4I say this so that no one may deceive you with persuasive arguments. 5For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. 6Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7Let your roots grow deep in him. Build your lives on him. Grow stronger in the faith you were taught, and overflow with thankfulness. 8See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. 9For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10You are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and authority:. 11In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, 12Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him by way of the faith of the operation of God, who has brought him back to life. 13And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14He erased the record of charges that stood against us with its legal demands. He set it aside by nailing it to the cross. 15He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. 16Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. 17These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. 18Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, 19Not holding the Skull, from which all the physical body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit as one, increaseth with the increase of God. 20If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still living in the world, do you submit to regulations — 21"Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" — 22Indeed, which all are to perish with the using;) following the commandments and doctrines of men? 23These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word agōna ('struggle, contest') echoes 1:29 and the athletic imagery found throughout Paul's letters. The mention of Laodicea (a neighboring city about 10 miles west of Colossae) confirms that Paul's concerns extend to the broader Lycus Valley. The phrase 'have not seen my face in the flesh' confirms Paul has never visited these churches.
2. The verb symbibasthentes ('being knit together, being united') pictures the community being woven into a unified fabric through love. The goal is epignōsis ('deep knowledge') of God's mystery — and that mystery is identified simply as 'Christ' (Christou). The SBLGNT text is shorter than the Textus Receptus, which reads 'of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.' The critical text identifies the mystery directly as Christ himself.
3. The adjective apokryphoi ('hidden, stored away') may be a deliberate counter to proto-gnostic claims of secret knowledge. Paul does not deny hidden wisdom — he locates it entirely in Christ. All (pantes) the treasures are in Christ, leaving no wisdom to be sought elsewhere. This verse undercuts any supplementary 'philosophy' (v. 8) that claims to offer what Christ lacks.
4. The verb paralagizetai ('to deceive, to reason falsely, to delude') literally means 'to reason alongside' — to lead astray through plausible but ultimately false reasoning. The noun pithanologia ('persuasive speech, plausible argument') appears only here in the New Testament. The danger is not crude error but sophisticated-sounding teaching that draws people away from the sufficiency of Christ.
5. The military metaphors taxis ('order, battle formation, rank') and stereōma ('firmness, solid front, fortification') picture the Colossian church as a well-ordered army holding its defensive position. Paul commends them before warning them — the church is currently standing firm, but threats are approaching.

6. The verb *parelabete* ('you received') is a technical term for receiving authoritative tradition (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3). What they received was not merely teaching about Christ but Christ himself — 'Christ Jesus the Lord.' The imperative *peripateite* ('walk!') commands them to continue in the same Christ they originally received, not to supplement him with additional spiritual systems.
7. Three metaphors describe spiritual stability: agricultural ('rooted,' *errizōmenoi* — a perfect participle indicating a past rooting with continuing effect), architectural ('built up,' *epoikodomoumenoi* — a present participle indicating ongoing construction), and legal ('established, confirmed,' *bebaioumenoi*). The foundation is Christ; the standard is the original teaching; the overflow is thanksgiving (*eucharistia*).
8. The verb *sylogōgōn* ('taking captive, carrying off as plunder') pictures the false teaching as a raiding party that captures believers and carries them away. The 'philosophy' (*philosophia*) is not Greek philosophy in general but the specific Colossian syncretism. The *stoicheia tou kosmou* ('elemental spirits/principles of the world') is debated: it may mean basic cosmic elements (earth, air, fire, water), elemental spiritual beings, or rudimentary religious principles. The final phrase — 'and not according to Christ' (*ou kata Christon*) — is Paul's decisive criterion: any system not grounded in Christ is empty deceit.
9. This verse intensifies 1:19. The word *theotētos* ('deity, divine nature, Godhead') is stronger than *theiotētos* ('divinity, divine quality') — it denotes the full essence of God, not merely divine characteristics. The adverb *sōmatikōs* ('bodily, in bodily form') insists that this divine fullness has taken permanent physical form in the incarnate Christ. The present tense *katoikei* ('dwells') indicates an ongoing reality — the risen Christ still possesses a body in which deity fully resides.
10. The verb *peplērōmenoi* ('you have been filled, you are complete') uses the same *plērōō* root as *plērōma* in verse 9. Because all divine fullness dwells in Christ, and believers are 'in him,' they share in that fullness. Nothing needs to be added — no angelic mediation, no dietary regulations, no ascetic practices. Christ is the 'head' (*kephalē*) of every cosmic power, making these powers subordinate rather than supplementary to him.
11. Paul redefines circumcision as an act accomplished 'in Christ' — not by human hands (*acheiropoiētō*) but by divine action. The 'putting off' (*apekdysai*, 'stripping away') of 'the body of the flesh' means the removal of the old sinful nature, not physical circumcision. The 'circumcision of Christ' may mean the circumcision Christ accomplished (through his death) or the circumcision that belongs to the Christian community. The SBLGNT omits 'of the sins' (*tōn hamartiōn*) found in some manuscripts.
12. Baptism is the visible enactment of the believer's union with Christ in death and resurrection. The *syn-* prefix ('with') appears in both verbs: *syntaphentes* ('co-buried') and *synēgerthēte* ('co-raised'). Unlike Romans 6:4-5, where the resurrection dimension is future, Colossians affirms that believers have already been raised with Christ — the emphasis is on present reality, not only future hope. Faith is directed toward God's *energeia* ('powerful working, operative power') — the same power that raised Christ is the basis of the believer's new life.
13. The Colossians' pre-conversion state was spiritual death — 'dead in trespasses' (*nekrous ontas en tois paraptōmasin*). The 'uncircumcision of your flesh' marks them as Gentiles, formerly outside the covenant community. The verb *synezōopoiēsen* ('he made alive together with') is another *syn-*compound — their new life is inseparable from Christ's resurrection. The shift from 'you' to 'us' (*hēmin*, 'having forgiven us') broadens the scope to include all believers.
14. The *cheirographon* ('handwritten document, certificate of debt, IOU') was a signed acknowledgment of debt in the ancient world. The metaphor is vivid: humanity's debt before God — the accumulated record of our violations of his righteous requirements (*dogmasin*, 'decrees, ordinances') — has been cancelled (*exaleipsas*, 'wiped away, erased'). The image of nailing the debt certificate to the cross may reflect the Roman practice of posting the charges against a crucified criminal above his head (cf. John 19:19-20). Christ's cross is the display of our cancelled debt.
15. The verb *apekdysamenos* ('having stripped, having disarmed') pictures Christ stripping the cosmic powers of their weapons and authority. The verb *edeigmatisen* ('he made a public spectacle, he exposed to shame') and *thriambeusas* ('having triumphed over') are drawn from the Roman triumphal procession (*triumphus*), where a victorious general paraded defeated enemies through the streets. The supreme irony: the cross, Rome's instrument of shame, becomes God's vehicle of cosmic victory. The phrase *en autō* ('in him' or 'in it') could refer to Christ or to the cross.
16. Paul now applies the theological argument of verses 9-15 to specific practices. The three categories — festivals (annual), new moons (monthly), Sabbaths (weekly) — cover the full cycle of Jewish calendar observance (cf. 1 Chronicles 23:31; Hosea 2:11). Paul does not condemn these practices in themselves but forbids anyone from using them as standards by which to judge believers in Christ.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Chronicles 23:31. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Hosea 2:11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The shadow-substance contrast (*skia / sōma*) is a powerful image: a shadow proves something real is casting it, but no one mistakes the shadow for the object itself. The Jewish regulations were real — they pointed forward to Christ — but now that Christ has come, clinging to the shadows while ignoring the substance is a fundamental confusion. The word *sōma* ('body, substance, reality') contrasts pointedly with *skia* ('shadow').
18. The verb *katababeuetō* ('let no one disqualify you, let no one act as umpire against you') is an athletic term — an unfair judge ruling against a competitor. The 'worship of angels' (*thrēskeia tōn angelōn*) could mean worship directed to angels or participation in angelic worship. The phrase *ha heōraken embateuōn* ('entering into what he has seen' or 'going on about visions') may describe mystical experiences claimed by the false teachers. The SBLGNT reads 'what he has seen' (*heōraken*) against the negation 'has not seen' in some manuscripts. Despite claims of deep spiritual insight, this person is 'puffed up by the mind of the flesh' — their supposed humility is actually arrogance.

19. The fundamental problem with the false teaching is disconnection from Christ, the Head (kephalēn). The body imagery uses medical terminology: haphōn ('joints, connections'), syndesmōn ('ligaments, sinews'), and epichorēgoumenon ('being supplied, being nourished'). A body severed from its head cannot grow, no matter how impressive its spiritual practices appear. The growth is tēn auxēsīn tou theou — growth that comes from God, not from human religious effort.
20. Paul's argument is from baptismal reality: you died with Christ (apethanete syn Christō). Death severs all obligations — a dead person owes nothing. If the Colossians died to the stoicheia ('elemental spirits/principles'), why do they let these defeated powers dictate rules for daily life? The verb dogmatizesthe ('you submit to decrees, you let yourselves be regulated') suggests voluntary submission to a system they have been freed from.
21. Paul quotes the slogans of the false teachers in descending order of contact: handle (hapsē, 'grasp, take hold of'), taste (geusē, 'eat, experience by tasting'), touch (thigēs, 'touch lightly'). The progression from major to minor contact underscores the ever-increasing restrictiveness of the legalistic system. These rules treat physical contact with certain substances as spiritually defiling.
22. Paul's argument echoes Jesus's teaching that what enters the body cannot defile a person (Mark 7:14-23). Food and drink are consumed and destroyed (phthoran, 'decay, destruction, perishing') — they have no lasting spiritual significance. The phrase 'commandments and teachings of humans' (entalmata kai didaskalias tōn anthrōpōn) directly quotes Isaiah 29:13 (LXX), which Jesus also cited against the Pharisees (Matthew 15:9).
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 29:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. Paul's devastating conclusion: the entire system of regulations has a 'reputation for wisdom' (logon sophia) — it looks impressive — but it fails at the one thing it claims to accomplish. The rare word ethelothrēskia ('self-imposed worship, voluntary religion, self-made piety') describes religion invented by human will rather than revealed by God. Ascetic severity to the body (apheidia sōmatos, 'unsparing treatment of the body') may look holy but has no actual power against fleshly indulgence (plēsmonē tēs sarkos). External regulations cannot transform the inner person — only union with Christ can.

3

Summary: *Paul pivots from theological argument to ethical exhortation, grounding the moral life in the believer's union with the risen Christ. He commands the Colossians to 'set your minds on things above, not on earthly things,' because they have died and their life is hidden with Christ in God. He lists vices to put to death and virtues to put on, climaxing with love as the bond of perfection. He instructs them to let the word of Christ dwell richly, to sing psalms and hymns, and to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. The chapter closes with a household code addressing wives and husbands, children and parents, and slaves and masters.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The 'put off / put on' metaphor (vv. 8-14) pictures moral transformation as changing garments — the old self is stripped away like soiled clothing and the new self is donned like a fresh outfit. This imagery may reflect the early Christian baptismal practice of removing garments before immersion and putting on new white robes afterward. The declaration that 'there is no Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all' (v. 11) is one of Paul's most radical equality statements. The household code (vv. 18-25) addresses relationships within the Greco-Roman family structure while subtly transforming them through the repeated phrase 'in the Lord.'*

Translation Friction: *The household code has generated significant debate. Paul appears to accept the existing social structures (including slavery) while introducing Christian modifications. Some scholars see this as accommodation to the surrounding culture; others see it as subversive transformation from within. We render the Greek without resolving this interpretive tension. The instruction to wives to 'submit' (v. 18) uses the middle voice hypotassethe ('arrange yourselves under'), which carries different nuances than a simple command to obey.*

Connections: *The 'set your minds above' command (v. 2) echoes Philippians 3:20 (heavenly citizenship). The put off/put on language parallels Ephesians 4:22-24 and Romans 13:12-14. The 'image of the creator' (v. 10) echoes Genesis 1:26-27 and Colossians 1:15. The household code parallels Ephesians 5:22-6:9 and 1 Peter 2:18-3:7. The 'whatever you do' principle (v. 17, 23) anticipates 1 Corinthians 10:31.*

1If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. 5Put to death therefore what is

earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices ¹⁰Have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge following the image of him that created him: ¹¹Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. ¹²Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, ¹³Indeed, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel opposed to any — even as Christ forgave you, so also do you. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. ¹⁸Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. ²⁰Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. ²²Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. ²³Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for people, ²⁴Knowing that of the Lord you will accept the reward of the inheritance — for you serve the Lord Christ. ²⁵For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The conditional 'if' (ei) assumes the reality: 'since you have been raised with Christ.' The verb *synēgerthēte* ('you were co-raised') picks up from 2:12. Because believers have already been raised with Christ, their orientation must shift upward. 'The right hand of God' (en dexia tou theou) is the position of supreme authority and honor, quoting Psalm 110:1 — the most frequently cited Old Testament text in the New Testament.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 110:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The verb *phroneite* ('set your minds on, think about, be oriented toward') is the same key verb from Philippians. This is not escapism or indifference to earthly life — the practical instructions that follow (vv. 5-25) are thoroughly engaged with daily existence. Rather, it means that the believer's fundamental orientation, values, and loyalties are determined by heavenly realities rather than by the world's value system.
3. The perfect tense *kekryptai* ('is hidden and remains hidden') describes an ongoing state of concealment. The believer's true life is not visible to the world — it is tucked away 'with Christ in God,' doubly secure. The phrase carries both protection (hidden from harm) and mystery (not yet fully manifested). What the world sees is not the whole story.
4. The hidden life of verse 3 will be revealed (*phanerōthēsēte*, 'you will be made visible, you will be manifested') when Christ himself is revealed at his return. The astounding identification — Christ is 'your life' (*hē zōē hymōn*) — echoes Philippians 1:21 ('to live is Christ'). The SBLGNT reads 'your life' (*hymōn*) rather than 'our life' (*hēmōn*) found in some manuscripts.
5. The imperative *nekrōsate* ('put to death, kill, make dead') is violent and decisive — not 'manage' or 'minimize' but kill. The list of five vices moves from external act to internal desire: sexual immorality (*porneia*), impurity (*akatharsia*), passion (*pathos*, 'uncontrolled desire'), evil desire (*epithymia kakē*), and covetousness (*pleonexia*). The final identification of covetousness as idolatry (*eidōlōlatria*) reveals that greed is fundamentally a worship disorder — it gives to things the devotion owed to God alone.
6. The SBLGNT omits 'upon the sons of disobedience' (*epi tous huious tēs apeitheias*) found in the Textus Receptus and in the Ephesians parallel (Ephesians 5:6). God's wrath (*orgē*) is not capricious anger but his settled opposition to everything that destroys human flourishing and dishonors his name.
7. The past tenses — 'walked' (*periepatēsate*), 'were living' (*ezēte*) — firmly locate these behaviors in the Colossians' pre-Christian past. They once lived in these sins; they no longer do. The 'once... but now' pattern is central to Paul's understanding of conversion.
8. The verb *apothesthe* ('put off, strip off, lay aside') is the clothing metaphor — strip off these behaviors like dirty garments. This second vice list focuses on sins of speech and relational hostility: anger (*orgēn*), wrath (*thymon*, 'explosive fury'), malice (*kakian*, 'ill will'), slander (*blasphēmian*, 'abusive speech'), and obscene talk (*aischrologian*, 'shameful language'). The progression moves from internal attitude to verbal expression.
9. The prohibition against lying targets community-destroying speech. The participle *apekdysamenoi* ('having stripped off') uses the same verb applied to Christ's stripping of the cosmic powers in 2:15. The 'old self' (*ton palaion anthrōpon*) is not merely bad habits but the entire pre-conversion identity — the person shaped by the world's values and the flesh's desires.

10. The 'new self' (ton neon) is not merely improved behavior but a new creation being progressively renewed (anakainoumenon, present passive — ongoing renewal) in deep knowledge (epignōsin). The phrase 'according to the image of its creator' (kat' eikona tou ktisantos) echoes Genesis 1:27 — the new creation restores the divine image marred by the fall. The same word eikōn ('image') was applied to Christ in 1:15; believers are being renewed into the image that Christ perfectly embodies.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 1:27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. In the new humanity, the fundamental divisions of the ancient world are abolished: ethnic (Greek/Jew), religious (circumcised/uncircumcised), cultural (barbarian/Scythian — the Scythians were considered the most uncivilized of all peoples), and social (slave/free). This does not mean differences disappear but that they no longer determine identity or status. The concluding declaration — 'Christ is all and in all' (ta panta kai en pasin Christos) — is breathtaking: Christ occupies every position and permeates every person in the new community.
12. The imperative endysasthe ('put on, clothe yourselves') completes the clothing metaphor. The motivation comes from identity: they are 'God's chosen ones, holy and beloved' (eklektōi tou theou hagioi kai ēgapēmenoi) — these are Old Testament titles for Israel now applied to the church. Five virtues are listed: compassion (splanchna oiktirmou, literally 'intestines of mercy'), kindness (chrēstotēta), humility (tapeinophrosynēn), gentleness (praūtēta), and patience (makrothymian). Each virtue is relational, oriented toward others.
13. The verb anechomenoi ('bearing with, putting up with') acknowledges that community life involves friction. The verb charizomenoi ('forgiving, granting grace') shares the root of charis ('grace'). The standard for forgiveness is not human capacity but divine precedent: 'as the Lord has forgiven you' (kathōs kai ho kyrios echarisato hymin). The SBLGNT reads 'the Lord' (ho kyrios) where some manuscripts have 'Christ' (ho Christos).
14. Love (agapē) is the outer garment that holds all other virtues together. The phrase syndesmos tēs teleiōtētōs ('the bond of perfection/completeness') pictures love as the belt or clasp that unifies the entire outfit. Without love, the other virtues are disconnected pieces; with love, they form a coherent whole. This echoes 1 Corinthians 13's declaration that without love, all other gifts are nothing.
15. The verb brabeuētō ('let it rule, let it act as umpire, let it arbitrate') is an athletic term — the same root as katabrabeuētō ('disqualify') in 2:18. Christ's peace serves as the internal umpire that adjudicates disputes and determines the proper course of action. The SBLGNT reads 'the peace of Christ' (tou Christou) rather than 'the peace of God' (tou theou). The call to thankfulness (eucharistoi ginesthe) is a constant refrain in Colossians.
16. The 'word of Christ' (ho logos tou Christou) — the gospel message — is to 'take up rich residence' (enoikeitō plousiōs) in the community. The three types of song — psalmois ('psalms,' likely Old Testament psalms), hymnois ('hymns,' compositions praising God or Christ), and ōdais pneumatikais ('spiritual songs,' Spirit-inspired singing) — suggest a rich variety in early Christian worship. Teaching and worship are intertwined; singing is a form of mutual instruction.
17. This verse serves as the comprehensive principle governing all Christian conduct: every word and every action is to be performed 'in the name of the Lord Jesus' — under his authority, as his representative, for his honor. The phrase covers the totality of life, leaving no secular realm untouched by Christ's lordship. Thanksgiving (eucharistountes) flows through Christ back to the Father — Christ is the mediator of both prayer and praise.
18. The household code begins. The verb hypotassasthe ('submit, arrange yourselves under') is in the middle voice, indicating voluntary self-ordering rather than forced subjugation. The qualifier 'as is fitting in the Lord' (hōs anēken en kyriō) places the instruction within the sphere of Christ's lordship — the submission is 'in the Lord,' not absolute or unconditional. This is notably shorter than the parallel in Ephesians 5:22-24.
19. The command to husbands is love (agapate), not authority. The verb pikrainesthe ('be bitter, be harsh, be embittered') prohibits the kind of resentful domination that characterized many ancient marriages. In a culture where husbands had virtually unlimited legal authority over wives, the command not to be harsh was a significant constraint on patriarchal power.
20. The verb hypakouete ('obey, listen to and comply with') is stronger than the 'submit' (hypotassasthe) used for wives — children are commanded to obey, not merely to arrange themselves under authority. The qualifier 'in everything' (kata panta) is broad, though 'in the Lord' provides the governing framework. That children are addressed directly indicates their presence in the worship gathering where this letter was read.
21. The verb erethizete ('provoke, irritate, stir up') addresses the abuse of paternal authority. The Roman paterfamilias had absolute legal authority (patria potestas) over children, including the right to punish severely. Paul limits this power: parental authority that crushes a child's spirit defeats its own purpose. The verb athymōsin ('become discouraged, lose heart, become spiritless') describes a child broken by harsh treatment.
22. The phrase 'earthly masters' (kata sarka kyrioi, literally 'masters according to the flesh') subtly relativizes their authority — they are masters in the fleshly realm only, not in the ultimate sense. The compound ophthalmoudoulia ('eye-service,' working only when watched) appears only in Paul. The contrast is between external performance (working to impress humans) and internal sincerity (haplotēti kardias, 'singleness of heart') motivated by reverence for the true Lord.
23. The phrase ek psychēs ('from the soul, heartily, with your whole being') demands wholehearted effort. The transformation is in perspective: the same task performed for a human master is reconceived as service to the Lord Christ. This does not legitimize the institution of slavery but transforms the slave's inner experience and ultimate allegiance.
24. The promise of an 'inheritance' (klēronomias) to slaves is revolutionary — in Roman law, slaves could not inherit property. Paul declares that these disinherited people will receive the ultimate inheritance from Christ himself. The phrase 'You are serving the Lord Christ' (tō kyriō Christō douleuete) can be read as indicative ('you are serving') or imperative ('serve!'). Either way, the slave's true master is Christ, not the human owner.

25. The warning against wrongdoing (adikōn, 'acting unjustly') applies to both slaves and masters — the lack of partiality (prosōpolēmpsia, literally 'face-receiving,' showing favoritism) means God judges everyone by the same standard regardless of social status. This is a veiled warning to masters that their position will not protect them from divine judgment, preparing for the explicit command to masters in 4:1.

4

Summary: *Paul concludes the household code with a command to masters, urges the Colossians to devote themselves to prayer and wise conduct toward outsiders, and sends a series of personal greetings that reveal the network of co-workers surrounding him. He names Tychicus and Onesimus as letter-bearers, sends greetings from Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas, gives instructions about sharing this letter with Laodicea (and vice versa), charges Archippus to complete his ministry, and closes with a handwritten greeting from prison.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The closing greetings of Colossians provide a remarkable snapshot of the early Christian network. The list includes Jews (Aristarchus, Mark, Justus — described as the only Jewish co-workers), Gentiles (Epaphras, Luke, Demas), a former slave (Onesimus, identified as 'one of you'), and a physician (Luke). The mention of Mark's potential visit is significant given his earlier falling out with Paul (Acts 15:37-39) — reconciliation has occurred. The instruction to exchange letters with Laodicea (v. 16) reveals that Paul's letters circulated among churches from the beginning, a practice that would eventually lead to their collection as Scripture.*

Translation Friction: *The 'letter from Laodicea' (v. 16) is lost — or may be the letter we know as Ephesians, which some scholars regard as a circular letter. The identity of Nympha (v. 15) and the gender of the name is debated; the SBLGNT reading supports a feminine name with 'her house' (autēs). The charge to Archippus (v. 17) is enigmatic — we do not know what ministry he received or why he needed encouragement to complete it.*

Connections: *Onesimus connects this letter to Philemon, where he is the central figure. Tychicus appears also in Ephesians 6:21 as letter-bearer. The house-church of Nympha (v. 15) reflects the standard meeting pattern of early Christianity before dedicated buildings existed. Paul's handwritten closing (v. 18) parallels Galatians 6:11, 2 Thessalonians 3:17, and 1 Corinthians 16:21.*

¹Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. ²Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison, ⁴That I may make it manifest, as I anything to speak. ⁵Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. ⁷Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. ⁸I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, ⁹Indeed, with Onesimus, a faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are done here. ¹⁰Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions — if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹Indeed, Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers to God's reign, which have been a comfort to me. ¹²Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. ¹⁴Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. ¹⁵Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. ¹⁶And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷And say to Archippus, "See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord." ¹⁸I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

1. The command to masters uses two significant words: *dikaion* ('what is just, what is right') and *isotēta* ('equality, fairness'). The word *isotēta* is striking — it pushes toward equitable treatment even within an institution built on inequality. The theological leverage is powerful: masters have a Master (*kyrion en ouranō*), and that heavenly Master will hold them accountable for how they treat those under their authority.
2. The verb *proskartereite* ('continue steadfastly, persist, devote yourselves') implies sustained effort against the tendency to neglect prayer. The participle *grēgorountes* ('being watchful, being alert') adds urgency — prayer is not passive but vigilant, attentive to both spiritual realities and the present moment. Thanksgiving (*eucharistia*) appears yet again as the characteristic posture of the praying community.
3. Paul asks for prayer not for release from prison but for opportunity to proclaim the gospel — the 'open door' (*thyran tou logou*) metaphor pictures gospel advance, not personal comfort. The 'mystery of Christ' (*to mystērion tou Christou*) echoes 1:26-27. Paul's imprisonment is directly connected to his proclamation: he is in chains 'on account of' (*di' ho*) the mystery he preaches.
4. The verb *phanerōsō* ('I may make clear, I may manifest, I may reveal') uses the same root as 'revealed' in 1:26. Paul's prayer request is not for eloquence but for clarity — that the mystery of Christ would be made transparent and accessible. The phrase 'as I ought to speak' (*hōs dei me lalēsai*) indicates a sense of divine obligation.
5. The phrase 'those outside' (*tous exō*) is the standard early Christian term for non-believers (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:12). The verb *exagorazomenoi* ('buying up, redeeming, making the most of') pictures time or opportunity as a commodity in a marketplace — believers must seize every moment for wise witness. The same phrase appears in Ephesians 5:16.
6. Gracious speech (*en chariti*, 'with grace') and salt-seasoned speech are complementary: grace makes words kind, salt makes them interesting, preserving, and penetrating. Salt in the ancient world prevented decay and enhanced flavor. The phrase 'each person' (*heni hekastō*) emphasizes that wise speech is not formulaic but adapted to the individual — each person deserves a thoughtful, tailored response.
7. Tychicus is the letter-bearer, entrusted with both delivering the written letter and providing oral updates about Paul's situation. He is described with three titles: beloved brother (*agapētos adelphos*), faithful minister (*pistos diakonos*), and fellow servant (*syndoulos*) in the Lord. Tychicus also carried the letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 6:21-22) and appears in Acts 20:4, 2 Timothy 4:12, and Titus 3:12.
8. The dual purpose of Tychicus's visit: to inform ('that you may know how we are') and to encourage ('that he may encourage your hearts'). The SBLGNT reads 'that you may know how we are' (*hina gnōte ta peri hēmōn*) rather than 'that he may know how you are' found in some manuscripts — the information flows from Paul to the Colossians, not the reverse.
9. This Onesimus is almost certainly the runaway slave of the letter to Philemon. Paul introduces him to the wider Colossian church as a 'faithful and beloved brother' (*tō pistō kai agapētō adelphō*) — the same elevated language used for Tychicus. The phrase 'who is one of you' (*hos estin ex hymōn*) identifies Onesimus as a Colossian, connecting this letter to the personal appeal of Philemon.
10. Aristarchus is called *synaichmalōtos* ('fellow prisoner of war, co-captive'), suggesting he shares Paul's imprisonment. Mark (Markos) is identified as Barnabas's cousin (*anepsios*, not 'nephew' as KJV). This is likely John Mark, who had deserted Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey (Acts 13:13, 15:37-39). Paul's instruction to 'welcome him' indicates the breach has been healed — a quiet testimony to reconciliation.
11. Jesus (Iesous, the Greek form of Joshua) called Justus bears the same name as the Lord — a common Jewish name in the first century. The note that only these three (Aristarchus, Mark, Justus) are Jewish co-workers (*ek peritomēs*, 'of the circumcision') reveals Paul's isolation from the broader Jewish-Christian community. The word *parēgoria* ('comfort, consolation') appears only here in the New Testament.
12. Epaphras, the probable founder of the Colossian church (1:7), is described as 'always struggling' (*pantote agōnizomenos*) in prayer — the athletic *agōn* metaphor applied to intercessory prayer. His prayer goal mirrors Paul's prayer in 1:9-10: maturity (*teleioi*) and full conviction (*peplērophōrēmenoi*, 'fully assured, completely convinced') in God's will. Prayer is depicted as strenuous spiritual labor, not passive meditation.
13. Paul personally vouches for Epaphras's labor. The word *ponon* ('toil, hard work, pain') emphasizes the costliness of his efforts. The three cities — Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis — are all in the Lycus Valley, within about 12 miles of each other. Epaphras appears to have been the evangelist for the entire region.
14. Luke (Loukas) is identified as a physician (*iatros*) — the only mention of his profession in the New Testament. He is traditionally identified as the author of Luke-Acts. That he is not listed among the Jewish co-workers (v. 11) confirms he was a Gentile. Demas is mentioned without any commendation — a silence that becomes significant in light of 2 Timothy 4:10, where Paul writes that 'Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me.'
15. The SBLGNT reads *autēs* ('her'), identifying Nympha (Nymphan) as a woman who hosts a house church. Other manuscripts read *autou* ('his'), making the name masculine (Nymphas). The house church was the standard meeting place for early Christian communities — purpose-built church buildings did not appear until the third century. Nympha's role as host of a church suggests significant social standing and leadership.
16. This verse reveals the circulation of Paul's letters among churches — a practice that contributed to their eventual collection and canonization. The 'letter from Laodicea' (*tēn ek Laodikeia*) is unknown. It may be a lost letter, or it may be the letter we know as Ephesians (which some scholars view as a circular letter). The verb *anagnōsthē* ('be read aloud') indicates that Paul's letters were read publicly in the worship assembly.
17. Archippus is mentioned also in Philemon 2 as a 'fellow soldier.' His ministry (*diakonian*) was received 'in the Lord' — a divine commission, not a human appointment. The fact that Paul delivers this charge through the congregation rather than privately suggests it is a matter of communal accountability. The nature of his ministry is unspecified.

- 18.** Paul takes the pen from his amanuensis (secretary) to write the final greeting in his own handwriting — a practice that authenticated the letter (cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:17). The brief imperative 'Remember my chains' (mnēmoneuete mou tōn desmōn) is both a prayer request and a reminder of the cost of the gospel he has proclaimed throughout this letter. The closing — 'Grace be with you' (hē charis meth' hymōn) — is characteristically brief. The SBLGNT omits the final 'Amen' found in the Textus Receptus.

1 Thessalonians

1

Summary: *Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy greet the church in Thessalonica, giving thanks for their faith, love, and hope. Paul recalls how the gospel came to them not merely in words but in power and the Holy Spirit, and how the Thessalonians became imitators of the apostles and of the Lord, receiving the word in the midst of affliction with joy from the Holy Spirit. Their faith became an example to believers throughout Macedonia and Achaia.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This is widely considered the earliest surviving letter of Paul, and possibly the earliest document in the New Testament (c. AD 49-51). The triad of faith, love, and hope (v. 3) appears here in what may be its earliest formulation, predating 1 Corinthians 13:13. The description of conversion in verses 9-10 provides one of the clearest summaries of early Christian proclamation: turning from idols, serving the living God, and awaiting the risen Son from heaven.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'election' (eklogē, v. 4) is rendered without imposing later Calvinist-Arminian frameworks. Paul's language about the gospel coming 'in power and in the Holy Spirit' (v. 5) describes experiential reality, not abstract doctrine. The reference to 'wrath that is coming' (v. 10) is eschatological, pointing to final judgment rather than a specific historical event.*

Connections: *The faith-love-hope triad reappears in 1 Corinthians 13:13 and Colossians 1:4-5. The description of turning from idols echoes Old Testament prophetic calls (Ezekiel 14:6, Isaiah 44:9-20). The expectation of Jesus's return from heaven connects to the fuller parousia teaching in chapters 4-5. Paul's self-description of his manner among them is expanded in chapter 2.*

¹Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, to the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ — Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, ³We continually remember before our God and Father your faithful work, your loving effort, and your patient hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴Knowing, brothers and sisters beloved, your election of God,. ⁵For our gospel arrived not to you in message only, but also in authority, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. As you know what manner of men we were in the midst of you since your sake. ⁶And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you received the word in great affliction with joy from the Holy Spirit, ⁷So that you were ensamples to all that trust in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸For the word of the Lord has sounded out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia,

but in every place your faith toward God has gone out, so that we have no need to say anything. ⁹For they themselves report about us what kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰To wait for his Descendant from the heavens above, whom he raised from the no longer alive, not even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT has the shorter greeting 'Grace to you and peace' without the additional 'from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ' found in some manuscripts and reflected in the KJV. We follow the critical text. The Greek *charis* ('grace') and *eirēnē* ('peace') combine a Greek greeting with the Hebrew *shalom*, bridging the two cultural worlds of Paul's audience.
1. Silvanus is the Latin form of Silas, Paul's companion from Acts 15-18. The letter is co-authored, though Paul is the primary voice.
2. The adverb *adialeiptōs* ('constantly, without ceasing') modifies the thanksgiving and prayer, indicating habitual practice rather than unbroken activity. Paul's thanksgivings are not mere formality — they typically preview the letter's main themes.
3. The three genitives — 'of faith,' 'of love,' 'of hope' — are best understood as subjective genitives: faith produces the work, love motivates the labor, hope sustains the endurance. This is possibly the earliest written occurrence of the faith-love-hope triad that Paul develops more fully in 1 Corinthians 13:13.
3. The Greek *kopos* ('labor') implies toil to the point of exhaustion, stronger than simple 'work' (*ergon*). Paul distinguishes the two: faith produces activity (*ergon*), but love drives costly effort (*kopos*).
4. The Greek *adelphoi* ('brothers') is used inclusively throughout Paul's letters to address the entire congregation, including women. We render it 'brothers and sisters' to reflect the inclusive scope. The noun *eklogē* ('election, choosing') denotes God's initiative in calling the Thessalonians — Paul grounds their identity in divine action, not human achievement.
5. The Greek *plērophoria* ('full conviction, complete certainty') could refer to the apostles' conviction in preaching or the Thessalonians' conviction in receiving. The ambiguity may be intentional — both the proclaimers and the hearers experienced deep assurance. The phrase 'our gospel' does not mean Paul invented it but that he was entrusted with proclaiming it.
6. The Greek *mimētai* ('imitators') is stronger than the KJV's 'followers' — it implies deliberate imitation of a pattern of life. The paradox of receiving the word 'in great affliction with joy' defines the distinctive Christian experience: suffering and joy coexist through the Holy Spirit's work. The affliction (*thlipsis*) likely refers to persecution from both Jewish and Gentile opponents in Thessalonica (cf. Acts 17:5-9).
7. The singular *typon* ('pattern, model') is used collectively — the entire church is one pattern. Macedonia and Achaia together comprise most of Roman Greece, indicating the rapid and wide spread of the Thessalonians' reputation.
8. The verb *exēchētai* ('has sounded out, has rung out') is onomatopoeic, suggesting a trumpet blast or the reverberation of thunder. It occurs only here in the New Testament. Paul portrays the Thessalonians' faith as an audible proclamation that reverberates outward from their city.
9. The phrase 'turned to God from idols' confirms the congregation was predominantly Gentile, since Jews would not be described as turning from idols. The two-part description — turning from (idols) and turning to (God) — mirrors the Old Testament prophetic call to repentance. 'Living and true God' (*theō zōnti kai alēthinō*) contrasts with the dead and false nature of idols, echoing Jeremiah 10:10.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 10:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The present participle *rhymenon* ('the one rescuing') portrays deliverance as ongoing, not merely a past event. 'The coming wrath' (*tēs orgēs tēs erchomenēs*) refers to eschatological judgment. This verse contains a compact early Christian creed: resurrection, heavenly exaltation, expected return, and deliverance from judgment. The three infinitives — serve (v. 9), wait (v. 10), and the implied rescue — summarize the Christian life as present service, future hope, and divine deliverance.

2

Summary: Paul defends the integrity of his ministry in Thessalonica, recalling how he and his companions came with boldness despite prior suffering in Philippi. He emphasizes their motives were pure — not from error, impurity, or deceit — and describes their gentle conduct, comparing themselves to a nursing mother caring for her children and a father encouraging his own. Paul then thanks God that the Thessalonians received his message as the word of God, not merely human speech. The chapter closes with Paul expressing his intense desire to revisit them, calling them his glory and joy.

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's extended self-defense in verses 1-12 likely responds to accusations from opponents in Thessalonica. The double parental metaphor — mother (v. 7) and father (v. 11) — is unusual in ancient rhetoric and reveals Paul's pastoral warmth. Verses 14-16 contain some of Paul's sharpest language about opposition, which has generated significant scholarly debate about its scope and intent.*

Translation Friction: *Verses 14-16 have been historically misused for anti-Jewish purposes. Paul's criticism is directed at specific opponents who hindered the gospel mission, not at the Jewish people as a whole — Paul himself remained proudly Jewish (cf. Romans 9:1-5, 11:1). We render the Greek as written while noting this critical context. The textual variant in verse 7 (ἐπιοί 'gentle' vs. νῆπιοι 'infants') affects the metaphor significantly; we follow the SBLGNT reading.*

Connections: *The suffering in Philippi is narrated in Acts 16:19-40. The description of opposition parallels Jesus's lament over Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37). Paul's longing to return anticipates the sending of Timothy in chapter 3. The 'crown of boasting' language (v. 19) connects to athletic and civic honor imagery Paul uses elsewhere (Philippians 4:1, 2 Timothy 4:8).*

¹For you yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not without result. ²But though we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak the gospel of God to you in the midst of great opposition. ³For our appeal does not come from error or from impurity or with deceit, ⁴However, as we were allowed of God to be placed in trust with the good news, not even so we talk. Not as pleasing people, but God, which trieth our hearts. ⁵For we never came with flattering speech, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed — God is our witness. ⁶Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, ⁷But we were gentle in the midst of you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:. ⁸So, being deeply fond of you, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become dear to us. ⁹For you remember, brothers and sisters, our labor and toil: working night and day so as not to burden any of you, we proclaimed the gospel of God to you. ¹⁰You are witnesses, and so is God, of how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we conducted ourselves toward you who believe, ¹¹As you recognize how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a Parent does his offspring,. ¹²Indeed, that you would walk worthy of God, who has called you to his reign and glory. ¹³And for this reason we also thank God continually, because when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human message but as what it truly is — the word of God, which is also at work in you who believe. ¹⁴For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Judea that are in Christ Jesus, because you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Judeans — ¹⁵Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own God's spokespersons, and possess persecuted us. Then they please not God, and are contrary to all people:. ¹⁶They try to keep us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In this way they keep piling up their sins to the limit. God's wrath has come upon them at last. ¹⁷But as for us, brothers and sisters, after being torn away from you for a short time — in person, not in heart — we made every effort with great longing to see you face to face. ¹⁸For we wanted to come to you — I, Paul, again and again — but Satan hindered us. ¹⁹For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting? Is it not you, before our Lord Jesus at his coming? ²⁰For you are what we take pride in and joy.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The adjective kenē ('empty, vain, without result') can mean either 'empty of content' (the visit was not pointless) or 'empty of result' (the visit was not fruitless). The context favors the latter — Paul appeals to the visible fruit of his ministry among them.
2. The verb hybristhentes ('mistreated, shamefully treated') refers to the illegal beating and imprisonment described in Acts 16:22-24. The noun agōni ('struggle, opposition') carries athletic connotations — a contest or fight. Paul frames gospel proclamation as a struggle that requires divine boldness (parrēsia).
3. Paul denies three possible charges: planē ('error, delusion') — that his message is false; akatharsia ('impurity') — that his motives are impure, possibly with sexual overtones given the reputation of some itinerant teachers; and dolos ('deceit, trickery') — that he uses manipulative methods. This three-part denial suggests actual accusations were circulating.

4. The verb *dokimazō* ('to test, examine, approve') appears twice: God has tested and approved Paul (*dedokimasmetha*), and God continues to test (*dokimazonti*) their hearts. The same God who qualified them also holds them accountable. 'Hearts' (*kardias*) in biblical usage refers to the center of thought, will, and intention — not merely emotion.
5. The Greek *kolakeia* ('flattery') occurs only here in the New Testament. It was a standard accusation against sophists and traveling philosophers who told audiences what they wanted to hear for profit. *Prophasis* ('pretext, excuse') implies a hidden motive concealed behind a respectable front. Paul invokes God as witness precisely because hidden motives cannot be seen by humans.
6. The Greek *doxa* here means 'glory' in the sense of honor, recognition, or reputation from human sources. Paul's point is that apostolic ministry is not motivated by the desire for public acclaim.
7. The SBLGNT reads *ēpioi* ('gentle') rather than the variant *nēpioi* ('infants'), which would create the odd image of Paul being an infant in their midst. The metaphor of the *trophos* ('nursing mother') is remarkably intimate — Paul compares himself not to a hired nurse but to a mother with her own (*heautēs*) children. The phrase *en barei einai* ('to be burdensome' or 'to carry weight') likely refers to financial demands or the weight of apostolic authority.
8. The verb *homeiromenoi* ('being deeply fond of, yearning for') is rare and occurs only here in the New Testament. Its etymology is debated, but it expresses strong emotional attachment. The phrase *tas heautōn psychas* ('our own souls/selves') means Paul gave not just a message but his entire person — the gospel was embodied, not merely proclaimed.
9. The paired nouns *kopos kai mochthos* ('labor and toil') emphasize exhausting physical work — Paul supported himself through manual labor (tent-making, Acts 18:3) while simultaneously preaching. 'Night and day' is a Semitic idiom emphasizing totality of effort. Paul's refusal to accept financial support from the Thessalonians was a deliberate pastoral strategy, not mere preference.
10. Paul invokes both human witnesses (the Thessalonians) and the divine witness (God) — a legal formula establishing credibility. The three adverbs — *hosiōs* ('devoutly, in a holy manner'), *dikaiōs* ('justly, uprightly'), and *amemptōs* ('blamelessly') — cover duty toward God, duty toward others, and overall integrity.
11. Paul shifts from the mother metaphor (v. 7) to a father metaphor. The phrase 'each one of you' (*hena hekaston hymōn*) in verse 12 emphasizes individual pastoral attention — Paul did not merely address crowds but engaged persons one by one.
12. Three participles describe Paul's fatherly role: *parakalountes* ('urging, exhorting'), *paramythoumenoi* ('encouraging, consoling'), and *martyromenoi* ('charging, insisting'). The progression moves from encouragement to solemn appeal. The present participle *kalountos* ('who calls') indicates God's call is ongoing, not merely a past event. 'Kingdom and glory' is Paul's shorthand for the full eschatological reality.
13. Paul distinguishes between *paralambanō* ('received' — the act of receiving a tradition) and *dechomai* ('accepted' — the act of welcoming and embracing it). The Thessalonians both received the message as transmitted and accepted it as divine in origin. The verb *energeitai* ('is at work, is active') is middle voice, indicating the word of God is self-acting — it accomplishes its own purpose in believers.
14. The Greek *sympyletōn* ('fellow countrymen, compatriots') indicates the Thessalonians were persecuted by their own Gentile neighbors, paralleling the Jewish believers' experience in Judea. We render *Ioudaiōn* as 'Judeans' here because the context is geographical and sociopolitical — it refers to the local population in Judea who opposed the early church, not to the Jewish people globally.
15. Paul's language here echoes the Old Testament tradition of Israel's persecution of prophets (cf. Nehemiah 9:26, Jeremiah 26:20-23, 2 Chronicles 36:15-16). Jesus himself invoked this tradition (Matthew 23:31-37, Luke 13:34). Paul — himself Jewish — speaks as a prophetic voice within the tradition of intra-Jewish critique, not as an outsider condemning another religion. The verb *ekdiōxantōn* ('drove out, persecuted') may refer to the specific events in Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-10) and Berea (Acts 17:13).
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Nehemiah 9:26 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 26:20-23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The phrase 'fill up the measure of their sins' (*anaplērōsai autōn tas hamartias*) echoes Genesis 15:16 where the Amorites' sins must reach their full measure before judgment comes. The final clause *ephthasen de ep' autous hē orgē eis telos* is debated: 'at last' (*eis telos*) could mean 'to the end, completely, finally.' The aorist *ephthasen* ('has overtaken') could be prophetic aorist (viewing a future event as already accomplished) or could refer to a recent event. Paul sees the obstruction of the Gentile mission as the culminating sin that triggers divine response.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 15:16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The verb *aporphanisthentes* ('having been orphaned from') is deeply emotional — Paul uses the language of an orphan separated from family. This is the only occurrence of this word in the New Testament. Combined with the mother (v. 7) and father (v. 11) metaphors, it creates a sustained family-relationship framework for understanding the apostolic bond.

- 18.** Paul shifts to the singular 'I, Paul' (egō men Paulos) to emphasize his personal desire. The phrase hapax kai dis ('once and twice') means 'repeatedly.' The verb enekopsen ('cut in, hindered, blocked') is a military term for breaking up a road to prevent an army's advance. Paul does not specify how Satan hindered him — it could be opposition, illness, or circumstances.
- 19.** The noun stephanos ('crown, wreath') refers to the victory wreath given to athletic victors, not the royal diadēma. Paul's 'crown of boasting' (kauchēseōs) is the Thessalonian church itself — his evidence of faithful labor when he stands before Christ. The word parousia ('coming, arrival, presence') here takes on its technical eschatological meaning — the future return of Christ. This is one of the earliest uses of parousia as a theological term in Christian literature.
- 20.** This brief declaration serves as an emphatic conclusion to the chapter's argument. The word doxa ('glory') when applied to the Thessalonians means the visible evidence of God's work through Paul's ministry — they are the tangible proof that his labor was not in vain (cf. v. 1).

3

Summary: *Unable to return to Thessalonica himself, Paul sent Timothy to strengthen and encourage the believers in their faith amid persecution. Timothy has now returned with the good news that the Thessalonians' faith and love remain strong and that they remember Paul fondly. Paul expresses overwhelming relief and joy, describing Timothy's report as life-giving. The chapter closes with a prayer that God would direct Paul's path back to them and that the Lord would cause their love to increase and overflow toward one another and toward all people.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter reveals the anxiety Paul felt during the separation — the language is remarkably candid about emotional vulnerability. The phrase 'we really live now' (v. 8) shows that Paul's emotional and spiritual vitality was bound up with the health of his churches. The closing prayer (vv. 11-13) transitions from personal concerns to eschatological hope, ending with another reference to the parousia.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of 'the tempter' (v. 5) parallels 'Satan' in 2:18. Paul's statement that afflictions are 'destined' (v. 3) raises theological questions about suffering and divine will that we render without resolving. The phrase 'night and day' (v. 10) in Paul's prayer vocabulary indicates intensity, not literal continuous prayer.*

Connections: *Timothy's mission is briefly noted in Acts 18:5. The concern about being 'shaken' by afflictions (v. 3) connects to Jesus's parable of foundations (Matthew 7:24-27). The prayer for increasing love (v. 12) anticipates the ethical instructions of chapters 4-5. The parousia reference (v. 13) prepares for the extended teaching in 4:13-5:11.*

¹Therefore, when we could bear it no longer, we decided to be left behind in Athens alone, ²We sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, ³so that none of you would be shaken by these hardships. You know very well that we are destined for them. ⁴For even when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction — and so it happened, as you know. ⁵For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to learn about your faith, fearing that the tempter had somehow tempted you and that our labor would be in vain. ⁶But Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought us the good news of your faith and love, and that you always remember us kindly, longing to see us just as we long to see you. ⁷For this reason, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and affliction we have been encouraged about you through your faith. ⁸For we really live now, since you are standing firm in the Lord. ⁹For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, in exchange for all the joy that we feel on your account before our God, ¹⁰After dark and time praying exceedingly that we may witness your face, and may perfect that which is lacking in your faith? ¹¹Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you. ¹²And may the Lord cause you to increase and overflow in love for one another and for all people, just as we do for you, ¹³May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy before our God and Father when our Lord Jesus returns with all his holy ones.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

- 1.** The verb stegontes ('bearing, enduring, containing') conveys the image of a container that can no longer hold its contents — Paul's anxiety about the Thessalonians overflowed. 'Left behind alone' (kataleiphthēnai monoī) emphasizes the cost of sending Timothy — Paul chose isolation in Athens

rather than continued uncertainty about the church.

2. The SBLGNT reads *synergon tou theou* ('God's coworker'), which is the more difficult reading — some manuscripts soften it to *diakonon* ('servant'). The bold claim that Timothy is God's coworker follows Paul's theology that human ministry participates in divine action. The two infinitives *stērixai* ('to strengthen, establish') and *parakalesai* ('to encourage, comfort') define Timothy's mission.
3. The verb *sainesthai* is rare and its meaning debated — it may mean 'to be shaken, disturbed' or possibly 'to be deceived, beguiled.' The context of afflictions (*thlipseis*) favors 'shaken.' The verb *keimetha* ('we are appointed, destined, set') indicates that suffering is not accidental but part of the expected Christian experience — Paul had warned them of this in advance (v. 4).
4. The imperfect *proelegomen* ('we kept telling') indicates repeated warning, not a single prediction. Paul had prepared the Thessalonians for persecution as a regular part of discipleship instruction, not an afterthought.
5. Paul shifts to the first person singular (*kagō*, 'I also') — the decision to send Timothy was personally his. The title *ho peirazōn* ('the tempter') identifies Satan by function rather than name (cf. 2:18). The concern that labor might be 'in vain' (*eis kenon*, 'into emptiness') echoes the same word (*kenē*) from 2:1 — Paul's deepest fear was that the Thessalonians' faith had not survived persecution.
6. Remarkably, Paul uses the verb *euangelisamenou* ('having brought good news') — the same word used for preaching the gospel — to describe Timothy's report about the Thessalonians. For Paul, news of their persevering faith is itself 'gospel.' The report covers three things: their faith (vertical relationship), their love (horizontal relationships), and their affection for Paul (the apostolic bond).
7. The noun *anankē* ('distress, necessity, hardship') combined with *thlipsis* ('affliction') reveals that Paul himself was under significant pressure — not just concerned for them but suffering in his own circumstances. Their faith became a source of encouragement (*paraklēsis*) for Paul in his own trials.
8. The emphatic *nyn zōmen* ('now we live') is one of Paul's most emotionally transparent statements — the news of their faithfulness was literally life-giving to him. The verb *stēkete* ('you stand firm') is present tense, describing their current state as reported by Timothy.
9. The verb *antapodounai* ('to give back in return, to repay') frames thanksgiving as a reciprocal act — God gave the joy; Paul wants to return adequate thanks. The rhetorical question implies that no thanksgiving is sufficient. The phrase *emprosthen tou theou* ('before our God') places Paul's joy in the context of worship.
10. The adverb *hyperēkperissou* ('beyond all measure, most earnestly') is a Pauline superlative found only in his letters — he piles up prefixes (*hyper* + *ek* + *perissou*) to intensify the expression. The verb *katartisai* ('to mend, complete, supply') was used for mending fishing nets (Mark 1:19) — Paul sees faith not as defective but as needing completion. The 'lacking' (*hysterēmata*) refers to areas where further instruction is needed, which chapters 4-5 will address.
11. The optative *kateuthynai* ('may he direct') introduces a wish-prayer. The singular verb with a compound subject ('God and Father... and our Lord Jesus') is grammatically notable — Paul treats the two as a unified source of action. The prayer for a directed path (*hodon*, 'road, way') reflects Paul's conviction that his travel plans are subject to divine sovereignty (cf. 2:18 where Satan blocked the way).
12. Two verbs intensify the prayer: *pleonasai* ('to increase, multiply') and *perisseusai* ('to overflow, abound'). The love Paul prays for has two directions: *eis allēlous* ('toward one another' — within the community) and *eis pantas* ('toward all' — beyond the community). Christian love is not exclusive but expansive.
13. The goal of increasing love (v. 12) is established holiness (v. 13) — Paul connects ethics and eschatology. 'Holy ones' (*hagiōn*) could refer to angels (as in Zechariah 14:5, which Paul may be echoing), to deceased believers, or to both. The ambiguity is preserved in 'holy ones.' Each major section of 1 Thessalonians ends with a reference to the *parousia* (2:19, 3:13, 4:15-17, 5:23), making Christ's return the structural center of the letter.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 14:5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

4

Summary: *Paul turns from personal narrative to instruction, addressing the 'what is lacking' in their faith (3:10). He begins with ethical exhortation: God's will is their sanctification, particularly in sexual purity and brotherly love. He then addresses the question that most concerned the Thessalonians: the fate of believers who have died before Christ's return. Paul provides the earliest written Christian teaching on the parousia — the Lord will descend from heaven with a shout, the dead in Christ will rise first, and then the living will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verses 13-18 constitute the earliest surviving Christian text about the resurrection of the dead at Christ's return. This passage predates 1 Corinthians 15 and was written to address a specific pastoral crisis — grief over fellow believers who had died. The imagery of the 'meeting' (*apantēsis*, v. 17) is a technical term from Hellenistic civic life: when a dignitary approached a*

city, citizens would go out to meet him and escort him back in. Paul's eschatology is pastoral, not speculative — it ends with 'encourage one another with these words.'

Translation Friction: The phrase 'caught up' (harpagēsometha, v. 17) is the basis for the theological concept of 'the rapture,' though Paul himself does not use that term and the passage's imagery is debated. We render the Greek without imposing any particular eschatological framework. The phrase 'possess his own vessel' (v. 4) is ambiguous — it may refer to one's body or to one's wife. We note the ambiguity.

Connections: The parousia teaching connects to Jesus's Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24, Mark 13). The 'word of the Lord' (v. 15) may refer to an otherwise unrecorded saying of Jesus or to prophetic revelation. The trumpet imagery echoes Isaiah 27:13 and Exodus 19:16. The 'meeting the Lord in the air' language uses the civic apantēsis pattern found in Acts 28:15.

¹Finally then, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and please God — as you are in fact doing — that you do so more and more. ²For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. ³For this is the will of God: your sanctification — that you abstain from sexual immorality, ⁴Each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵Not in the lust of sinful desire, even as the Gentiles which know not God:. ⁶That no person depart beyond and defraud his brother in any matter — on account of the fact that that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we as well have forewarned you and testified. ⁷For God has not called us to impurity but to holiness. ⁸Therefore, whoever rejects this is not rejecting a human authority but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. ⁹Now concerning brotherly love, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. ¹⁰For indeed you are practicing it toward all the brothers and sisters throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers and sisters, to do so more and more, ¹¹Make it your goal to live a quiet life, to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we instructed you. ¹²That you may conduct your lives honestly toward them that are without, and that you may possess lack of nothing. ¹³But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have fallen asleep, so that you may not grieve as the rest do, who have no hope. ¹⁴For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep through Jesus. ¹⁵For this we declare to you by a word of the Lord: we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The transition loipon oun ('finally then') marks the shift from personal narrative (chs. 1-3) to ethical instruction (chs. 4-5). The verb peripatein ('to walk') is a Semitism for conduct or way of life, adopted from the Hebrew halak. Paul both affirms their current practice and calls for growth — they are already walking rightly but should abound (perisseuēte) increasingly.
2. The noun parangelias ('instructions, commands, charges') is a military term for orders passed down a chain of command. Paul's ethical instructions carry the authority of the Lord Jesus — they are not mere suggestions but authoritative directives mediated through apostolic teaching.
3. The noun hagioσmos ('sanctification, being made holy') is the practical outworking of holiness in daily life. The first concrete application is sexual ethics. The Greek porneia ('sexual immorality') is broader than 'fornication' (KJV) — it covers all sexual activity outside the covenant of marriage. Paul begins with this topic because Thessalonica's Greco-Roman culture was highly permissive sexually, and new converts needed clear guidance.
4. The phrase to heautou skeuos ktasthai is debated: skeuos ('vessel') could mean 'body' (as we render) or 'wife' (as in 1 Peter 3:7's 'weaker vessel'). The verb ktasthai means 'to acquire' or 'to possess/control.' If 'body,' the instruction is about self-mastery; if 'wife,' about honorable marriage. The context of sexual ethics supports either reading. We follow 'body' as more likely given the parallel with verse 5.
5. The phrase pathei epithymias ('passion of desire') denotes uncontrolled sexual craving. Paul distinguishes believers from ta ethnē ('the nations, Gentiles') — ironic given that most Thessalonian believers were themselves formerly Gentile pagans (1:9). The distinguishing factor is knowing God (eidota ton theon), which transforms sexual ethics from cultural convention into covenantal faithfulness.
6. The verbs hyperbainein ('to overstep, transgress') and pleonektein ('to take advantage of, exploit') combined with en tō pragmati ('in this matter') likely refer to sexual violation of another person's marriage or family — not general business ethics. The Lord as ekdikos ('avenger') draws on Old Testament language of God as the defender of the wronged (Psalm 94:1, Deuteronomy 32:35).

6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 94:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 32:35. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Paul grounds sexual ethics in vocation — the call of God defines the standard. The prepositions shift meaningfully: *epi akatharsia* ('upon/toward impurity') versus *en hagioismo* ('in holiness') — impurity is a destination God rejects; holiness is the sphere God intends believers to inhabit.
8. The verb *athetōn* ('rejecting, setting aside, nullifying') was used for annulling a treaty or covenant — to reject Paul's instruction is to violate the covenant relationship with God. The present participle *didonta* ('the one giving') indicates the ongoing gift of the Spirit. Some manuscripts read 'us' (*hēmas*) instead of 'you' (*hymas*); the SBLGNT reads 'you,' making the point more direct.
9. The compound *theodidaktōi* ('God-taught') is found only here in the New Testament and may be a Pauline coinage. It echoes the prophetic promise of direct divine instruction (Isaiah 54:13, Jeremiah 31:33-34). Paul's compliment is genuine but also serves as encouragement to continue.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 54:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 31:33-34. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The love of the Thessalonians extends beyond their local congregation to believers throughout the province — evidence of inter-church relationships and mutual support in the earliest Christian movement. Paul's pattern is consistent: affirm what is already happening, then call for growth (cf. v. 1).
11. The phrase *philotimeisthai hēsychazein* ('to make it your ambition to be quiet') is a deliberate paradox — 'ambitiously pursue non-ambition.' Some Thessalonians may have abandoned daily work in light of the expected *parousia*. Paul counters this with a call to ordinary, productive life. The three infinitives — live quietly, mind your own affairs, work with your hands — form a practical ethic for eschatological living.
12. The phrase *tous exō* ('those outside') refers to non-believers — Paul is concerned about the church's public witness. The practical goals are reputation (*euschēmōnōs*, 'properly, respectably') and self-sufficiency (*mēdenos chreian echēte*, 'having need of no one'). A church financially dependent on outsiders loses credibility.
13. The formula *ou thelomen hymas agnoein* ('we do not want you to be ignorant') introduces a new and important teaching section. 'Fallen asleep' (*koimōmenōn*) is a common early Christian metaphor for death — it implies the expectation of waking. The Thessalonians' grief was not about death in general but about the specific fear that deceased believers would miss the *parousia*. Paul does not forbid grief but grief 'as those who have no hope' — Christian grief is real but bounded by resurrection hope.
14. Paul's logic: Jesus's death and resurrection is the pattern for believers' death and resurrection. The phrase *dia tou Iēsou* ('through Jesus') could modify 'fallen asleep' (those who died as Christians) or 'will bring' (God will bring them through Jesus). The ambiguity may be intentional — Jesus is the means of both their death-experience and their resurrection. Note Paul uses *apethanen* ('died') for Jesus but *koimēthentas* ('fallen asleep') for believers — Jesus's death was the raw reality; believers' death is softened by his victory over it.
15. The phrase *en logō kyriou* ('by a word of the Lord') may cite an unrecorded saying of Jesus, a prophetic revelation given to Paul, or an interpretation of Jesus's known teaching (cf. Matthew 24:30-31). The double negative *ou mē* ('by no means, definitely not') is the strongest negation in Greek — the living will absolutely not have an advantage over the dead. Paul includes himself among 'we who are alive' (*hēmeis hoi zōntes*), suggesting he expected the *parousia* in his lifetime, though he later moderated this (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:1-10).
16. Three auditory images accompany the descent: *keleusma* ('a command, a shout of authority' — used for a military officer's command or a charioteer's cry), *phōnē archangelou* ('voice of an archangel'), and *salpingi theou* ('trumpet of God,' echoing the Sinai theophany of Exodus 19:16 and the eschatological trumpet of Isaiah 27:13). The phrase 'the Lord himself' (*autos ho kyrios*) emphasizes personal presence — this is not delegated to angels. 'Dead in Christ' (*nekroi en Christō*) defines the scope: those who died in union with Christ.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 19:16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 27:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The verb *harpagēsometha* ('we will be caught up, snatched away') is the basis for the later theological term 'rapture' (from the Latin *rapturo* in the Vulgate). The Greek conveys sudden, forceful action. The noun *apantēsis* ('meeting') is a technical term from Hellenistic civic life: when an important dignitary approached a city, the citizens would go out to meet (*apantēsis*) him and escort him back into the city. This imagery suggests the believers go out to meet the descending Lord and accompany him — the destination is not specified as heaven but as permanent presence 'with the Lord.' The clouds echo Daniel 7:13 and the ascension narrative (Acts 1:9-11).
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verb *parakaleite* ('encourage, comfort, exhort') frames the entire *parousia* teaching as pastoral, not speculative. Paul's purpose in describing the Lord's return is not to construct a detailed eschatological timeline but to provide comfort for the grieving. The instruction is communal — 'one another' (*allēlous*) — making this teaching a shared possession of the church, not private knowledge.

5

Summary: *Paul continues the eschatological teaching from chapter 4, now addressing the timing of the Lord's return. The 'day of the Lord' will come like a thief in the night — sudden and unexpected for the unprepared, but not for believers who are children of light. Paul calls them to remain sober and watchful, putting on the armor of faith, love, and hope. The chapter then delivers a rapid series of community instructions: respect your leaders, live at peace, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient, pursue good, rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in everything, do not quench the Spirit, test everything, hold fast to what is good, abstain from every form of evil. The letter closes with a prayer for complete sanctification and a request for mutual prayer, greeting, and public reading.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The rapid-fire instructions in verses 12-22 form one of the densest collections of ethical imperatives in Paul's letters. The triad of 'rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in everything' (vv. 16-18) has become one of the most memorized passages in the New Testament. The closing prayer (v. 23) uses the tripartite 'spirit and soul and body,' the only place Paul uses all three terms together. The final verse's insistence that the letter be read to 'all the brothers and sisters' suggests awareness of its authoritative status.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'spirit and soul and body' (v. 23) should not be pressed into a systematic anthropological framework — Paul is using comprehensive language for the whole person, not teaching trichotomism. The 'thief in the night' imagery (v. 2) echoes Jesus's own teaching (Matthew 24:43, Luke 12:39) and was clearly part of early Christian tradition. We render without imposing a specific millennial framework.*

Connections: *The 'day of the Lord' language derives from Old Testament prophetic tradition (Amos 5:18-20, Joel 2:1-11, Zephaniah 1:14-18). The thief imagery appears in Matthew 24:43, Luke 12:39, 2 Peter 3:10, and Revelation 3:3, 16:15. The armor metaphor anticipates the fuller treatment in Ephesians 6:10-17. 'Do not quench the Spirit' connects to Paul's broader pneumatology in 1 Corinthians 12-14.*

¹Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you have no need for anything to be written to you, ²For yourselves recognize perfectly that the time of the Lord so comes as a thief in the after dark. ³When they say, "Peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness, so that the day would overtake you like a thief, ⁵You are every one of the children of light, and the children of the day — we are not of the night, nor of darkness. ⁶So then, let us not sleep as the rest do, but let us stay awake and be sober, ⁷Since they that sleep sleep in the night. Then they that be drunken are drunken in the night. ⁸But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. ⁹For God has not destined us for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰Christ died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with him. ¹¹Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as you are in fact doing. ¹²Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to recognize those who labor among you, who lead you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³To esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace in the midst of yourselves. ¹⁴And we urge you, brothers and sisters: admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵See that no one repays evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good for one another and for all people. ¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷Never stop praying. ¹⁸Give thanks in every situation, for this is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies, ²¹Indeed, prove all things. Hold fast that which is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil. ²³Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. ²⁵Brothers and sisters, pray for us also. ²⁶Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss. ²⁷I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters. ²⁸May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ remain with you. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul distinguishes *chronōn* ('times' — chronological duration) from *kairōn* ('seasons' — significant or decisive moments). The combination covers both 'when' and 'what kind of time.' The phrase echoes Acts 1:7 where Jesus uses the same pair to deflect timeline questions. Paul's point is not that timing is knowable but that it is irrelevant to readiness.
2. The phrase *hēmera kyriou* ('day of the Lord') is drawn directly from Old Testament prophetic vocabulary (Hebrew: *yom YHWH*). In the prophets it refers to God's decisive intervention in judgment and salvation. Paul applies it to the return of Christ. The thief simile emphasizes unexpectedness, not stealth or evil intent — a thief comes when you do not expect him (cf. Jesus's use in Matthew 24:43).
3. The phrase *eirēnē kai asphaleia* ('peace and security') may echo Roman imperial propaganda — the Pax Romana promised exactly this. Paul subverts the claim: true security is not found in empire but in Christ. The labor pain metaphor (*ōdin*) emphasizes inevitability and suddenness, not gradual process. The double negative *ou mē* ('they will absolutely not') stresses the impossibility of escape for the unprepared.
4. Paul shifts from 'they' (v. 3) to 'you' — the believers are in a fundamentally different position. The metaphor of darkness represents moral and spiritual ignorance, not merely the absence of chronological information. Those who live in the light will not be surprised because they are already prepared.
5. The Semitic idiom 'sons/children of' (*huiōi*) expresses essential character — 'children of light' means people whose nature is defined by light. The phrase echoes language found in the Dead Sea Scrolls (War Scroll: 'sons of light vs. sons of darkness'). Paul shifts from 'you' to 'we' (*esmen*), including himself in the community of light.
6. The metaphors operate on two levels: literal sleep/waking (extending the night/day imagery) and moral alertness/negligence. The verb *grēgorōmen* ('let us stay awake, be watchful') becomes a key eschatological term in early Christianity (cf. Mark 13:35, 37). The verb *nēphōmen* ('let us be sober') refers to mental clarity and self-control, the opposite of spiritual intoxication.
7. Paul extends the night/day metaphor with commonsense observation — sleep and drunkenness are naturally associated with nighttime. The implication is that if believers belong to the day, they should exhibit daytime behavior: alertness and sobriety.
8. Paul introduces military armor imagery drawn from Isaiah 59:17 where God puts on righteousness as a breastplate and salvation as a helmet. Paul adapts the imagery: the breastplate protects the heart with faith and love, and the helmet guards the mind with hope. The faith-love-hope triad from 1:3 returns here in eschatological armor form. This is a condensed version of the fuller armor passage in Ephesians 6:10-17.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 59:17 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The verb *etheto* ('placed, appointed, destined') with *eis* ('toward, for') indicates divine purpose. The contrast is between *orgē* ('wrath' — eschatological judgment) and *peripoiēsis sōtērias* ('obtaining of salvation'). The noun *peripoiēsis* can mean 'possession' or 'obtaining/acquiring' — salvation is both God's gift and something believers receive.
10. The 'awake or asleep' language now carries double meaning: it refers to physical death and life (the concern from 4:13-18) as well as the moral alertness imagery of this chapter. Paul's answer to both questions — what about the dead? what about readiness? — is the same: Christ's death ensures that our state (alive or dead, alert or not) does not determine our destiny. Union with Christ does.
11. The verb *oikodomeite* ('build up, edify') uses construction imagery — the community is a building under construction, and each member contributes to the structure. The phrase *eis ton hena* ('one the one,' i.e., 'each other individually') emphasizes personal, one-on-one encouragement. Paul again affirms their current practice (cf. 4:1, 10).
12. Three participles describe church leaders: *kopiōntas* ('those laboring' — the same word for exhausting toil used in 1:3), *proistamenous* ('those who lead, stand before, care for'), and *nouthetountas* ('those who admonish, counsel, correct'). The verb *eidenai* ('to know, recognize') means more than mere awareness — it implies respect and acknowledgment of their role. The leadership structure in Thessalonica was not yet formalized into offices (no 'elders' or 'deacons' are named).
13. The adverb *hyperekperissou* ('beyond all measure') recurs from 3:10 — Paul characteristically piles up intensifiers. Esteem for leaders is to be 'in love' (*en agapē*), not in fear or obligation. The abrupt imperative *eirēneuete en heautois* ('be at peace among yourselves') suggests tensions within the community, possibly related to the disorderly behavior addressed in verse 14.
14. Four imperatives addressed to the whole community, not just leaders: *noutheteite tous ataktous* ('admonish the disorderly' — *ataktos* is a military term for soldiers who break rank, referring to those who refuse to work per 4:11-12); *paramytheisthe tous oligopsychous* ('encourage the fainthearted' — *oligopsychos* means 'small-souled,' those crushed by grief or fear); *antechesthe tōn asthenōn* ('help the weak' — whether physically, economically, or spiritually); *makrothymeite pros pantas* ('be patient with everyone' — including all three problem groups). The differentiated response is crucial: the disorderly need correction, the fainthearted need comfort, the weak need support. One-size-fits-all pastoral care fails.
15. The prohibition of retaliation (*kakon anti kakou*, 'evil in return for evil') parallels Romans 12:17 and 1 Peter 3:9, and ultimately echoes Jesus's teaching (Matthew 5:38-48). The verb *diōkete* ('pursue, chase after') implies active effort — doing good requires intentional action, not passive goodwill. The scope extends beyond the community (*eis allēlous*) to everyone (*eis pantas*).

16. The first of three brief imperatives (vv. 16-18) that form a well-known triad. *Pantote* ('always, at all times') is unqualified — Paul does not say 'rejoice when things go well.' Joy in Paul's theology is not dependent on circumstances but rooted in relationship with God (cf. Philippians 4:4, written from prison).
17. The adverb *adialeiptōs* ('without ceasing, constantly') appeared in 1:3 and 2:13 for Paul's own prayer practice. This does not mean unbroken verbal prayer but a persistent orientation of life toward God — prayer as habitual conversation with God woven into daily existence.
18. The phrase *en panti* ('in everything, in every circumstance') does not mean 'for everything' — Paul calls for thanksgiving in all situations, not necessarily for all situations. The phrase 'this is the will of God' (*touto gar thelēma theou*) may refer to all three imperatives (vv. 16-18) together, not just thanksgiving. God's will is the triad: joy, prayer, gratitude.
19. The verb *sbennyte* ('quench, extinguish') treats the Spirit's work as fire — a metaphor consistent with Pentecost imagery (Acts 2:3). 'Quenching' implies suppressing or stifling the Spirit's manifestations, likely prophetic gifts given the next verse. The present imperative with *mē* suggests 'stop quenching' — this may have already been happening.
20. The verb *exoutheneite* ('despise, treat as nothing, hold in contempt') suggests some Thessalonians were dismissive of prophetic speech. Prophecy in the Pauline churches was Spirit-inspired speech for edification, not fortune-telling (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:3). The next verse provides the corrective: test, don't dismiss.
21. The verb *dokimazete* ('test, examine, assess') is the same word used for testing metals to determine their purity. Applied to prophecy, it means evaluate rather than accept uncritically or reject reflexively. The imperative *katechete* ('hold fast, retain') balances openness with discernment — accept what proves genuine, release what does not.
22. The Greek *eidous* can mean 'form, kind, type' or 'appearance.' The KJV's 'appearance of evil' has been misapplied to mean 'anything that looks bad.' The Greek more likely means 'every kind of evil' — each type or manifestation of evil should be avoided. This provides the negative counterpart to verse 21's positive imperative.
23. The title 'God of peace' (*theos tēs eirēnēs*) is a standard Pauline benediction formula. The adjective *holoteleis* ('completely, entirely') and the adjective *holoklēron* ('whole, complete, intact') create emphatic completeness — every part of the person is included. The threefold 'spirit and soul and body' (*pneuma kai psychē kai sōma*) is comprehensive language for the whole person, not a systematic anthropological division. This is the only place Paul lists all three together. The *parousia* serves once again as the horizon toward which sanctification is directed.
24. The brevity is powerful: *pistos ho kalōn* ('faithful is the one calling'). The present participle *kalōn* indicates God's call is ongoing. The assurance that 'he will do it' (*hos kai poiēsei*) grounds the prayer of verse 23 in God's faithfulness — sanctification will be completed because God's character guarantees it.
25. The request for prayer is brief and mutual — Paul who prays constantly for them (1:2, 3:10) asks for the same in return. The *kai* ('also') emphasizes reciprocity.
26. The 'holy kiss' (*philēmati hagiō*) was a standard greeting in early Christian worship (cf. Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20, 2 Corinthians 13:12). The adjective 'holy' distinguishes it from romantic or familial kisses — it was a sign of spiritual kinship and mutual peace.
27. The verb *enorkizō* ('I put under oath, I adjure') is strikingly solemn for a letter closing — Paul uses oath language to ensure the letter is read publicly to the entire congregation, not just leaders. This suggests both the letter's authoritative status and the possibility that some might try to restrict its circulation. Paul shifts to the first person singular (*enorkizō*, 'I'), lending personal weight to the charge.
28. The closing benediction follows Paul's standard formula. The SBLGNT does not include 'Amen,' which appears in some later manuscripts. 'Grace' (*charis*) forms an *inclusio* with the opening greeting (1:1), framing the entire letter in the reality of divine favor.

2 Thessalonians

1

Summary: *Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy greet the Thessalonian church again, thanking God for their growing faith and increasing love amid ongoing persecution. Paul assures them that their suffering is evidence of God's righteous judgment — God will repay affliction to their oppressors and grant relief to the afflicted when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire. Those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel will face eternal destruction away from the Lord's presence, while Christ will be glorified among his saints on that day.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter contains one of the most vivid descriptions of Christ's return in judgment in the Pauline corpus. The language draws heavily on Old Testament theophany traditions — flaming fire (Exodus 3:2, Isaiah 66:15), angels as divine attendants (Deuteronomy 33:2), and divine vengeance (Isaiah 66:4, 15). The phrase 'eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord' (v. 9) is Paul's most explicit statement about the nature of final judgment.*

Translation Friction: *The severity of the judgment language in verses 6-9 stands in tension with modern sensibilities but is consistent with Old Testament prophetic tradition and Jesus's own warnings. We render the Greek faithfully without softening. The authorship of 2 Thessalonians is debated among scholars; we render the text as it stands without adjudicating authorship questions.*

Connections: *The 'revelation' (apokalypsis) of the Lord Jesus (v. 7) parallels 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 but emphasizes judgment rather than reunion. The flaming fire imagery echoes Exodus 3:2, Isaiah 66:15, and Daniel 7:9-10. The prayer for God to 'fulfill every resolve for good' (v. 11) anticipates the pastoral concerns of chapter 3.*

¹Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²From god our father and the lord jesus christ, grace to you, and peace. ³We are obligated to give thanks to God always for you, brothers and sisters, as is fitting, because your faith is growing abundantly and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing. ⁴Because of this, we ourselves boast about you among the churches of God for your endurance and faith through all the persecutions and hardships you are facing. ⁵This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering. ⁶Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense suffering to them that trouble you; ⁷and to give relief to you who are suffering along with us. This will happen when the Lord Jesus appears from heaven with his mighty angels. ⁸He will come in blazing fire, bringing judgment on those

who do not know God and on those who refuse to obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹They will suffer the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, ¹⁰When he will come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that trust (because our testimony in the midst of you was believed) in that day. ¹¹To this end we always pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, ¹²According to the grace of our god and the lord Jesus Christ, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The greeting nearly mirrors 1 Thessalonians 1:1 with one addition: 'our' (hēmōn) modifies 'Father,' which the shorter first letter lacked in the SBLGNT. This subtle addition emphasizes the relational bond between the writers and God.
2. The fuller greeting includes the source — 'from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ' — which the SBLGNT text of 1 Thessalonians 1:1 omitted. Grace (charis) and peace (eirēnē) again bridge Greek and Hebrew blessing traditions.
3. The phrase opheilomen ('we are obligated, we ought') replaces the spontaneous thanksgiving of 1 Thessalonians — Paul frames gratitude as a moral duty given the evidence of their growth. The verb hyperauxanei ('is growing beyond measure') is found only here in the New Testament and may be another Pauline coinage. The growth in faith and love answers the prayer of 1 Thessalonians 3:10-12.
4. The compound verb enkauchasthai ('to boast in, to glory in') intensifies the boasting — Paul takes personal pride in the Thessalonians' faithfulness. He boasts 'among the churches' (en tais ekklesiāis), using the Thessalonians as an example to other congregations. The present tense anechesthe ('you are bearing') indicates ongoing, current suffering.
5. The noun endeigma ('evidence, proof, sign') indicates that their faithful endurance under persecution serves as evidence — not that suffering earns the kingdom, but that their perseverance demonstrates the genuineness of their faith and thus God's righteous judgment in counting them worthy. The phrase 'kingdom of God' (basileia tou theou) is relatively rare in Paul (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:12, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:21).
6. The phrase eiper dikaion ('since indeed it is righteous') appeals to the principle of divine justice: those who inflict suffering will receive suffering. The verb antapodounai ('to repay, recompense') echoes the lex talionis principle but placed in divine hands — God repays, not the believers (cf. Romans 12:19, Deuteronomy 32:35).
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 32:35. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The noun anesin ('relief, rest, release') is the opposite of thlipsis ('affliction') — the present pressure will be replaced by release. The word apokalypsis ('revelation, unveiling') describes Christ's return as the removal of a veil — what is now hidden (Christ's glory and authority) will become visible. 'Angels of his power' (angelōn dynamēōs autou) portrays the angels as instruments of divine power.
8. The phrase en pyri phlogos ('in flaming fire') draws on theophany language — God's presence is associated with fire from the burning bush (Exodus 3:2) to Sinai (Exodus 19:18) to Isaiah's vision (Isaiah 66:15). 'Vengeance' (ekdikēsis) is not emotional retaliation but judicial retribution — the enactment of justice. The two groups — 'those who do not know God' (likely Gentiles) and 'those who do not obey the gospel' (possibly those who heard but rejected) — may be two descriptions of the same group or two distinct groups.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 3:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 19:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 66:15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The phrase olethron aiōnion ('eternal destruction') describes not annihilation but permanent ruin — separation from God's presence. The preposition apo ('away from') defines the destruction as exclusion from God's presence (prosōpou, 'face') and glory. This echoes Isaiah 2:10, 19 where people flee from 'the splendor of his majesty.' The penalty is defined relationally — loss of God's presence — rather than as physical torment.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 2:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Christ's glory will be visible 'in' or 'among' (en) his saints — believers become the medium through which Christ's glory is displayed. The verb thaumasthenai ('to be marveled at, to be admired') suggests awe and wonder. The parenthetical 'because our testimony to you was believed' assures the Thessalonians they are included among those who will marvel. 'That day' (en tē hēmera ekeinē) is the eschatological 'day of the Lord.'
11. The phrase pasan eudokian agathōsynēs could mean 'every good resolve' (the Thessalonians' desire for goodness) or 'every desire of goodness' (God's good pleasure). The former fits better: Paul prays that God would empower their good intentions. 'Work of faith' (ergon pisteōs) echoes 1 Thessalonians 1:3, forming a thematic link between the two letters.

12. The mutual glorification — Christ glorified 'in you' and you glorified 'in him' — creates a remarkable reciprocity. Believers reflect Christ's glory, and Christ's glory elevates believers. The phrase *kata tēn charin* ('according to the grace') grounds everything in unmerited favor — neither the worthiness (v. 11) nor the glorification (v. 12) is earned. The single article before 'our God and the Lord Jesus Christ' (*tou theou hēmōn kai kyriou Iēsou Christou*) has been debated — some read it as equating God and Christ, though most scholars see two distinct referents sharing one governing article.

2

Summary: *Paul corrects a misunderstanding that the day of the Lord has already come. He insists that two events must occur first: a great rebellion (apostasia) and the revelation of the 'man of lawlessness' who will exalt himself above every so-called god, even seating himself in the temple of God and claiming to be God. Something — or someone — is currently restraining this figure, and once the restrainer is removed, the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth. Those who follow the lawless one do so because they refused to love the truth. Paul then thanks God for the Thessalonians' election and urges them to stand firm in the traditions they were taught.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This passage is one of the most debated in the Pauline corpus. The identity of the 'man of lawlessness' (*ho anthrōpos tēs anomias*), the 'restrainer' (*to katechon* / *ho katechōn*), and the 'mystery of lawlessness' (*to mystērion tēs anomias*) have generated centuries of interpretation without scholarly consensus. Paul assumes the Thessalonians already know what he means ('Do you not remember?' v. 5), leaving modern readers without the key to his allusions.*

Translation Friction: *We render the Greek without identifying the man of lawlessness with any specific historical or future figure. The 'restrainer' is rendered with deliberate ambiguity matching Paul's own shift between neuter (*to katechon*, v. 6) and masculine (*ho katechōn*, v. 7). The phrase 'God sends them a strong delusion' (v. 11) raises difficult theological questions about divine agency in deception, which we note without resolving.*

Connections: *The man of lawlessness draws on Daniel 11:36 (the king who exalts himself), Ezekiel 28:2 (the prince of Tyre who claims to be God), and Isaiah 14:13-14. Jesus's warning about false messiahs and signs (Matthew 24:24, Mark 13:22) parallels the deceptive signs of the lawless one. The 'breath of his mouth' destruction echoes Isaiah 11:4. The 'mystery of lawlessness' contrasts with the 'mystery' revealed in Christ (Colossians 1:26-27, Ephesians 3:3-6).*

1Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, 2That you be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by message, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is drawing near. 3Let no one deceive you in any way, for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, 4He will oppose and exalt himself above every so-called god or object of worship. He will even seat himself in God's temple, claiming to be God. 5Do you not remember that when I was still with you I kept telling you these things? 6And you know what is restraining him now, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. 7For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only the one who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way. 8And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. 9The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan, with all power and false signs and wonders, 10With all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish. On account of the fact that they received not the devotion of the what is genuine, that they might be saved. 11For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie, 12so that all who refused to believe the truth and took pleasure in wickedness will be condemned. 13But we are obligated to give thanks to God always for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. 14He called you to this through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught, whether by our spoken word or by our letter. 16Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, 17Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good message and work.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The noun *episynagōgēs* ('gathering together, assembling') is related to the *synagōgē* ('synagogue, assembly') and refers to the believers' reunion with Christ at the *parousia*, described in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. The preposition *epi* ('to, upon') indicates movement toward Christ as the gathering point.
2. Three possible sources of the false teaching are identified: *dia pneumatos* ('through a spirit' — a prophetic utterance), *dia logou* ('through a word' — oral teaching), or *di' epistolēs* ('through a letter' — a written communication). The phrase *hōs di' hēmōn* ('as if from us') suggests someone may have forged or misrepresented a Pauline letter. The verb *enestēken* ('has come, is present, has arrived') is perfect tense, indicating a claim that the day of the Lord had already arrived — not merely that it was near.
3. The noun *apostasia* ('rebellion, revolt, apostasy') denotes a decisive falling away — from what is debated (from God, from faith, from political order). In the Septuagint it describes political rebellion and religious unfaithfulness. The SBLGNT reads 'man of lawlessness' (*anomias*) rather than 'man of sin' (*hamartias*) found in some manuscripts. The title 'son of destruction' (*ho huios tēs apōleias*) is the same title applied to Judas in John 17:12 — a person defined by and destined for ruin.
4. The language closely parallels Daniel 11:36 ('the king shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god'). The phrase *eis ton naon tou theou* ('in the temple of God') could refer to the Jerusalem temple (either the historical one or a rebuilt future temple), to the church as God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16), or to a metaphorical enthronement in the sphere of divine authority. The verb *apodeiknynta* ('declaring, proclaiming, showing') implies an official claim — a public self-deification.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 11:36. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. This verse is both informative and frustrating for modern interpreters — Paul had taught them orally about these matters, and the Thessalonians knew what he meant. We do not have that oral teaching. The imperfect *elegon* ('I kept telling') indicates repeated instruction, not a single conversation. Paul's rhetorical question implies mild rebuke: they should not have been shaken by false claims about the day of the Lord.
6. The neuter participle *to katechon* ('the thing that restrains') is one of the great mysteries of Pauline interpretation. Proposed identifications include the Roman Empire, the rule of law, the Holy Spirit, the preaching of the gospel, an angelic power, or God's providential timing. Paul's 'you know' (*oidate*) assumes shared knowledge we no longer possess. The phrase *en tō heautou kairō* ('at his own time') indicates the lawless one has an appointed moment of revelation, which is currently being held back.
7. Paul shifts from the neuter 'what restrains' (v. 6) to the masculine 'the one who restrains' (*ho katechōn*) — possibly indicating both a force and a person behind it. The 'mystery of lawlessness' (*to mystērion tēs anomias*) means lawlessness is already operative but in hidden form — it has not yet been publicly revealed. The KJV's 'letteth' meant 'restrains' in 1611 English but now means the opposite, making the KJV misleading here. The phrase *ek mesou genētai* ('removed from the midst') does not specify who removes the restrainer.
8. The verb *anelei* ('will destroy, will slay') combined with *tō pneumati tou stomatos autou* ('with the breath of his mouth') echoes Isaiah 11:4: 'He shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.' The lawless one's destruction is effortless — a mere breath from Jesus suffices. The phrase *tē epiphaneia tēs parousias* ('the appearance of his coming') combines two technical terms for Christ's return: *epiphaneia* ('manifestation, appearing') and *parousia* ('coming, presence'). The combination emphasizes visible, overwhelming presence.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 11:4: — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The lawless one has his own *parousia* — a satanic parody of Christ's coming. The triad *dynamei kai sēmeiois kai terasin* ('power and signs and wonders') mirrors the language used for apostolic authentication (Romans 15:19, 2 Corinthians 12:12), but qualified by *pseudous* ('of falsehood, false'). The deception is not in the supernatural character of the events but in the source and purpose — they serve to deceive, not to reveal truth.
10. The phrase *tēn agapēn tēs alētheias* ('the love of the truth') is distinctive — Paul does not say they rejected the truth but that they rejected the love of truth. The disposition toward truth matters as much as intellectual assent. The present participle *apollymenois* ('those who are perishing') describes a current state and trajectory, not a fixed category. The deception succeeds only against those who have already refused truth.
11. The statement that God sends (*pempei*) the delusion is theologically difficult. The logic follows the Old Testament pattern of judicial hardening: when people persistently refuse truth, God confirms their choice by giving them over to it (cf. Romans 1:24-28, 'God gave them over'). The 'lie' (*tō pseudei*) has the definite article — 'the lie,' a specific falsehood, perhaps the claim of the lawless one to be God (v. 4). This is not arbitrary divine cruelty but the consequence of refusing truth: one is left with what one chose.
12. The verb *eudokēsantes* ('took pleasure in, delighted in') is the same word used for God's good pleasure (*eudokia*) — but here directed toward unrighteousness. The contrast is stark: they found delight in *adikia* ('unrighteousness') rather than in *alētheia* ('truth'). Condemnation follows not just intellectual rejection but moral complicity — they enjoyed what was wrong.
13. The SBLGNT reads *aparchēn* ('firstfruits') rather than *ap' archēs* ('from the beginning') found in some manuscripts. 'Firstfruits' portrays the Thessalonians as the initial harvest of a greater ingathering. Two means of salvation are named: *hagiasmos pneumatos* ('sanctification by/of the Spirit') — the Spirit's transforming work — and *pistei alētheias* ('faith in the truth') — the human response. Together they describe God's initiative and human reception.

14. The noun *peripoiēsis* ('obtaining, possession') appeared in 1 Thessalonians 5:9 for 'obtaining salvation.' Here the object is even grander: the glory of Christ himself. The chain is: God chose (v. 13), God called (v. 14), and the instrument of the call was 'our gospel' (*dia tou euangeliou hēmōn*). The human proclamation is the means of the divine call.
15. The noun *paradoxeis* ('traditions, things handed down') is a technical term for authoritative teaching transmitted from teacher to student. Paul uses the same word that Jesus criticizes when applied to human traditions that override God's word (Mark 7:8), but here the traditions are apostolic and Spirit-guided. The two channels — *dia logou* ('through spoken word') and *di' epistolēs* ('through letter') — validate both oral and written apostolic teaching as authoritative.
16. Unusually, Paul names Christ before the Father in the prayer, perhaps because the eschatological teaching has focused on Christ's *parousia*. The singular participles ('who loved... and gave') with a compound subject again suggests a unity of action between Christ and the Father (cf. 1 Thessalonians 3:11). 'Eternal comfort' (*paraklēsin aiōnian*) and 'good hope' (*elpida agathēn*) are the gifts that sustain believers through present affliction and eschatological uncertainty.
17. The two optative verbs — *parakalesai* ('comfort, encourage') and *stērixai* ('establish, strengthen') — complete the prayer begun in verse 16. Paul reverses the expected order to 'work and word' (*ergō kai logō*) rather than 'word and work,' possibly emphasizing that action accompanies and sometimes precedes verbal expression. The prayer is for inner strengthening ('hearts') manifested in outward conduct ('every good work and word').

3

Summary: *Paul requests prayer for the spread of the word and for deliverance from wicked people, expresses confidence in the Lord's faithfulness, and then addresses the problem of those living in idleness. He commands the community to keep away from every brother or sister living irresponsibly, pointing to his own example of working night and day so as not to be a burden. Those who will not work should not eat. Paul instructs the community not to associate with the idle in order to shame them into correction, but also not to treat them as enemies. The letter closes with a prayer for peace and a handwritten greeting that serves as an authentication mark.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The 'no work, no eat' principle (v. 10) is one of the most frequently quoted Pauline sayings in secular discourse, though it is often lifted from its pastoral context. Paul is not articulating a general economic philosophy but addressing a specific problem: some Thessalonians had apparently stopped working, possibly because they believed the *parousia* was imminent. The closing authentication (v. 17) suggests Paul was aware that letters were being circulated under his name (cf. 2:2).*

Translation Friction: *The severity of the disciplinary measures (vv. 6, 14-15) reflects Paul's concern that idleness was disrupting the entire community. The balance between 'do not associate' and 'do not regard as an enemy' defines the tension of redemptive discipline. We render without softening the sharpness of Paul's instruction.*

Connections: *The idle/disorderly problem was already flagged in 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 and 5:14. Paul's appeal to his own manual labor (v. 8) parallels 1 Thessalonians 2:9 and 1 Corinthians 9:3-18. The authentication in verse 17 connects to Galatians 6:11 and Colossians 4:18.*

¹Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was among you, ²That we may be delivered from unreasonable and corrupt people — for all people have not faith. ³But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one. ⁴And we have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will continue to do what we command. ⁵May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ. ⁶Now we command you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from every brother or sister who lives irresponsibly and not according to the tradition that they received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us, because we were not idle among you, ⁸We did not eat anyone's food without paying for it. Instead, we labored and toiled day and night so we would not be a burden to any of you. ⁹Not that we do not have the right, but to give you ourselves as an example to imitate. ¹⁰For even when we were with you, we used to give you this command: if anyone is not willing to work, let that person not eat. ¹¹For we hear that some among you are living irresponsibly, not busy at work but busybodies. ¹²Now such people we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and eat their own bread. ¹³As for you, brothers and sisters, do not grow weary of doing good. ¹⁴If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. ¹⁵

Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother. ¹⁶Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all. ¹⁷This greeting is in my own hand — Paul's. This is the mark in every letter of mine; this is how I write. ¹⁸May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ remain with all of you. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *trechē* ('may run') is athletic imagery — the word of the Lord is personified as a runner in a race (cf. Psalm 147:15, 'His word runs swiftly'). The verb *doxazētai* ('may be glorified, honored') indicates that the word achieves its purpose and is received with respect. Paul asks for prayer not for his personal safety but for the mission's success.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 147:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The adjective *atopōn* ('out of place, improper, wicked') literally means 'having no place' — people who are morally displaced. Combined with *ponērōn* ('evil, malicious'), it describes active opposition to the gospel. The understated conclusion — 'not everyone has faith' (*ou gar pantōn hē pistis*) — is almost ironic in its simplicity, acknowledging that the gospel will be resisted.
3. The wordplay between *pistis* ('faith,' v. 2) and *pistos* ('faithful,' v. 3) is deliberate: not all people have faith, but the Lord is faithful. The phrase *apo tou ponērou* could mean 'from evil' (abstract) or 'from the evil one' (personal — Satan). Given the eschatological context of the letter and the reference to the 'lawless one' in chapter 2, 'the evil one' is more likely.
4. Paul's confidence is 'in the Lord' (*en kyriō*), not merely in the Thessalonians' character — divine faithfulness undergirds human obedience. The verb *parangellogen* ('we command') is the same military-order language used in 1 Thessalonians 4:2, emphasizing apostolic authority.
5. The optative *kateuthynai* ('may he direct') is a prayer-wish (cf. 1 Thessalonians 3:11). The two goals are: *tēn agapēn tou theou* ('the love of God') — possibly God's love for them or their love for God — and *tēn hypomonēn tou Christou* ('the steadfastness/endurance of Christ') — possibly Christ's own endurance as an example or the endurance that comes from Christ. The genitives are deliberately ambiguous, encompassing both divine gift and human response.
6. The adverb *ataktōs* ('disorderly, irresponsibly') is a military term for a soldier who abandons his post or breaks formation (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:14). In this context it refers specifically to refusing to work (vv. 10-11). The verb *stellesthai* ('to keep away from, to withdraw from') prescribes social distancing as a disciplinary measure. The 'tradition' (*paradosis*) they violate is Paul's example and instruction regarding manual labor.
7. The verb *ētaktēsamen* ('we were disorderly, we were idle') is the verbal form of the same root as *ataktōs* in verse 6. Paul presents his own conduct as the pattern (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:9-10). The obligation to imitate (*mimeisthai*) implies that apostolic behavior, not just apostolic teaching, carries normative authority.
8. The phrase *dōrean arton* ('bread for free') is an idiom for receiving support without contributing. Paul's language nearly verbatim repeats 1 Thessalonians 2:9 (*kopon kai mokhthon*, 'toil and hardship'), reinforcing consistency between the two letters. The right to financial support was legitimate (v. 9), but Paul chose to forgo it for pedagogical purposes.
9. Paul explicitly acknowledges his *exousia* ('right, authority') to receive financial support — he develops this argument at length in 1 Corinthians 9:3-14. His voluntary renunciation was strategic: he wanted to establish a visible pattern (*typon*, 'example, model') of self-supporting labor that the congregation could follow.
10. The conditional *ei tis ou thelei ergazesthai* ('if anyone is not willing to work') specifies unwillingness, not inability — Paul is addressing those who refuse to work, not those who cannot. The imperfect *parēngellomen* ('we used to command') indicates this was repeated instruction during Paul's visit. The principle may draw on a Jewish proverbial tradition (cf. Genesis Rabbah 2:2: 'If I do not work, I do not eat'). The command is pastoral, not economic theory — it addresses a specific community problem.
11. Paul employs a pointed wordplay: *mēden ergazomenous alla periergazomenous* — literally 'not working but over-working,' meaning 'not doing their own work but meddling in others' work.' The English 'not busy but busybodies' captures the pun. The problem is not just laziness but its byproduct: idle people who meddle in others' affairs, disrupting the community.
12. Paul combines authority (*parangellogen*, 'we command') with pastoral warmth (*parakaloumen*, 'we encourage'). The phrase *meta hēsychias* ('with quietness') echoes 1 Thessalonians 4:11 — living quietly means minding one's own affairs. 'Eat their own bread' (*ton heautōn arton esthiōsin*) means earn their own livelihood rather than depending on the community's resources.
13. The verb *enkakēsēte* ('grow weary, lose heart, give up') acknowledges the real temptation: when some members exploit communal generosity, the generous may become disillusioned. Paul addresses this directly — the irresponsibility of some must not extinguish the generosity of others.
14. The verb *sēmeiousthe* ('take note of, mark, identify') suggests a formal process of community recognition — the person is publicly identified. The verb *synanamiggysthai* ('to associate with, to mingle with') denotes social interaction, particularly shared meals. The purpose clause *hina entrapē* ('so that he may be ashamed') reveals the goal is redemptive, not punitive — shame is meant to produce change, not permanent exclusion.
15. This verse provides the critical guardrail for the discipline of verse 14. The person under discipline remains *adelphos* ('brother') — a family member in need of correction, not an outsider to be rejected. The verb *noutheteite* ('warn, admonish, counsel') implies instruction aimed at change of behavior, not condemnation. The tension between social exclusion (v. 14) and fraternal correction (v. 15) defines the narrow path of redemptive

discipline.

- 16.** The title 'Lord of peace' (ho kyrios tēs eirēnēs) parallels 'God of peace' (1 Thessalonians 5:23), applying a divine title to Christ. The double emphasis — dia pantos ('at all times') and en panti tropō ('in every way') — asks for peace that is both continuous and comprehensive. After a letter dealing with eschatological anxiety and community conflict, the prayer for total peace is especially apt.
- 17.** Paul typically dictated his letters through a secretary (amanuensis; cf. Romans 16:22) and then added a greeting in his own handwriting as authentication. Given the concern about forged letters in 2:2, this authentication takes on special urgency. The phrase sēmeion en pasē epistolē ('a sign in every letter') establishes Paul's handwriting as a security feature for all his correspondence.
- 18.** The closing benediction matches the standard Pauline formula. The SBLGNT does not include 'Amen,' which appears in later manuscripts. The word pantōn ('all') may carry special weight after a letter about community discipline — grace extends to the entire congregation, including those under correction.

1 Timothy

1

Summary: *Paul writes to Timothy, his 'true child in the faith,' who has been left in Ephesus to confront false teachers promoting myths, endless genealogies, and speculative teachings that produce controversy rather than God's plan of faith. Paul clarifies the proper use of the law — it is for the lawless, not the righteous — and then offers his own testimony as the foremost of sinners who received mercy so that Christ's perfect patience might be displayed. The chapter closes with a charge to Timothy to fight the good fight, holding to faith and a good conscience, and warns about Hymenaeus and Alexander who have shipwrecked their faith.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Paul's self-description as 'the foremost of sinners' (v. 15) is one of the most quoted passages in Christian devotional tradition. The 'faithful saying' formula (pistos ho logos, v. 15) appears five times in the Pastoral Epistles and nowhere else in Paul, marking distinctive material. The vice list in verses 9-10 is unusual in following the structure of the Ten Commandments, connecting the law's proper use to its specific prohibitions.*

Translation Friction: *The authorship of the Pastoral Epistles is debated among scholars — some attribute them to Paul, others to a later Pauline disciple. We render the text as it stands without adjudicating authorship. The vice list in verses 9-10 includes arsenokoitais ('men who have sex with men'), a compound word whose precise scope and meaning are debated. We render the Greek term and note the interpretive issues.*

Connections: *The charge to Timothy anticipates the military language of 2 Timothy 2:3-4 and 4:7. The 'faithful saying' formula recurs at 3:1, 4:9, 2 Timothy 2:11, and Titus 3:8. The reference to Paul's conversion echoes Acts 9, 22, and 26. Hymenaeus appears again in 2 Timothy 2:17.*

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope, ²To Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. ³As I urged you when I was leaving for Macedonia, remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach different doctrine ⁴and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies. These promote speculation rather than the advancement of God's work, which is by faith. ⁵The goal of this instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith. ⁶Some have strayed from these and turned to meaningless talk, ⁷They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not understand what they are saying or what they so confidently assert. ⁸Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it legitimately, ⁹Knowing this, that the instruction of Moses is not fashioned for a upright man, but for the lawless and

disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,. ¹⁰For the sexually immoral, for those who practice homosexuality, for slave traders, for liars, for those who swear falsely, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to healthy teaching;. ¹¹In keeping with to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. ¹²I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service, ¹³Indeed, who was prior to a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious — but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief;. ¹⁴The grace of our Lord poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that come through Christ Jesus. ¹⁵The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶But I received mercy for this reason: so that in me, as the foremost, Christ Jesus might display his perfect patience as an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. ¹⁷To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. ¹⁸This charge I entrust to you, Timothy my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, so that by them you may fight the good fight, ¹⁹Holding trust, and a righteous conscience. Which some possessing placed away concerning faith have made shipwreck;. ²⁰Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan so they would learn not to blaspheme.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The title 'God our Savior' (theou sōtēros hēmōn) is distinctive to the Pastoral Epistles (cf. Titus 1:3, 2:10, 3:4) and draws on Old Testament language for God as Israel's savior (Isaiah 43:3, 11). Christ is called 'our hope' (tēs elpidos hēmōn) — not merely the object of hope but hope itself personified. The phrase kat' epitagēn ('by command') frames Paul's apostleship as military commission, not personal choice.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 43:3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The adjective gnēsio ('genuine, true, legitimate') indicates a deep spiritual bond — Timothy is Paul's authentic spiritual offspring. The greeting adds 'mercy' (eleos) to the usual 'grace and peace,' a distinctive feature of the Pastoral Epistles' greetings to individuals (cf. 2 Timothy 1:2). Mercy may be added because Timothy faces a difficult pastoral situation requiring divine compassion.
3. The verb heterodidaskalein ('to teach different doctrine, to teach otherwise') is a compound found only in the Pastoral Epistles (here and 6:3). It implies deviation from the established apostolic teaching rather than mere theological innovation. The vague 'certain people' (tisin) avoids naming them initially, though Paul names two in verse 20.
4. The 'myths' (mythois) and 'genealogies' (genealogiais) likely refer to speculative elaborations on Old Testament narratives — possibly Jewish-Gnostic or proto-Gnostic traditions. The noun oikonomia ('stewardship, plan, administration') has a rich theological range — here it refers to God's redemptive plan or strategy, which operates through faith (en pistei), not through speculative knowledge.
5. The telos ('goal, aim, end') of the paraggelia ('instruction, command') is not theological knowledge but love (agapē). Three sources of genuine love are named: a pure heart (inner motivation), a good conscience (moral integrity), and sincere faith (anypokritos — literally 'unhypocritical,' without pretense). The false teachers have missed all three.
6. The verb astochēsantes ('having missed the mark, having strayed') uses archery imagery — they aimed at love but missed. The noun mataiologian ('meaningless talk, empty discussion') characterizes the false teaching as vacuous — it produces noise without substance.
7. The compound nomodidaskaloi ('teachers of the law') is used only here and in Luke 5:17 and Acts 5:34. The irony is sharp: they aspire to teach the law but comprehend neither their own words nor the subjects they pronounce upon. The verb diabebaiountai ('make confident assertions, insist strongly') makes their ignorance more damaging — they speak with unwarranted authority.
8. The wordplay on nomos ('law') and nomimōs ('lawfully, legitimately') is deliberate — the law must be used in accordance with its own purpose. Paul affirms the goodness of the law (cf. Romans 7:12, 16) while qualifying its proper application.
9. The vice list follows the order of the Ten Commandments: the first pairs (lawless, rebellious, ungodly, sinful, unholy, irreverent) correspond to the first table (duties toward God); the next items follow the second table (duties toward others). Patrolōais kai mētrolōais ('those who strike fathers and mothers') corresponds to the fifth commandment, and androphonois ('murderers') to the sixth.
10. The list continues through the Decalogue: pornois (sexually immoral, seventh commandment), arsenokoitais (a compound of arsēn 'male' + koitē 'bed,' appearing in the Septuagint language of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 — the precise scope of this term is debated among scholars), andrapodistais ('slave traders, kidnappers,' eighth commandment — enslaving people), pseustais ('liars') and epiorkois ('perjurers,' ninth commandment — false witness). The phrase hygiainousē didaskalia ('sound/healthy teaching') is a distinctive Pastoral Epistles expression, using medical imagery — true doctrine promotes health.

- 10.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 18:22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 11.** The phrase to euangelion tēs doxēs tou makariou theou ('the gospel of the glory of the blessed God') is a remarkably dense genitive chain. The gospel is characterized by God's glory, and God is described as makarios ('blessed, happy') — a term usually reserved for humans in Paul but here applied to God (cf. 6:15), a distinctive feature of the Pastoral Epistles.
- 12.** The verb endynamōsanti ('having empowered, having strengthened') is the same root Paul uses in Philippians 4:13 ('I can do all things through him who strengthens me'). The appointment to diakonia ('service, ministry') flows from Christ's assessment of Paul's faithfulness — yet the next verse reveals that Paul's 'faithfulness' was preceded by blasphemy and persecution.
- 13.** The three self-descriptions intensify: blasphemōn ('blasphemer' — against God), diōktēn ('persecutor' — against the church), and hybristēn ('violent, insolent aggressor' — the same word used in Romans 1:30). Paul's ignorance (agnoōn) does not excuse his actions but explains why mercy was possible — he was not sinning against known truth (cf. Numbers 15:27-31 on inadvertent vs. deliberate sin).
- 13.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 15:27-31 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 14.** The verb hypereplenasen ('overflowed, super-abounded') is a Pauline intensive — where sin abounded, grace hyper-abounded (cf. Romans 5:20). Grace did not merely match Paul's sin but overwhelmed it. The paired nouns 'faith and love' (pisteōs kai agapēs) describe what grace produced in Paul — the very qualities the false teachers lack (v. 5).
- 15.** The formula pistos ho logos ('faithful is the saying, the saying is trustworthy') introduces what may be an early Christian confession or hymnic fragment. The core proclamation — Christos Iēsous ēlthen eis ton kosmon hamartōlous sōsai ('Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners') — is a compact statement of incarnational soteriology. Paul's claim to be prōtos ('foremost, first, chief') is present tense (eimi, 'I am'), not past — he does not merely recall his former persecution but maintains a present consciousness of unworthiness.
- 16.** Paul's conversion becomes a paradigm — a hypotypōsis ('pattern, model, outline') for all future believers. If the 'foremost of sinners' could receive mercy, no one is beyond reach. The noun makrothymia ('patience, longsuffering') describes Christ's restraint in the face of Paul's active persecution — a patience that endured until Paul's transformation. 'Eternal life' (zōēn aiōnion) is the ultimate goal of belief.
- 17.** Paul breaks into a doxology — the overflow of gratitude from his testimony. Four attributes describe God: basilei tōn aiōnōn ('King of the ages' — sovereign over all time), aphthartō ('imperishable, immortal'), aoratō ('invisible'), and monō theō ('the only God'). The SBLGNT does not include 'wise' (sophō), which appears in some manuscripts. The phrase eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn ('to the ages of the ages') is the strongest expression of unending duration in Greek.
- 18.** The military imagery — strateuē ('fight, serve as a soldier') and strateian ('campaign, warfare') — frames Timothy's ministry as a battle. The 'prophecies previously made about you' (proagousas epi se prophēteias) likely refer to prophetic words spoken over Timothy at his commissioning (cf. 4:14). These prophecies are not mere encouragement but equipment for spiritual combat.
- 19.** The verb enauagēsan ('shipwrecked') is vivid — faith is a vessel that can be wrecked on the rocks of a rejected conscience. The 'good conscience' (agathēn syneidēsin) from verse 5 returns: it is not optional equipment but essential to the integrity of faith. Those who pushed away (apōsamenoi, middle voice — 'pushed away from themselves') their conscience destroyed their own faith.
- 20.** Paul names the offenders — Hymenaeus reappears in 2 Timothy 2:17. 'Handed over to Satan' (paredōka tō satana) parallels 1 Corinthians 5:5 and likely refers to expulsion from the community — outside the protective sphere of the church, they are in Satan's domain. The purpose is remedial: hina paideutōsin ('so that they may be disciplined/educated') — the verb paideuō means to train as a child, to educate through correction. Even this severe action aims at restoration, not destruction.

2

Summary: *Paul instructs that prayers be offered for all people, especially for kings and those in authority, so that believers may live peaceful and godly lives. He grounds this universal concern in the nature of God, who desires all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. A christological statement declares one God and one mediator between God and humanity — the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all. Paul then gives instructions about how men should pray and how women should conduct themselves in the assembly, including a controversial instruction about women not teaching or exercising authority over men.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verses 5-6 contain what many scholars consider an early Christian hymn or creedal formula: 'one God, one mediator... who gave himself as a ransom for all.' The phrase 'ransom for all' (antilytron hyper pantōn) is unique to this passage and represents one of the clearest universal atonement statements in the New Testament. The instructions about women (vv. 9-15) have generated more interpretive debate than almost any other passage in Paul.*

Translation Friction: Verses 11-15 regarding women's roles in the assembly are among the most debated texts in the New Testament. We render the Greek as written without imposing either complementarian or egalitarian interpretive frameworks. The reference to Eve's deception (v. 14) and salvation 'through childbearing' (v. 15) are notoriously difficult and we note the major interpretive options without choosing among them.

Connections: The prayer for authorities parallels Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17. The mediator language connects to Hebrews 8:6, 9:15, 12:24. The ransom statement echoes Mark 10:45. The discussion of women's roles relates to 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and 14:34-35, though the relationship among these passages is debated.

¹First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²Pray for kings and all those in authority, so that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in complete godliness and dignity. ³This is good and pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴Who will possess all people to be saved, and to arrive to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and humanity — the man Christ Jesus, ⁶Indeed, who offered himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. ⁷For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle — I am telling the truth, I am not lying — a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. ⁸Therefore I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without anger or quarreling. ⁹Likewise, I want women to adorn themselves with proper clothing, modestly and with self-control, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothing, ¹⁰However, (which becometh women professing godliness) with good deeds. ¹¹Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. ¹²I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³For Adam was formed first, then Eve, ¹⁴Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the sin. ¹⁵Yet she will be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness with self-control.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

- Four types of prayer are listed: *deēseis* ('supplications' — specific requests arising from need), *proseuchas* ('prayers' — the general term), *enteuxeis* ('intercessions' — approaching God on behalf of others, literally 'petitions'), and *eucharistias* ('thanksgivings'). The phrase *hyper pantōn anthrōpōn* ('for all people') establishes the universal scope that the entire chapter develops.
- The prayer for political rulers is pragmatic rather than political — stable governance allows peaceful Christian life. The noun *eusebeia* ('godliness, piety') is a key term in the Pastoral Epistles (appearing 10 times in 1-2 Timothy and Titus) and describes the outward manifestation of reverence for God. The noun *semmotēs* ('dignity, seriousness, respectability') describes conduct that commands respect.
- The adjective *apodekton* ('acceptable, pleasing, welcome') indicates that universal prayer aligns with God's own character and desire. The title 'God our Savior' (*toū sōtēros hēmōn theou*) recurs from 1:1, connecting God's saving character to his desire that all be saved (v. 4).
- The verb *thelei* ('desires, wills, wants') has been debated for centuries: does God's desire necessarily produce its result? We render the Greek without imposing either universalist or particularist frameworks. The phrase *epignōsis alētheias* ('full knowledge of the truth') implies not mere information but deep, experiential understanding. Salvation and knowledge are paired — being saved involves knowing truth.
- This verse may preserve an early creedal formula. The numerical emphasis — *heis* ('one') repeated — stresses exclusivity: one God (echoing the Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4) and one mediator. The term *mesitēs* ('mediator, go-between') implies someone who stands in the middle, connecting two parties. Christ's humanity is emphasized — *anthrōpos Christos Iēsous* ('the man Christ Jesus') — because a mediator between God and humans must share in both natures.
- [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 6:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- The noun *antilytron* ('ransom, substitute payment') is unique to this verse in the New Testament. It intensifies the related word *lytron* (Mark 10:45) with the prefix *anti-* ('in exchange for, in place of'), emphasizing substitutionary exchange. The phrase *hyper pantōn* ('for all') completes the universal scope established in verses 1 and 4. The 'testimony at the proper time' (*to martyriōn kairos idiois*) indicates that this redemptive act has been publicly declared at the divinely appointed moment.
- Three roles describe Paul's commission: *kēryx* ('herald, proclaimer' — one who announces a king's message), *apostolos* ('apostle, sent one'), and *didaskalos ethnōn* ('teacher of the Gentiles'). The parenthetical oath — *alētheian legō, ou pseudomai* ('I tell the truth, I do not lie') — is striking (cf. Romans 9:1, 2 Corinthians 11:31) and may respond to challenges to Paul's authority in Ephesus.
- The verb *boulomai* ('I want, I desire, I intend') expresses authoritative will. The noun *andras* ('men, males') is gender-specific here (not the generic *anthrōpoi*), establishing a parallel with the instructions to women in verse 9. Lifting hands in prayer was standard Jewish and early Christian practice (cf. Psalm 134:2). The qualifications — 'without anger' (*chōris orgēs*) and 'without quarreling' (*dialogismou* — 'dispute, argument') — suggest the Ephesian church had conflict-ridden worship.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 134:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The adverb *hōsautōs* ('likewise, in the same way') connects women's instructions to the men's in verse 8. The noun *katastolē* ('clothing, deportment, demeanor') refers to the overall presentation. The virtues *aidous* ('modesty, reverence') and *sōphrosynēs* ('self-control, sound judgment') contrast with extravagant adornment. The specifics — braided hair (*plegmasin*), gold (*chrysiō*), pearls (*margaritais*), expensive clothing (*himatismō polytelei*) — were markers of wealth and social status in Roman society that could create division in worship.
10. The noun *theosebeian* ('reverence for God, godliness') is the feminine counterpart to the *eusebeia* that characterizes the entire letter's moral vision. The true adornment of a godly woman is not external display but *ergōn agathōn* ('good works') — conduct that reflects character.
11. The verb *manthanetō* ('let her learn') is actually a positive command — women are to learn, which was not universally accepted in the ancient world. The noun *hēsychia* ('quietness, stillness') does not necessarily mean total silence but a receptive, non-disruptive posture (the same word is used in verse 2 for the 'quiet life' of all believers). The noun *hypotagē* ('submissiveness, proper order') describes alignment with established authority structures.
12. The verb *epitrepō* ('I permit') is present tense — some scholars read this as a universal principle, others as a situational directive addressing the Ephesian context. The verb *authentēin* ('to exercise authority, to domineer') occurs only here in the New Testament, and its precise meaning is debated: it may mean 'to exercise authority' (neutral) or 'to domineer, to usurp authority' (negative). The range of meaning affects whether the prohibition targets all authority or only improper authority. We render with the standard translation while noting the interpretive complexity.
13. Paul appeals to the creation narrative (Genesis 2:7, 21-22) as the basis for his instruction. The verb *eplasthē* ('was formed, was molded') echoes the Septuagint of Genesis 2:7, 8. Whether the temporal priority of Adam's creation establishes a permanent hierarchical principle or describes a culturally mediated application is debated among interpreters.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 2:7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Paul adds a second argument from Genesis 3: Eve was *exapatētheisa* ('thoroughly deceived') while Adam was not (*ouk ēpatēthē*). This does not absolve Adam — Romans 5:12-21 makes Adam fully responsible for the fall. Paul's point may be about susceptibility to deception in a context where false teachers were specifically targeting women (cf. 2 Timothy 3:6), rather than a universal statement about women's intellectual capacity. The relationship between this argument and the broader Pauline corpus remains debated.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 3:. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. This is among the most difficult verses in the Pastoral Epistles. The phrase *sōthēsetai dia tēs teknogonias* ('she will be saved through the childbearing') has been interpreted as: (1) women will be preserved safely through the physical process of childbirth; (2) women will be saved through the Childbirth — the birth of Christ (the definite article *tēs* may point to a specific birth); (3) women will find their salvation expressed through faithful motherhood; (4) the curse of Genesis 3:16 will not have the final word. The shift from singular 'she' to plural 'they' (*meinōsin*) broadens the application. We render the Greek directly and note the complexity without selecting one interpretation.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 3:16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

3

Summary: *Paul outlines the qualifications for overseers (episkopoi) and deacons (diakonoi) in the church. An overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent, gentle, peaceable, not a lover of money, and must manage his own household well. He must not be a recent convert and must be well regarded by outsiders. Deacons similarly must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy, holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. Women (whether deacons' wives or female deacons) must likewise be dignified and faithful. The chapter concludes with a christological hymn: 'Great indeed is the mystery of godliness.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The qualifications for church officers focus overwhelmingly on character rather than competence or charisma. The only skill-based requirement is 'able to teach' (v. 2). The christological hymn in verse 16 — six clauses in three couplets — is widely regarded as a pre-Pauline hymn fragment that Paul quotes. Its structure moves from incarnation to exaltation in rhythmic parallels.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'husband of one wife' (mias gynaikos andra, v. 2) is debated: does it prohibit polygamy, remarriage after divorce, remarriage after a spouse's death, or require marital faithfulness? We render literally and note the debate. The 'women' (gynaikas) in verse 11 could be deacons' wives or female deacons — the Greek is ambiguous, and we preserve that ambiguity.*

Connections: The overseer qualifications parallel Titus 1:5-9. The deacon qualifications have no exact parallel but relate to Acts 6:1-6. The christological hymn echoes Philippians 2:6-11 and Colossians 1:15-20 in its hymnic structure. The 'pillar and foundation of truth' (v. 15) imagery connects to Ephesians 2:20-22.

¹The saying is trustworthy: if anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. ²Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, ³Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of dishonest profit. But patient, not a brawler, not covetous. ⁴He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive. ⁵Because if a man know not how to rule his own home, how will he take care of the church of God? ⁶He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ⁷Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and into a snare of the devil. ⁸Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. ⁹They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. ¹⁰And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove blameless. ¹¹Women likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, sober-minded, faithful in all things. ¹²Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. ¹³For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you soon, ¹⁵But if I am delayed, you will know how people should conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God — the pillar and foundation of the truth. ¹⁶Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The 'faithful saying' formula (pistos ho logos) introduces the second such statement in the letter (cf. 1:15). The noun episkopē ('office of overseer, oversight') gives us the later English word 'bishop,' but in this period the role was local church leadership, not the hierarchical office that developed later. The verb oregetai ('aspires to, reaches for') is positive — desiring leadership is commendable when the character qualifications are met.
2. The overarching qualification is anepilēmpton ('above reproach, without anything to take hold of against him'). The phrase mias gynaikos andra ('a one-woman man') literally means 'a man of one woman.' Interpretations include: (1) prohibition of polygamy; (2) prohibition of remarriage after divorce; (3) prohibition of remarriage after widowhood; (4) requirement of marital faithfulness ('a faithful husband'). The last reading has the strongest contextual support. The list moves from personal character to social skills to a specific ability (didaktikon, 'able to teach').
3. The qualifications shift to negatives — what an overseer must not be. Mē paroinon ('not given to much wine, not a drunkard') does not necessarily prohibit all wine consumption but excessive drinking. Mē plēktēn ('not a striker, not violent') prohibits physical aggression. The positive counterpart is epikeikē ('gentle, yielding, forbearing') — a word Aristotle described as justice tempered by mercy.
4. The verb proistamenon ('managing, leading, caring for') is the same word used for church leadership in 1 Thessalonians 5:12 and Romans 12:8. Paul treats household management as a proving ground for church leadership. The noun semnotētos ('dignity, seriousness') may modify the father's manner of leadership rather than the children's behavior.
5. The verb epimelēsetai ('will care for, will take charge of') is the same word used for the Good Samaritan's care (Luke 10:34-35) — leadership is a form of caregiving, not dominion. The logic is from lesser to greater: the household is a microcosm of the church.
6. The noun neophyton ('newly planted') gives us the English 'neophyte.' The verb typhōtheis ('puffed up, conceited, clouded') literally refers to smoke — pride clouds the mind. The phrase krima tou diabolou ('condemnation of the devil') could mean: (1) the same condemnation the devil received for his pride, or (2) the condemnation that the devil brings upon the prideful. Both readings fit the context.
7. The phrase tōn exōthen ('those outside') refers to non-Christians — the overseer's reputation in the wider community matters. The 'snare of the devil' (pagida tou diabolou) adds to the devil's activity from verse 6: pride leads to condemnation, bad reputation leads to entrapment. A leader with a compromised public reputation becomes vulnerable to Satan's exploitation.
8. The noun diakonous ('deacons, servants, ministers') denotes those who serve — the role is defined by service rather than authority. The qualifications parallel the overseer's but with some differences: no teaching requirement, more emphasis on integrity in speech (mē dilogous, 'not double-tongued' — saying different things to different people). The term aischrokerdeis ('greedy for dishonest gain') suggests deacons may have handled community funds.
9. The phrase mystērion tēs pisteōs ('the mystery of the faith') refers to the revealed content of Christian belief — the truth previously hidden but now made known through the gospel (cf. v. 16). A 'clear conscience' (kathara syneidēsei) means their inner life matches their outward profession — the same concern Paul raised in 1:5, 19.

10. The verb dokimazesthōsan ('let them be tested, examined') is the same word used for testing metals (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:21). A period of evaluation precedes service — deacons are not self-appointed but community-assessed. The adjective anegklētoi ('blameless, without accusation') sets a high bar: no credible charge can be brought against them.
11. The Greek gynaikas ('women') could mean: (1) wives of deacons, (2) female deacons (deaconesses), or (3) women in general. The parallel structure hōsautōs ('likewise') — used for deacons in verse 8 — suggests a third category of church workers rather than merely deacons' wives. Romans 16:1 identifies Phoebe as a diakonos, supporting the existence of female deacons. The adjective diabolous ('slandorous') is literally 'devil-like' — the devil (diabolos) is the slanderer par excellence.
12. The household management requirement repeats from the overseer qualifications (v. 4) but in condensed form. If verse 11 refers to female deacons, then verse 12 resumes the male deacon qualifications. The phrase mias gynaikos andres ('men of one woman') mirrors verse 2.
13. The noun bathmon ('step, standing, rank') may refer to social standing in the community, spiritual advancement, or both. The parrēsian ('boldness, confidence, freedom of speech') indicates that faithful service produces inner assurance and outward courage in the faith. Service is not merely duty but a means of spiritual growth.
14. Paul signals that the letter is a temporary substitute for his personal presence. The phrase en tachei ('soon, quickly') expresses hope rather than certainty — Paul does not know when he will arrive.
15. Three metaphors describe the church: oikos theou ('household of God' — a family), ekklēsia theou zōntos ('assembly of the living God'), and stylos kai hedraiōma tēs alētheias ('pillar and foundation of the truth'). The architectural imagery is powerful: the church supports and displays truth as a pillar holds up and displays a building. The phrase 'living God' (theou zōntos) distinguishes the true God from the dead idols of Ephesus (cf. Acts 19).
16. The SBLGNT reads hos ('who, he who') rather than theos ('God'), which appears in later manuscripts — the difference in uncial script is minimal (OC vs. ΘC) and the original reading was likely the relative pronoun. The six clauses form three antithetical pairs: flesh/Spirit, angels/nations, world/glory — moving between earthly and heavenly spheres. This is widely regarded as a pre-existing hymn that Paul quotes. The verb edikaiōthē ('was vindicated, was justified') in reference to Christ means his claims were confirmed, not that he needed moral justification. 'Taken up in glory' (anelēmphthē en doxē) refers to the ascension.

4

Summary: *Paul warns that the Spirit explicitly predicts that some will depart from the faith in later times, following deceiving spirits and teachings of demons. These false teachers forbid marriage and require abstinence from certain foods — practices Paul refutes by affirming that everything God created is good and is sanctified through the word of God and prayer. Paul then gives Timothy personal pastoral directives: train yourself in godliness (which has value both for the present and the coming life), do not let anyone look down on your youth, set an example in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity. He is to devote himself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, and to teaching, and not to neglect the gift given through prophecy and the laying on of hands.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The ascetic practices condemned here (forbidding marriage, requiring food abstinence) suggest a proto-Gnostic or Jewish-ascetic influence in Ephesus that viewed the material world as inherently evil. Paul's response affirms the goodness of creation — a fundamental Jewish-Christian conviction. The statement 'godliness is of value in every way' (v. 8) and the 'faithful saying' of verse 9 provide one of the Pastoral Epistles' most positive theological affirmations. The charge to Timothy not to neglect his gift (v. 14) reveals that even Spirit-given gifts require active cultivation.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'in later times' (en hysterois kairois, v. 1) is debated — Paul may view these times as already present or as still future. We render the Greek temporal reference without imposing a specific eschatological timeline. The 'faithful saying' formula in verse 9 is unusual because what precedes and what follows could each be the saying referred to.*

Connections: *The food laws discussion connects to Romans 14:1-4, 14:14-23 and Colossians 2:16-23. The training metaphor anticipates 2 Timothy 2:5 and 4:7-8. The laying on of hands (v. 14) parallels Acts 6:6, 13:3 and 2 Timothy 1:6. The 'public reading of Scripture' (v. 13) reflects synagogue practice adopted by the early church.*

1Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith, devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2Speaking lies in hypocrisy. After their conscience seared with a hot iron;. 3They forbid people to marry and order them to avoid certain foods. But God created those foods to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe

and know the truth. ⁴For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, ⁵ Since it is sanctified by the message of God and prayer. ⁶If you put these things before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, trained in the words of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. ⁷Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather, train yourself for godliness, ⁸Physical training has some value, but godliness has value in every way, since it holds promise for both the present life and the life to come. ⁹The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance. ¹⁰For to this end we toil and strive, because we have set our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe. ¹¹Command and teach these things. ¹²Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. ¹³Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, and to teaching. ¹⁴Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. ¹⁵Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that your progress may be evident to all. ¹⁶Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by doing so you will save both yourself and your hearers.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The adverb *rhētōs* ('expressly, explicitly, in so many words') indicates a clear prophetic utterance, not vague prediction. The phrase *en hysterois kairois* ('in later times') is less urgent than the 'last days' (*eschatais hēmerais*) of 2 Timothy 3:1 — it describes a future period without specifying when. The 'spirits' (*pneumasin planois*) are not human false teachers but spiritual entities whose deceptive influence produces false teaching.
2. The verb *kekautēriasmenōn* ('having been seared, having been branded') uses medical/branding imagery — their consciences have been cauterized, rendered insensitive like burned flesh. The passive voice may suggest the searing was done to them by the 'deceitful spirits' of verse 1, not merely by their own choices.
3. The two prohibitions — forbidding marriage and requiring food abstinence — reflect an asceticism that views the material world as corrupting. Paul counters with a creation-affirming theology: these things were 'created' (*ektisen*) by God 'for receiving with thanksgiving' (*eis metalēmpsion meta eucharistias*). The qualifier 'those who believe and know the truth' does not restrict enjoyment but identifies those who understand creation's goodness.
4. Paul echoes Genesis 1 where God declares each element of creation 'good' (*kalon*). The phrase *pan ktisma theou kalon* ('every creature/creation of God is good') is a direct theological rebuttal of any dualism that considers the material world evil. The qualifying condition is *eucharistia* ('thanksgiving') — gratitude sanctifies the reception of God's gifts.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The verb *hagizetai* ('is made holy, is sanctified') does not mean the food was previously unholy but that it is consecrated for use through two means: *logos theou* ('word of God' — possibly a prayer of blessing, a scriptural declaration like Genesis 1's 'it was good,' or the gospel itself) and *enteuxeōs* ('prayer, intercession'). The meal prayer sanctifies ordinary food by acknowledging God as its source.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The verb *entrophomenos* ('being nourished, being trained') is a passive participle — Timothy is simultaneously nourishing the church and being nourished by sound doctrine. The phrase *kalēs didaskalias* ('good teaching') contrasts with the 'teachings of demons' in verse 1. The verb *parēkolouthēkas* ('you have followed, you have closely traced') implies not just intellectual understanding but personal adherence to the teaching.
7. The adjective *graōdeis* ('old-womanish, silly') was a common ancient rhetorical dismissal — the characterization is cultural, not gender-based. The verb *gymnaze* ('train, exercise') is from the athletic gymnasium — godliness requires the same deliberate, disciplined effort as physical fitness. This sets up the comparison in verse 8.
8. Paul does not dismiss physical training (*pros oligon estin ōphelimos*, 'is of some value') but relativizes it. Godliness (*eusebeia*) surpasses it because its benefits extend beyond the present life (*tēs nyn*) into the coming life (*tēs mellousēs*). The 'promise' (*epangelian*) attaches both temporal and eternal rewards to godliness — it is not merely heavenly insurance but transforms present existence.
9. The third 'faithful saying' formula in the letter (cf. 1:15, 3:1). Whether this refers back to verse 8 or forward to verse 10 is debated. The content of verse 8 — godliness is universally profitable — fits the formula well and is the more likely referent.
10. The SBLGNT reads *agōnizometha* ('we strive, we struggle') rather than *oneidizometha* ('we suffer reproach') found in some manuscripts. The phrase *sōtēr pantōn anthrōpōn* ('Savior of all people') has been debated: some read it as affirming universal salvation, others as affirming God's universal saving intent which is actualized especially (*malista*) in believers. The word *malista* ('especially, most of all') does not negate the universal statement but qualifies it — God's saving work extends to all but is fully realized in those who believe.
11. The two imperatives — *parangelle* ('command') and *didaske* ('teach') — combine authority with instruction. Timothy is both to require obedience and to educate understanding.

12. Timothy's 'youth' (neotētos) in ancient terms likely means he was under 40 — not necessarily what moderns would call young. The antidote to age-related dismissal is not assertion of authority but exemplary character. Five areas of example are named: logos ('speech'), anastrophē ('conduct, way of life'), agapē ('love'), pistis ('faith'), and hagneia ('purity'). The SBLGNT does not include en pneumati ('in spirit'), which appears in some manuscripts.
13. The noun anagnōsei ('reading') with the definite article refers to the formal, public reading of Scripture in the assembly — a practice inherited from the synagogue (cf. Luke 4:16-21, Acts 13:15). The three activities — reading, exhortation (paraklēsei), and teaching (didaskalia) — form the core of early Christian worship. Timothy is to ensure these continue in Paul's absence.
14. The charismatos ('gift, grace-gift') is a specific endowment for ministry, given at a definable moment through two means: prophētiās ('prophecy' — inspired speech identifying Timothy's calling) and epitheseōs tōn cheirōn tou presbyteriou ('laying on of hands by the elder council'). The command mē amelei ('do not neglect') implies that spiritual gifts can atrophy without active cultivation. The 'council of elders' (presbyterion) suggests a collective commissioning body. Second Timothy 1:6 adds that Paul himself participated in this laying on of hands.
15. The verb meleta ('practice, cultivate, meditate on') implies active engagement, not passive contemplation. The phrase en toutois isthi ('be in these things, immerse yourself in them') calls for total absorption — Timothy's ministry should be his consuming focus. The noun prokopē ('progress, advancement') was a Stoic term for moral growth, here applied to visible pastoral development.
16. The dual focus — seautō ('yourself') and tē didaskalia ('the teaching') — insists that personal character and doctrinal fidelity cannot be separated. The verb epimene ('persist, continue, remain') demands sustained commitment. The promise that Timothy will 'save' (sōseis) both himself and his hearers does not mean Timothy replaces Christ as savior but that faithful ministry is the instrument through which Christ's saving work reaches people.

5

Summary: Paul instructs Timothy on relating to different groups within the church: older and younger men and women. He then provides extensive guidance on caring for widows, distinguishing between those who qualify for church support (truly desolate, over sixty, with a record of good works) and those whose families should provide for them. Younger widows are encouraged to remarry rather than enroll on the widow list. Paul addresses the compensation and discipline of elders, warns against partiality, and offers personal health advice about wine. The chapter closes with observations about the visibility of sins and good works.

What Makes This Remarkable: This chapter provides the most detailed early church organizational material in the New Testament. The widow enrollment list (vv. 9-16) reveals a formal structure for benevolence that included criteria for eligibility. The instruction to give elders 'double honor' (v. 17) and the scriptural argument for compensating church workers (v. 18) represent early Christian thinking about ministerial support. The personal note about wine (v. 23) offers a rare glimpse into Timothy's health and Paul's pastoral concern for his protege.

Translation Friction: The restrictions on younger widows (vv. 11-15) and the language about their potential behavior ('they grow wanton,' 'learn to be idlers,' 'gossips and busybodies') reflects ancient patriarchal assumptions about women's vulnerabilities. We render the Greek faithfully and note the cultural context without sanitizing or editorializing. The command to 'drink a little wine' (v. 23) has been variously interpreted regarding total abstinence debates.

Connections: The care of widows connects to Acts 6:1-6, James 1:27. The 'laborer deserves his wages' saying (v. 18) quotes Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7 (or a common tradition). The requirement for two or three witnesses (v. 19) follows Deuteronomy 19:15. The laying on of hands (v. 22) connects to 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:6.

¹Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but appeal to him as a father, to younger men as brothers, ²Treat older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with complete purity. ³Honor widows who are truly widows. ⁴But if a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some repayment to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God. ⁵She who is truly a widow, left all alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day, ⁶However, she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. ⁷Command these things as well, so that they may be above reproach. ⁸But if anyone does not provide for his own relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. ⁹Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years old, having been the wife of one husband, ¹⁰Well reported of for righteous deeds. If she

possess carried up offspring, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. ¹¹But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when their desires draw them away from Christ, they want to marry, ¹²They bring judgment on themselves because they have broken their original commitment. ¹³Besides that, they also learn to be idle, going from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they should not. ¹⁴So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, manage their households, and give the adversary no occasion for slander. ¹⁵For some have already strayed after Satan. ¹⁶If any believing woman has relatives who are widows, let her care for them. Let the church not be burdened, so that it may care for those who are truly widows. ¹⁷Let the elders who lead well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. ¹⁸For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages." ¹⁹Do not accept an accusation against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁰As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear. ²¹In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels, I charge you to keep these rules without prejudging, doing nothing out of partiality. ²²Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure. ²³No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments. ²⁴The sins of some people are conspicuous, going ahead of them to judgment, but the sins of others only follow later. ²⁵So also good works are conspicuous, and even those that are not cannot remain hidden.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The noun *presbyterō* here likely means 'older man' rather than the office of 'elder' (that topic begins at v. 17). The verb *epilēxēs* ('rebuke sharply, strike at') is strong — Timothy should correct with family-appropriate respect, not public confrontation. The church is envisioned as a family with generational dynamics.
2. The addition of *en pasē hagneia* ('in all purity') specifically in reference to younger women is practical: a young pastor relating to younger women must maintain absolute propriety. The four-part schema (older men, younger men, older women, younger women) covers the entire congregation through family metaphors.
3. The verb *tima* ('honor') likely includes both respect and material support — 'honor' in this context has financial implications (cf. v. 17 where 'double honor' clearly includes payment). The phrase *ontōs chēras* ('truly widows, widows indeed') establishes a category: not all women who have lost husbands qualify for church support.
4. The verb *manthanetōsan* ('let them learn') — the subject is the children or grandchildren, not the widow. Family responsibility takes priority over church benevolence. The noun *amoibas* ('repayments, returns') frames the care of parents as reciprocal — children are repaying what they received. The KJV's 'nephews' reflects 17th-century English meaning 'grandchildren' (*ekgona*).
5. The qualifying portrait: a 'true widow' is *memonōmenē* ('left alone, isolated') with no family support, *ēlpiken epi theon* ('has set her hope on God' — perfect tense indicating settled trust), and devotes herself to continual prayer. This describes both her need (desolate) and her character (devoted).
6. The verb *spatalōsa* ('living in self-indulgence, living for pleasure') describes a widow who uses her status to pursue luxury rather than godliness. The paradox *zōsa tethnēken* ('living, she has died') is a spiritual death that coexists with physical life — a sharp rebuke that distinguishes genuine need from entitlement.
7. The adjective *anepilēmptoi* ('above reproach, not open to accusation') applies to both the widows and the families — the entire system of care must be conducted blamelessly.
8. The harshness of Paul's verdict — 'worse than an unbeliever' (*apistou cheirōn*) — underscores the seriousness of family responsibility. Even pagans care for their own; a Christian who fails to do so has contradicted the faith at its most basic level. The verb *ērñētai* ('has denied') is the same word used for denying Christ (2 Timothy 2:12).
9. The verb *katalegestho* ('let her be enrolled, let her be put on the list') indicates a formal register — the 'widow list' was an official church institution. The age requirement of sixty and the phrase *henos andros gynē* ('a one-man woman' — the feminine parallel to the overseer requirement in 3:2) establish formal criteria. This is not merely charity but an organized role.
10. Five examples of 'good works' illustrate the character required: child-rearing (*eteknotropēsen*), hospitality (*exenodochēsen*), foot-washing (*hagiōn podas enipsen* — indicating both humility and practical service), caring for the afflicted (*thlibomenois epērkesen*), and general devotion to good works. Foot-washing was a menial task usually performed by slaves or the lowest-ranking household member (cf. John 13:1-17).
11. The verb *katastrēniasōsin* ('to grow wanton against, to be drawn away by desire against') is rare and implies sensual desire that conflicts with a commitment — in this case, the enrollment may have involved a pledge of dedication to the church. The concern is not that remarriage itself is sinful (v. 14 encourages it) but that breaking a formal commitment constitutes unfaithfulness.

12. The noun *krima* ('judgment, condemnation') and the phrase *tēn prōtēn pistin* ('the first faith/pledge') are debated: *pistin* could mean 'faith' (they have abandoned their Christian faith) or 'pledge' (they have broken their enrollment vow). The enrollment context favors 'pledge' — they made a commitment they are now breaking. The KJV's 'damnation' is too strong for *krima*, which can mean 'censure' or 'adverse judgment.'
13. The verb *periechomenai* ('going around, visiting') describes house-to-house movement that becomes an occasion for *phylaroi* ('gossips, chatterers') and *periergoi* ('busybodies, meddlers' — the same word root as in 2 Thessalonians 3:11). The 'things they should not say' (*ta mē deonta*) may include spreading false teaching, which ties this passage to the broader concern about heterodox influence.
14. Paul's preference (*boulomai*, 'I want, I desire') for younger widows to remarry is not a prohibition of celibacy but practical pastoral counsel in context. The verb *oikodespotein* ('to manage a household, to be master of a house') assigns significant domestic authority to women. The 'adversary' (*tō antikeimenō*) could be Satan, human opponents of the church, or both.
15. The verb *exetrapēsan* ('have turned aside, have strayed') recurs from 1:6 — the same word for the false teachers. Paul implies that some younger widows have already followed the path he warns about, making this not hypothetical but pastoral response to actual situations.
16. The SBLGNT reads *pistē* ('believing woman') rather than *pistos ē pistē* ('believing man or woman') found in some manuscripts. The economic logic is clear: private family support frees the church's limited resources for those who have no other support. The verb *eparkeitō* ('let her care for, let her assist') is the same used for the enrolled widow's good works in verse 10.
17. The noun *presbyteroi* now clearly refers to the office of elder (not merely older men as in v. 1). The 'double honor' (*diplēs timēs*) likely includes both respect and financial remuneration — verse 18 confirms the financial dimension. The phrase *malista hoi kopiōntes en logō kai didaskalia* ('especially those laboring in preaching and teaching') distinguishes a subset of elders whose primary ministry is verbal — suggesting that not all elders preached or taught.
18. Two quotations support financial compensation for elders: Deuteronomy 25:4 (the working ox must be fed) and a saying attributed to Jesus in Luke 10:7 (the laborer deserves wages). The remarkable fact is that Paul introduces both with the formula *legei hē graphē* ('the Scripture says'), placing a saying of Jesus on equal authority with Old Testament Scripture — one of the earliest indications of written gospel traditions being treated as authoritative.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 25:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The protection of elders from false accusations follows the Mosaic requirement of multiple witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15, which Jesus also cited in Matthew 18:16). The higher standard protects leaders from manipulation while still allowing legitimate charges. The verb *paradechou* ('accept, receive, entertain') means not that accusations cannot be heard but that they should not be acted upon without corroboration.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 19:15. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The present participle *hamartanontas* ('those sinning, those who persist in sin') indicates ongoing sin, not a single lapse. Public rebuke follows the failure of private processes (v. 19). The phrase *enōpion pantōn* ('in the presence of all') makes the correction communal — the entire congregation witnesses it. The purpose is deterrent: *hina kai hoi loipoi phobon echōsin* ('so that the rest may fear').
21. The solemn adjuration — invoking God, Christ, and the elect angels as witnesses — gives this charge the gravity of a courtroom oath. The warnings against *prokrimatos* ('prejudging, prejudice') and *prosklisin* ('partiality, favoritism') address the two great temptations of church discipline: deciding before hearing evidence and playing favorites. The 'elect angels' (*eklektōn angelōn*) are the holy angels who serve as witnesses of human conduct.
22. The 'laying on of hands' (*cheiras epitithei*) likely refers to ordination (cf. 4:14) rather than restoration of the fallen, though both interpretations have support. The warning against haste means: do not ordain without adequate evaluation (cf. 3:10). 'Sharing in others' sins' (*koinōnei hamartiais allotriais*) means that premature ordination of an unqualified person makes the ordainer complicit in the subsequent failures.
23. This personal aside reveals that Timothy had been drinking only water (*mēketi hydropōtei* — 'no longer be a water-drinker'), possibly as an ascetic practice or to avoid any appearance of impropriety. Paul overrides this with practical medical advice: *oinō oligō* ('a little wine') as a digestive aid. In the ancient world, wine was commonly used medicinally and was often safer than water. The verse interrupts the flow of instructions, suggesting it was a parenthetical pastoral concern.
24. Paul returns to the theme of evaluating people for leadership. The point is practical: some people's disqualifying sins are immediately visible (*prodēloi*, 'evident, conspicuous'), while others' sins are hidden and only emerge later (*epakolouthousin*, 'follow after'). This is why hasty ordination is dangerous (v. 22) — time reveals what is hidden.
25. The parallel is encouraging: just as hidden sins eventually surface (v. 24), hidden good works will also become visible. The phrase *krybēnai ou dynantai* ('cannot remain hidden') assures Timothy that genuine godliness, even when unrecognized initially, will eventually be revealed. This gives both warning and encouragement for the evaluation process.

6

Summary: *Paul instructs enslaved people to honor their masters so that God's name is not blasphemed, and specifically addresses those with believing masters. He then returns to the problem of false teachers who use godliness as a means of financial gain, contrasting their mindset with the principle that godliness with contentment is great gain. The famous warning about the love of money follows: those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare. Paul charges Timothy to flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. The letter closes with a magnificent doxology to God as 'the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The statement 'the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil' (v. 10) is one of the most frequently quoted and misquoted verses in the Bible — Paul says love of money, not money itself. The closing doxology (vv. 15-16) is among the most exalted descriptions of God in the New Testament, drawing on Jewish liturgical traditions about God's transcendence. The 'good confession' Timothy is charged to maintain (v. 12) connects to Jesus's testimony before Pontius Pilate (v. 13), linking Timothy's pastoral courage to Christ's ultimate witness.*

Translation Friction: *The instructions to enslaved people (vv. 1-2) must be read in the context of ancient slavery, which was pervasive and varied in form. Paul does not endorse slavery but addresses the reality of enslaved believers within existing social structures. The 'deposit' (parathēkē, v. 20) that Timothy must guard has been interpreted as the body of apostolic teaching, anticipating 2 Timothy 1:12, 14.*

Connections: *The slavery instructions parallel Ephesians 6:5-9, Colossians 3:22-4:1, Titus 2:9-10, and Philemon. The love-of-money warning echoes Ecclesiastes 5:10 and Jesus's teaching in Matthew 6:19-24. The 'good confession' connects to Matthew 27:11 and John 18:36-37. The doxology echoes Deuteronomy 10:17, Daniel 2:47, and Revelation 17:14, 19:16.*

¹Let all who are under the yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed. ²Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful on the ground that they are brothers; rather, they must serve all the more, since those who benefit from their good service are believers and beloved. Teach and urge these things. ³If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, ⁴Indeed, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting concerning questions and strifes of words, whereof comes envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,. ⁵and constant friction between people whose minds are corrupted and who have lost hold of the truth. They think that godliness is a way to make money. Stay away from them. ⁶But godliness with contentment is remarkable gain. ⁷Indeed, since we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows. ¹¹But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. ¹³I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, ¹⁴That you keep this commandment apart from spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵At the proper time, God will reveal Christ — God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords. ¹⁶Indeed, who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach to. Whom no man has seen, nor can see — to whom be honour and authority everlasting. Amen. ¹⁷As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. ¹⁸They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹Indeed, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation opposed to the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. ²⁰O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to

you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called 'knowledge,' ²¹Indeed, which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace remain with you. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *hypo zygon douloi* ('slaves under the yoke') acknowledges the burden of slavery without endorsing it. The motivation for honorable conduct is the reputation of God — *hina mē to onoma tou theou kai hē didaskalia blasphemētai* ('so that God's name and the teaching may not be blasphemed'). Disobedient Christian slaves would give outsiders reason to malign both God and the gospel.
2. A specific problem: some enslaved Christians with Christian masters were using their shared faith as grounds for insubordination — 'we are brothers, so why should I serve you?' Paul argues the opposite: shared faith should increase rather than decrease the quality of service. The phrase *hoi tēs euergeias antilambanomenoi* ('those who receive the benefit') likely refers to the masters benefiting from the slaves' service, though it could also mean both parties benefit from the relationship. The tension between spiritual equality and social hierarchy was a real challenge for early Christian communities.
3. The verb *heterodidaskalei* ('teaches differently') returns from 1:3, forming an *inclusio* for the letter's central concern. 'Sound words' (*hygiainousin logois*, 'healthy words') uses the medical metaphor characteristic of the Pastoral Epistles. The phrase *tois tou kyriou hēmōn Iēsou Christou* ('those of our Lord Jesus Christ') may refer to Jesus's own teachings or to the apostolic tradition about Christ.
4. The verb *tetyphōtai* ('is puffed up, is clouded with conceit') recurs from 3:6. The verb *nosōn* ('being sick, having an unhealthy craving') extends the medical metaphor — while sound teaching is 'healthy,' the false teacher is diseased, craving (*nosōn*) controversies (*zētēseis*) and word-fights (*logomachias*). The five fruit of false teaching — envy (*phthonos*), dissension (*eris*), slander (*blasphēmiai*), evil suspicions (*hyponoiai ponērai*), and the constant friction of verse 5 — describe a community being destroyed from within.
5. The noun *diapatribai* ('constant friction, mutual irritation') occurs only here in the New Testament. The false teachers' fundamental corruption is described at three levels: corrupted minds (*diephtharmenōn ton noun*), deprived of truth (*apesterēmenōn tēs alētheias*), and mercenary motivation (*nomizontōn porismon einai tēn eusebeian* — 'thinking godliness is a means of profit'). The mercenary motive is the climactic accusation.
6. Paul redefines 'gain' (*porismos*): true profit is not financial enrichment through religion but *eusebeia meta autarkeias* ('godliness with contentment'). The noun *autarkeia* ('contentment, self-sufficiency') was a key Stoic virtue meaning independence from external circumstances (cf. Philippians 4:11-12). Paul Christianizes it: contentment comes not from self-mastery but from trust in God's provision.
7. This proverbial wisdom echoes Job 1:21 ('Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return') and Ecclesiastes 5:15. The logic is simple: material wealth has no eternal portability. The textual variant *hoti* ('because') or *dēlon hoti* ('it is clear that') does not affect the meaning significantly.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Job 1:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ecclesiastes 5:15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The two essentials — *diatrophas* ('food, sustenance') and *skepasata* ('coverings' — which could include clothing and shelter) — define the baseline for contentment. The verb *arkesthēsometha* ('we will be content, we will be satisfied') is a future of resolution — 'we will consider these sufficient.' This is not asceticism but a rejection of acquisitiveness.
9. Paul targets not wealth itself but *boulomenoi ploutein* ('those who desire to be rich') — the craving for wealth. The sequence is a downward spiral: temptation (*peirasmon*), snare (*pagida*), many foolish and harmful desires (*epithymias pollas anoētous kai blaberas*), and finally ruin (*olethron*) and destruction (*apōleian*). The verb *bythizousin* ('plunge, drown') is nautical — those pursuing wealth are pulled under like a sinking ship.
10. The Greek *rhiza pantōn tōn kakōn* ('a root of all evils') lacks the definite article before *rhiza*, so 'a root' is more accurate than the KJV's 'the root.' The noun *philargyria* ('love of money, avarice') is the specific vice — not money itself but the love of it. The verb *perieperian* ('pierced through') is violent imagery — they have impaled themselves on their own desires, and the result is *odynais pollais* ('many sorrows, many pains'). The wandering (*apeplanēthesan*) from faith completes the pattern: doctrinal error, moral compromise, and financial corruption are interconnected.
11. The address *anthrōpe theou* ('man of God') is an Old Testament title for prophets (1 Samuel 9:6, 1 Kings 17:18, 2 Kings 1:9) — Paul identifies Timothy with the prophetic tradition. The six virtues to 'pursue' (*diōke*) are: righteousness (*dikaïosynēn*), godliness (*eusebeian*), faith (*pistin*), love (*agapēn*), endurance (*hypomonēn*), and gentleness (*praypathian*). The pattern is twofold: flee (*pheuge*) the dangers and pursue (*diōke*) the virtues — the Christian life involves active movement in both directions.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Samuel 9:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Kings 17:18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Kings 1:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

12. The verb *agōnizōu* ('fight, compete, struggle') is athletic/military — the same word family used throughout both letters to Timothy. The noun *agōna* ('fight, contest, struggle') is the struggle itself. The 'good confession' (*kalēn homologian*) likely refers to Timothy's baptismal confession or ordination vow, made publicly (*enōpion pollōn martyron*, 'before many witnesses'). 'Take hold of' (*epilabou*) the eternal life suggests grasping what has already been given — eternal life is both present possession and future hope.
13. God is described as *zōgonountos ta panta* ('giving life to all things') — a title that grounds the charge in God's sovereign power over life. Christ's 'good confession' before Pilate (*martyrēsantos epi Pontiou Pilatou*) parallels Timothy's confession in verse 12 — Timothy's courage is modeled on Christ's courage. This is one of the few places in the Epistles that names Pontius Pilate, rooting the gospel in historical specificity.
14. The 'commandment' (*entolēn*) refers to the entire charge entrusted to Timothy — his apostolic commission. The adjectives *aspilon* ('unstained, spotless') and *anepilēmpton* ('above reproach') apply to Timothy's faithfulness in keeping it. The time horizon is *mechri tēs epiphaneias* ('until the appearing') of Christ — Timothy's duty extends to the parousia.
15. The doxology begins. God is described as *makarios* ('blessed, supremely happy'), *monos dynastēs* ('only Sovereign, sole Ruler'), *basileus tōn basileuontōn* ('King of those who reign'), and *kyrios tōn kyrieuontōn* ('Lord of those who exercise lordship'). These titles directly challenge imperial claims — in a Roman world where Caesar claimed supreme sovereignty, Paul declares that only God holds true power. The phrase *kairois idiois* ('at the proper time') places the timing of Christ's return under God's sovereign control.
16. Three divine attributes complete the doxology: *athanasian* ('immortality' — God alone inherently possesses deathlessness; all other immortality is derivative and gifted), *phōs aprositon* ('unapproachable light' — God's essential nature is so radiant that no creature can draw near), and invisibility (*hon eiden oudeis anthrōpōn* — 'whom no human has seen or is able to see,' echoing Exodus 33:20). The doxology closes with *timē kai kratos aiōnion* ('honor and eternal dominion') and the solemn *Amēn*.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 33:20. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. After the doxology about God's transcendence, Paul returns to practical instruction for wealthy believers. Two prohibitions: *mē hypselophronein* ('not to be arrogant') and *mēde ēlpikenai epi ploutou adēlotēti* ('not to have set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth'). The positive alternative — hope in God who provides *plousios* ('richly') *eis apolausin* ('for enjoyment') — is remarkable: God is not stingy but generous, and his gifts are meant to be enjoyed, not hoarded.
18. The verb *agathoergein* ('to do good') and the phrase *ploutein en ergois kalois* ('to be rich in good works') redefine 'wealth' — true riches are generosity, not accumulation. The adjectives *eumetadotous* ('generous, ready to give') and *koinōnikous* ('ready to share, sociable in giving') describe open-handed living. The progression from 'do good' to 'be rich in good works' to 'generous' to 'ready to share' intensifies the call to active generosity.
19. The verb *apothēsaurizontas* ('storing up treasure') echoes Jesus's teaching in Matthew 6:19-20 — generosity in the present stores treasure for the future. The phrase *tēs ontōs zōēs* ('the real life, the life that is truly life') distinguishes genuine life from mere existence — what passes for life among the wealthy may not be life at all. The verb *epilabōntai* ('take hold of') echoes verse 12, creating a thematic ring around the closing section.
20. The noun *parathēkēn* ('deposit, what has been entrusted') is a banking term for something placed in trust for safekeeping. Timothy must protect the body of apostolic teaching — not innovate upon it or allow it to be corrupted. The 'falsely called knowledge' (*pseudōnymou gnōseōs*) may anticipate the later Gnostic movement or refer to proto-Gnostic claims already present. The word *gnōsis* ('knowledge') with the prefix *pseudo-* ('false') brands the opponents' intellectual claims as counterfeit.
21. The verb *ēstochēsan* ('have missed the mark, have swerved') returns from 1:6, forming a final inclusio. Those who claimed superior 'knowledge' actually missed the target of faith. The closing 'Grace be with you' (*hē charis meth' hymōn*) uses the plural *hymōn* ('you all'), suggesting the letter was intended for the wider community, not Timothy alone. The SBLGNT does not include 'Amen.'

2 Timothy

1

Summary: *Paul writes to Timothy from prison, expressing longing to see him and recalling Timothy's sincere faith, which first lived in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. He urges Timothy to fan into flame the gift of God, reminding him that God gave a spirit not of fear but of power, love, and self-discipline. Paul calls Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony about the Lord or of Paul as his prisoner, but to share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, who saved us and called us according to his own purpose and grace given in Christ Jesus before the ages began. This grace has now been manifested through the appearing of Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This letter is widely considered Paul's last — written from a Roman prison as he anticipates death (cf. 4:6-8). The emotional texture is unique in the Pauline corpus: deeply personal, retrospective, and urgent. The reference to Timothy's grandmother and mother (v. 5) is the only place in the New Testament where a believer's spiritual heritage is traced through female family members. The christological statement in verses 9-10 is one of Paul's most compact summaries of the gospel: pre-temporal grace, historical appearing, and the abolition of death.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'before the ages began' (pro chronōn aiōniōn, v. 9) describes God's purpose in eternity past — we render without imposing specific predestination frameworks. The reference to Paul's 'deposit' (parathēkē, vv. 12, 14) echoes 1 Timothy 6:20 and raises questions about the relationship between divine preservation and human guarding of the gospel.*

Connections: *Timothy's family faith connects to Acts 16:1. The 'fan into flame' metaphor for spiritual gifts connects to 1 Thessalonians 5:19 ('do not quench the Spirit'). The gospel summary in vv. 9-10 parallels Titus 1:2-3 and 3:4-7. Onesiphorus's loyalty (vv. 16-18) contrasts with the Asian believers' desertion (v. 15).*

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, ²From god the father and christ jesus our lord, to Timothy, my dearly dear son — Grace, mercy, and peace. ³I am grateful to God, whom I serve with a clear conscience as my ancestors did, when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and now, I am persuaded, lives in you as well. ⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷Because God has not given

us the spirit of fear. But of authority, and of love, and of a sound mind. ⁸Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹Who has saved us, and known as us with an holy calling, not in keeping with to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,. ¹⁰However, is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and has brought life and immortality to light by way of the gospel:. ¹¹For which purpose I am appointed as a herald, and an emissary, and an instructor to the non-Jewish peoples. ¹²For the which cause I also suffer these things — nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day. ¹³Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴Guard the good deposit entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. ¹⁵You are aware that all who are in Asia turned away from me, among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. ¹⁷Instead, when he arrived in Rome, he searched for me earnestly and found me — ¹⁸Indeed, the Lord grant to him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day — and in how numerous things he ministered to me at Ephesus, you knowest very well.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul's apostleship is grounded in *dia thelēmatos theou* ('by the will of God') — divine calling, not personal ambition. The prepositional phrase *kat' epangelian zōēs* ('according to the promise of life') defines his apostolic mission: he proclaims the life promised in Christ Jesus. This opening sets the letter's dominant theme: life in Christ versus the death Paul faces.
2. The adjective *agapētō* ('beloved') replaces *gnēsio* ('true, genuine') from 1 Timothy 1:2, reflecting the deeper emotional register of this final letter. The threefold greeting — *charis, eleos, eirēnē* ('grace, mercy, peace') — matches 1 Timothy's greeting.
3. Paul connects his service to God with his ancestral faith (*apo progenōn*, 'from ancestors') — his Christian faith is the fulfillment of Jewish faith, not a departure from it. The 'clear conscience' (*kathara syneidēsei*) assures Timothy that Paul's imprisonment is unjust, not the result of wrongdoing. The constant remembrance (*adialeipton... mnēian*) echoes 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3.
4. Timothy's tears (*dakryōn*) may refer to their last parting — a detail that reveals the depth of their relationship. The verb *epipothōn* ('longing, yearning') expresses intense desire. Paul's joy would be 'filled' (*plērōthō*) — made complete — by seeing Timothy again. From prison, facing death, Paul's greatest desire is personal reunion.
5. The adjective *anypokritos* ('sincere, unhypocritical, genuine') describes faith without pretense (cf. 1 Timothy 1:5). Paul traces this faith through three generations of women: grandmother (*mammē*) Lois and mother Eunice. This is the only New Testament passage that names a believer's grandmother in the context of faith transmission. Timothy's father was Greek (Acts 16:1), making his maternal line the source of his Jewish-Christian faith. The verb *enōkēsen* ('dwelt in, took up residence in') personifies faith as a living presence that inhabits successive generations.
6. The verb *anazōpyrein* ('to fan into flame, to rekindle') implies the gift is a fire that may have diminished — not extinguished but needing renewed attention. First Timothy 4:14 mentions the laying on of hands by the council of elders; here Paul mentions his own hands (*tōn cheirōn mou*) — both likely occurred at the same commissioning event. The gift (*charisma*) is specific to Timothy's calling and requires active cultivation.
7. The noun *deilias* ('cowardice, timidity, fear') is the only occurrence in the New Testament. Paul addresses what may be Timothy's temperamental tendency toward timidity. The three replacements for fear are: *dynamis* ('power' — the capacity to act), *agapē* ('love' — the motivation to act), and *sōphronismos* ('self-discipline, sound judgment' — the wisdom to act well). This triad equips Timothy for courageous ministry.
8. Two potential sources of shame: the testimony (martyrion) about Christ and Paul himself as a prisoner (desmion). In Roman culture, association with a convicted prisoner brought social stigma. The compound verb *synkakopathēson* ('share in suffering, join in hardship') calls Timothy to voluntary participation in the cost of the gospel. The enabling power for this is not Timothy's courage but *dynamis theou* ('the power of God').
9. This verse contains a compact gospel summary. Two divine actions — 'saved' (*sōsantos*) and 'called' (*kalesantos*) — are grounded not in human works (*ou kata ta erga hēmōn*) but in God's own 'purpose and grace' (*idian prothesin kai charin*). The stunning claim: this grace was given (*dotheisan*) in Christ Jesus *pro chronōn aiōniōn* ('before eternal ages, before time began'). God's saving purpose preceded creation itself.
10. The pre-temporal grace (v. 9) has been *phanerōtheisan* ('manifested, made visible') through Christ's *epiphaneia* ('appearing' — his incarnation and ministry). Two achievements of Christ are stated: *katargēsantos ton thanaton* ('having abolished/rendered powerless death') and *phōtisantos zōēn kai aphtharsian* ('having brought to light life and immortality'). The verb *katargeō* means not that death no longer occurs but that its power and finality have been broken. Light imagery pervades: death is darkness; life and imperishability (*aphtharsia*) are illuminated through the gospel.
11. The three roles mirror 1 Timothy 2:7 but without 'of the Gentiles' and without the oath formula. Paul's imprisonment is the direct result of his appointment — he suffers because of what he was commissioned to proclaim.

12. Paul's personal confession: *ouk epaischynomai* ('I am not ashamed') answers the call of verse 8. The ground of his confidence is relational — *oida gar hō pepisteuka* ('I know whom I have believed') — not abstract theology but personal trust in a known Person. The 'deposit' (*parathēkēn mou*) could mean 'what I have entrusted to him' (my life, my ministry) or 'what he has entrusted to me' (the gospel). Both readings are theologically rich. 'That day' (*ekeinēn tēn hēmeran*) is the day of Christ's return and final judgment.
13. The noun *hypotypōsin* ('pattern, model, outline') appeared in 1 Timothy 1:16 for Paul as a 'pattern' of conversion. Here it refers to the pattern of sound teaching — Timothy must not merely remember the content but maintain the form (the healthy framework) of apostolic doctrine. The qualifying phrase *en pistei kai agapē* ('in faith and love') means the pattern must be held with the right disposition, not merely intellectual adherence.
14. The 'good deposit' (*kalēn parathēkēn*) is the apostolic gospel and teaching. The means of guarding it is *dia pneumatos hagiou* ('by the Holy Spirit') — human effort alone cannot preserve divine truth. The participle *enoikountos* ('dwelling in') describes the Spirit's permanent residence in believers, providing ongoing empowerment for the task.
15. The verb *apestraphēsan* ('turned away from') indicates abandonment — when Paul needed support, his Asian associates deserted him. 'All' (*pantes*) is likely hyperbolic but indicates widespread desertion. Phygelus and Hermogenes are named as representative defectors — they appear nowhere else in the New Testament. This personal pain sets up the contrast with Onesiphorus in the next verses.
16. Onesiphorus's name means 'profit-bearer' — fitting for one who brought refreshment (*anepsyxen*, 'cooled, refreshed' — the opposite of the 'rekindling' metaphor in v. 6). His loyalty is highlighted by what it cost: *ouk epaischynthē* ('was not ashamed') of Paul's chains (*halysin*). The prayer is directed to 'the household' (*oikō*) of Onesiphorus, which some interpreters take as evidence that Onesiphorus himself had died, though this is uncertain.
17. The adverb *spoudaiōs* ('earnestly, diligently') and the verb *ezētēsen* ('sought, searched for') indicate that finding Paul in Rome was not easy. Prisoners were not always easily located in the Roman system. Onesiphorus's persistence contrasts sharply with those who turned away (v. 15).
18. The prayer 'may the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord' (*dōē autō ho kyrios heurein eleos para kyriou*) uses 'Lord' twice — possibly distinguishing God the Father and Christ, or using 'Lord' for both as the source and the mediator of mercy. 'That day' (*ekeinē tē hēmera*) is the same day of judgment referenced in verse 12. Onesiphorus's service in Ephesus, well known to Timothy (*beltion sy ginōskeis*, 'you know better than I'), preceded his courageous service in Rome.

2

Summary: *Paul calls Timothy to endurance in ministry through a series of vivid metaphors: a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer — each illustrating single-minded devotion and the promise of reward. Paul grounds his exhortation in the faithfulness of Christ, offering a creedal fragment ('if we died with him, we will also live with him'). He warns against quarrelsome, divisive teaching — specifically naming Hymenaeus and Philetus, who claim the resurrection has already occurred — and contrasts it with the quiet competence of a worker rightly handling the word of truth. The chapter closes with instructions on gentleness toward opponents, in hope that God may grant them repentance.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The 'faithful saying' in verses 11-13 is likely an early Christian hymn or confession, exhibiting parallelism and conditional logic: faithfulness yields co-reign, denial yields denial, yet human faithlessness cannot override divine faithfulness ('he cannot deny himself'). The metaphor of a 'large house' containing vessels of honor and dishonor (vv. 20-21) draws on the Pauline body imagery but applies it to the church's mixed composition. The phrase 'rightly handling the word of truth' (*orthotomeo*, v. 15) literally means 'cutting straight' — a metaphor from road-building or tentmaking.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'faithful saying' (*pistos ho logos*) is debated — does it begin at verse 11 or earlier? We take verses 11b-13 as the quoted material. Hymenaeus appears also in 1 Timothy 1:20; whether this is the same person is assumed but uncertain. The 'resurrection has already happened' teaching (v. 18) likely reflects an over-realized eschatology that spiritualized the resurrection, a recurring problem in early churches.*

Connections: *The soldier/athlete/farmer triad connects to 1 Corinthians 9:7, 24-27 and the broader Pauline theme of disciplined endurance. The 'faithful saying' formula appears five times in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 1:15, 3:1, 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8). The large-house metaphor recalls Romans 9:21 (potter and vessels). The call to gentleness toward opponents anticipates the warnings of chapter 3.*

¹You therefore, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ²And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. ³Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No soldier on active duty gets entangled in civilian affairs, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. ⁵Likewise, if anyone competes as an athlete, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. ⁶The hardworking farmer ought to be the first to receive a share of the crops. ⁷Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. ⁸Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, descended from David — this is my gospel, ⁹Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even to bonds. But the message of God is not bound. ¹⁰Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. ¹¹This saying is trustworthy: If we died with him, we will also live with him; ¹²Indeed, if we suffer, we will also reign with him — if we deny him, he also will deny us: ¹³If we trust not, yet he remains faithful — he cannot deny himself. ¹⁴Remind them of these things, charging them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good but ruins the hearers. ¹⁵Make every effort to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. ¹⁶But avoid irreverent, empty talk, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, ¹⁷Their word will eat as does a canker — of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; ¹⁸Indeed, who concerning the truth have erred and stated that the resurrection is past already. And overthrow the faith of some. ¹⁹But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." ²⁰Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use and some for dishonorable. ²¹Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. ²²So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. ²³Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. ²⁴And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, ²⁵In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. If God perhaps will provide them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. ²⁶so that they may come to their senses and escape the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *endynamou* ('be strengthened') is a present passive imperative — Timothy is not told to muster his own strength but to be empowered by grace. The address *teknon* ('child') expresses Paul's paternal relationship to Timothy, established in 1 Timothy 1:2.
2. This verse outlines four generations of transmission: Paul to Timothy to faithful people to others. The Greek *parathou* ('entrust, deposit') uses banking language — the gospel is a deposit to be guarded and transmitted intact. 'Faithful people' (*pistoi anthrōpoi*) uses the gender-inclusive *anthrōpoi* rather than the male-specific *andrasin*.
3. The compound verb *synkakopatheson* ('share in suffering together') links Timothy's hardships to Paul's own — and ultimately to Christ's. The military metaphor is the first of three vocational images (soldier, athlete, farmer) that structure verses 3-6.
4. The Greek *empeketai* ('gets entangled') conveys the image of being woven into something that restricts movement. Roman soldiers were legally prohibited from engaging in trade during service. The application to ministry is clear: undivided loyalty to the commanding officer — Christ.
5. The athletic metaphor shifts from military endurance to disciplined competition. The Greek *nomimos* ('lawfully, according to the rules') refers to the strict training and competition regulations of the Greek games. The *stephanos* ('crown, wreath') is the victor's garland, not a royal diadem.
6. The third metaphor — the farmer — emphasizes both labor and reward. The Greek *kopiaonta* ('laboring, toiling') is the same word Paul uses for ministerial work (1 Cor 15:10, 1 Tim 5:17). The right to first fruits echoes Deuteronomy 18:4 and 1 Corinthians 9:7-11.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 18:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Paul invites Timothy to active reflection (*noei*, 'perceive, think over') but assures him that understanding ultimately comes from the Lord. The future indicative *dosei* ('will give') expresses confidence, not mere wish.
8. This compact creedal statement names the two essential facts: resurrection (*egeghermenon*, perfect participle — risen and still alive) and Davidic descent. The order is significant: resurrection comes first, then lineage. 'My gospel' (*to euangelion mou*) does not mean Paul invented it but that he was entrusted with it (cf. Rom 2:16, 16:25).

9. The contrast is sharp: Paul is bound (desmōn, 'chains'), but the word of God is not bound (ou dedetai). The Greek kakourgos ('criminal, evildoer') is the same word used for the criminals crucified with Jesus (Luke 23:33). Paul's situation mirrors his Lord's.
10. Paul's suffering is vicarious — endured for the benefit of the elect (tous eklektous, 'the chosen ones'). The phrase meta doxes aioniou ('with eternal glory') places present suffering against the horizon of eschatological weight, echoing Romans 8:18 and 2 Corinthians 4:17.
11. The formula pistos ho logos ('the saying is trustworthy') introduces what appears to be an early Christian hymn or confession (vv. 11b-13). The aorist synapethanomen ('we died with') likely refers to baptismal identification with Christ's death (Rom 6:8), not physical martyrdom.
12. The parallelism intensifies: endurance yields co-reign (symbasileusomen), but denial yields reciprocal denial. The warning echoes Jesus' own words in Matthew 10:33 and Luke 12:9. The shift from first person plural ('we') maintains the hymnic, communal voice.
13. The hymn's climactic line shifts from conditional symmetry to asymmetry: human unfaithfulness does not cancel divine faithfulness. The reason is ontological — 'he cannot deny himself' (arnesasthai heauton ou dynatai). God's faithfulness is not contingent on human response but rooted in his own nature. This is not a promise of universal salvation but a statement about God's character.
14. The Greek logomachein ('to fight about words, quarrel verbally') is a compound of logos and machomai. Paul is not dismissing theology but condemning fruitless verbal combat. The strong word katastrophe ('ruin, destruction') — from which English 'catastrophe' derives — shows the stakes of divisive teaching.
15. The Greek spoudason ('be diligent, make every effort') is stronger than the KJV's 'study.' The key term orthotomeo literally means 'to cut straight' — possibly from road-building (cutting a straight path) or tentmaking (cutting fabric correctly). The KJV's 'rightly dividing' has sometimes been misused to support compartmentalizing Scripture; 'rightly handling' better captures the sense of accurate, faithful interpretation and proclamation.
16. The Greek kenophonias ('empty sounds, empty talk') is a compound of kenos ('empty') and phone ('sound, voice'). The verb periastaso ('stand away from, avoid') conveys deliberate distance. False teaching is not merely incorrect — it produces progressive moral decay (epi pleion, 'more and more').
17. The medical metaphor is graphic: gangraina ('gangrene') describes dead tissue that spreads to healthy flesh. The Greek nomen hexei ('will have pasture, will spread') uses a grazing image — the disease feeds and spreads. Hymenaeus also appears in 1 Timothy 1:20 as someone Paul 'handed over to Satan'; Philetus is mentioned only here.
18. The Greek estochesan ('missed the mark, swerved') is an archery metaphor. The heresy — that the resurrection has already occurred (teen anastasin ede gegonenai) — likely represents an over-realized eschatology that spiritualized bodily resurrection. This directly undermines the hope Paul grounded in verse 11. The verb anatrepousin ('overthrow, upset') means to flip something upside down.
19. The two inscriptions (sphragida, 'seal, inscription') combine Numbers 16:5 (God knows his own — from the Korah rebellion) and a paraphrase of Numbers 16:26 or Isaiah 52:11. The architectural metaphor of a foundation with an inscription evokes ancient building dedications. Despite defections, God's foundation remains unshaken (hesteken, perfect tense — 'stands and continues standing').
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 16:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 52:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The 'great house' (megale oikia) represents the church, containing a mix of vessels. The categories are material (gold/silver vs. wood/clay) and functional (honor vs. dishonor). The metaphor echoes Romans 9:21 but shifts agency — in the next verse, one can change one's category through self-purification.
21. The Greek ekkathare ('cleanses thoroughly') implies decisive separation from the false teachers and their influence. The progression — cleansed, set apart (hegiastmenon), useful (euchreston), ready (hetoimasmenon) — moves from purification to active service. The 'master' (despotes) refers to Christ as lord of the household.
22. The contrast between 'flee' (pheuge) and 'pursue' (dioke) creates a two-directional imperative: run away from and run toward. 'Youthful passions' (neotericas epithymias) may refer to Timothy's relative youth but more broadly to impulsive desires of any kind — impatience, combativeness, pride. The four virtues (righteousness, faith, love, peace) are pursued in community, not isolation.
23. The Greek apaideutos ('uneducated, ignorant, undisciplined') describes speculations that lack intellectual and moral formation. The verb gennōsin ('breed, give birth to') personifies these controversies as producing offspring — namely fights (machas).
24. The title 'the Lord's servant' (doulon kyriou) echoes the Old Testament 'servant of the LORD' (ebed YHWH) applied to Moses, David, and the prophets. The three qualities — kind (epion), able to teach (didaktikon), patient under mistreatment (anexikakon) — describe the temperament required for corrective ministry.
25. The Greek prauteti ('gentleness, meekness') is the quality Jesus claimed for himself (Matt 11:29). Repentance (metanoian) is here described as something God grants — not merely a human decision but a divine gift. The phrase epignōsin aletheias ('full knowledge of truth') uses the intensified form epignosis, indicating deep, experiential knowledge.
26. The Greek ananepsōsin ('come to their senses, become sober again') implies that the opponents are in a state of spiritual intoxication. The imagery combines hunting (pagidos, 'snare, trap') and military capture (ezōgremenoi, 'taken alive as prisoners'). The final phrase eis to ekeinou thelema ('to do his will') is ambiguous — 'his' could refer to the devil or to God. We take it as the devil's will, from which they may escape to do God's will.

3

Summary: *Paul warns Timothy that the last days will bring moral and spiritual decay, cataloguing vices that masquerade as piety — people who hold to the outward form of godliness while denying its power. He draws a parallel between these deceivers and Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses. Against this backdrop, Paul points to his own life as an example: his teaching, conduct, persecution, and endurance. The chapter culminates in one of the most significant statements in Scripture about the nature of sacred writings: 'All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verse 16 contains the word theopneustos ('God-breathed'), found nowhere else in the New Testament or in earlier Greek literature — Paul may have coined it. The term does not describe the process of inspiration (how God did it) but the origin and character of Scripture (it comes from God's breath). The vice catalogue in verses 2-5 is structured around the concept of disordered love: love of self, love of money, and love of pleasure replace love of God. The reference to Jannes and Jambres (v. 8) draws on Jewish tradition not found in the Hebrew Bible but preserved in later texts — Paul treats this tradition as reliable.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'last days' (eschatai hemerai, v. 1) has been debated — does Paul refer to a future period or to the present age inaugurated by Christ? The Pastoral Epistles treat the 'last days' as already underway, with conditions worsening. The scope of 'all Scripture' (pasa graphe) in verse 16 originally referred to the Hebrew Scriptures (the only 'Scripture' Timothy knew from childhood), though the church later applied the principle to the New Testament writings as well. We render theopneustos as 'God-breathed' rather than the KJV's 'given by inspiration of God,' which is accurate but less precise about the metaphor.*

Connections: *The vice catalogue parallels Romans 1:29-31 in structure and content. The Jannes and Jambres tradition appears in the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan on Exodus 7:11 and in later Jewish and early Christian texts. Paul's appeal to his own suffering (vv. 10-11) recalls 2 Corinthians 11:23-27. The Scripture passage (vv. 15-17) connects to the deposit language of 1 Timothy 6:20 and 2 Timothy 1:14, and provides the theological basis for the 'word of truth' in 2:15.*

¹But understand this: in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ²For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, ³Apart from natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are upright, ⁴Treacherous, reckless, conceited, loving pleasure rather than loving God; ⁵Indeed, having a form of godliness, but denying the authority thereof — from such turn away. ⁶For among them are those who creep into households and captivate vulnerable women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, ⁷Ever learning, and never able to arrive to the knowledge of the what is genuine. ⁸Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth — people of corrupted minds, disqualified regarding the faith. ⁹But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was the folly of those two. ¹⁰You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my endurance, ¹¹Persecutions, afflictions, which arrived to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra. What persecutions I endured — but out of them every one of the Lord delivered me. ¹²Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. ¹³However, evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. ¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵That from a child you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise to salvation by way of faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷Indeed, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good deeds.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek chalepoi ('difficult, hard, dangerous') is used in Matthew 8:28 to describe the Gadarene demoniacs as 'fierce.' The 'last days' (eschatai hemerai) in Pauline theology began with Christ's resurrection and continue until his return — they are not solely future.

2. The catalogue begins with two phil- compounds: philautoi ('lovers of self') and philargyroi ('lovers of money'), establishing disordered love as the root problem. This prepares for the climactic contrast in verse 4: 'lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.' The list echoes Romans 1:29-31, where moral decay follows the rejection of God.
3. The Greek astorgoi ('without natural affection, heartless') denotes the absence of storge — the instinctive love within families. The word diaboloi ('slandereous') is the same word used as a title for the devil (ho diabolos, 'the slanderer'). These people take on the character of the adversary himself.
4. The catalogue reaches its climax with the contrast: philedonoi mallon e philotheoi ('lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God'). The structure mirrors the opening — phil-compounds frame the entire list. The Greek tetyphomenoi ('puffed up, blinded by smoke') suggests delusion caused by pride.
5. The Greek morphosin ('outward form, appearance') implies an external shape without internal reality — a religious veneer over moral emptiness. The 'power' (dynamis) of godliness is the transformative energy of the Holy Spirit working through genuine faith. The command apotrepeō ('turn away from, avoid') is present imperative — this is an ongoing stance, not a one-time action.
6. The Greek gynaikaria (diminutive of gynē) has often been translated pejoratively ('silly women'). The diminutive likely indicates vulnerability rather than contempt — these are people in precarious situations who are exploited by predatory teachers. 'Captivate' (aichmalotizontes) is military language: taking prisoners of war. The false teachers conduct household-level infiltration campaigns.
7. The paradox of perpetual learning without ever reaching truth (epignosis aletheias) describes a cycle of religious consumption without transformation. The intensified epignosis ('full, experiential knowledge') underscores what is missing — not information but genuine encounter with truth.
8. Jannes and Jambres are not named in the Hebrew Bible but appear in Jewish tradition as the Egyptian magicians who replicated Moses' signs (Exodus 7:11, 8:7). Paul draws on this extrabiblical tradition without qualification. The term adokimoi ('disqualified, failing the test') is the opposite of dokimos ('approved') in 2:15 — these men fail the very test Timothy is called to pass.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 7:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Paul offers reassurance: the false teachers' progress has limits. Just as Jannes and Jambres were ultimately exposed and defeated (Exodus 8:18-19, 9:11), so these opponents will be revealed. The Greek anoia ('folly, senselessness') contrasts with the 'knowledge of truth' they claim to possess.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 8:18-19. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The Greek parekolouthesas ('followed closely, investigated, accompanied') means Timothy did not merely hear Paul's teaching but observed his entire life. The seven items form a comprehensive portrait: doctrine (didaskalia), behavior (agoge), purpose (prothesis), faith (pistis), patience (makrothymia), love (agape), and endurance (hypomone).
11. Paul cites three cities from his first missionary journey (Acts 13-14) — notably, these are cities in Timothy's home region. Timothy would have known firsthand about these events (Acts 16:1-2). The Lystra reference is especially poignant: Paul was stoned and left for dead there (Acts 14:19). The declaration 'the Lord rescued me from them all' (ek pantōn me erhysato ho kyrios) echoes Psalm 34:19.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 34:19. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. This is a universal statement without qualification: all (pantes) who pursue godliness in Christ will face persecution. The passive diochthesontai ('will be persecuted') is a divine passive — God permits persecution as part of the faithful life. This verse functions as a theological axiom grounding the entire chapter.
13. The Greek goetes ('impostors, sorcerers, charlatans') originally meant 'wailing ones' — referring to the incantations of sorcerers. The double participle planōntes kai planōmenoi ('deceiving and being deceived') captures the self-referential nature of deception: the deceivers are themselves deceived. This is not merely about bad actors but about a contagion of falsehood.
14. The Greek epistōthes ('have become convinced, have been assured') implies settled conviction, not mere intellectual acceptance. 'From whom' (para tinōn) is plural — Timothy learned from multiple sources: Paul, his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice (1:5). The appeal to personal relationships as a basis for trust in teaching is characteristic of the Pastoral Epistles.
15. The Greek ta hiera grammata ('the sacred writings') refers to the Hebrew Scriptures — the Torah, Prophets, and Writings that Timothy learned from his Jewish mother and grandmother. The word brephos ('infant, baby') indicates that Timothy's scriptural education began in earliest childhood. These writings accomplish their saving purpose 'through faith in Christ Jesus' — the Old Testament is not superseded but fulfilled.
16. The Greek theopneustos ('God-breathed') is a compound of theos ('God') and pneō ('to breathe, blow'). It appears nowhere else in the New Testament and may be Paul's own coinage. The word describes not the process by which Scripture was written but its character and origin — it carries God's breath, his life-giving and authoritative word. The KJV's 'given by inspiration of God' accurately conveys the meaning but obscures the vivid breath metaphor. The four uses of Scripture — teaching (didaskalia), reproof (elegmon), correction (epanorthōsin), and training in righteousness (paideian tēn en dikaiosynē) — cover both doctrine and ethics, both confrontation and formation.

17. The Greek *artios* ('complete, capable, proficient') does not mean sinless perfection but fitness for purpose. The related verb *exertismenos* ('equipped, fully furnished') reinforces the practical aim: Scripture is not given for abstract knowledge but to produce people capable of every good work. 'The person of God' (*ho tou theou anthropos*) is a title with Old Testament roots (applied to Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and others) now applied to the Christian minister.

4

Summary: *Paul delivers his most solemn charge to Timothy: preach the word in season and out of season, for a time is coming when people will accumulate teachers to suit their own desires. Paul then shifts to a deeply personal valediction — 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith' — announcing that his departure is at hand and a crown of righteousness awaits him. The chapter closes with personal requests and greetings: Demas has deserted, Luke alone is with him, Paul asks for Mark and for his cloak and scrolls left at Troas. He reports on Alexander the coppersmith's opposition and notes that at his first defense, no one stood with him — but the Lord stood by him and strengthened him.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter is widely regarded as Paul's final written words — a spiritual last will and testament. The triple declaration in verse 7 ('I have fought... finished... kept') uses three perfect tenses, each indicating completed action with ongoing results. The metaphors shift from combat (*agōn*) to athletics (*dromos*) to stewardship (*pistin*) in three staccato clauses. The personal details in verses 9-21 provide an unparalleled window into Paul's final circumstances: the paths of abandonment, the practicality of requesting a cloak for Roman winter, and the enduring importance of his scrolls (likely Scripture).*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'first defense' (*prōtē apologia*, v. 16) is debated — it may refer to a preliminary hearing in Paul's current trial or to his first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28). 'The lion's mouth' (v. 17) may be literal (the arena), figurative (Satan or Nero), or an allusion to Psalm 22:21. Alexander the coppersmith (v. 14) may or may not be the Alexander of 1 Timothy 1:20 or Acts 19:33. The 'scrolls, especially the parchments' (v. 13) likely refer to Old Testament Scriptures, though their exact contents are unknown.*

Connections: *The charge to 'preach the word' (v. 2) builds on the Scripture passage in 3:16-17. The 'crown of righteousness' (v. 8) connects to the athletic crown in 2:5 and the crowns in 1 Corinthians 9:25, James 1:12, and Revelation 2:10. Paul's abandonment at his trial (v. 16) echoes Jesus' experience in Gethsemane, and his prayer 'may it not be charged against them' echoes Stephen (Acts 7:60). The lion's mouth alludes to Psalm 22:21 and Daniel 6:22.*

1I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: 2Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. 3For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but, having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4They will turn away their ears from the truth, and will be turned to fables. 5As for you, be sober-minded in everything, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 6For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8From now on there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. 9Do your best to come to me soon. 10For Demas, in love with this present age, deserted me and went to Thessalonica. Crescens went to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. 12Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. 14Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. 15Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. 16At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! 17But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. 18The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. 19Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20Erast

us remained at Corinth, and I left Trophimus, who was ill, at Miletus. ²¹Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers and sisters. ²²The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *diamartyromai* ('I solemnly testify, I charge under oath') is the strongest form of adjuration available. The charge is issued before two witnesses: God and Christ Jesus. The phrase 'the living and the dead' (*zōntas kai nekrous*) encompasses all humanity across all time. 'His appearing' (*tēn epiphaneian*) and 'his kingdom' (*tēn basileian*) serve as the eschatological horizon that gives urgency to the charge.
2. Five imperatives in rapid succession create urgency: preach (*kēryxon*), be ready (*epistēthi*), reprove (*elegxon*), rebuke (*epitimēson*), exhort (*parakaleson*). The phrase 'in season and out of season' (*eukairōs akairōs*) means 'when it is convenient and when it is not' — the preacher does not wait for ideal conditions. The final phrase adds the necessary temperament: patience (*makrothymia*) and substance (*didachē*).
3. The medical metaphor *hygiainousēs didaskalias* ('sound/healthy teaching') recurs throughout the Pastoral Epistles — false teaching is a disease, sound teaching is health. The vivid image of 'itching ears' (*knēthomenoi tēn akoēn*) describes people who crave novelty and flattery rather than truth. The verb *episōreuousin* ('pile up, accumulate') suggests an excess of teachers — not quality but quantity, selected to validate existing desires.
4. The contrast is between truth (*alētheia*) and myths (*mythous*). The Greek *mythoi* in the Pastoral Epistles likely refers to speculative theological narratives — genealogical fantasies, proto-gnostic origin stories, or fanciful reinterpretations of Scripture (cf. 1 Tim 1:4, 4:7; Titus 1:14). The passive *ektrapēsontai* ('will be turned aside') suggests they are led astray rather than making a fully conscious choice.
5. Four more imperatives directed at Timothy: be sober (*nēphe*), suffer (*kakopathēson*), evangelize (*ergon poiēson euangelistou*), fulfill (*plērophorēson*). The term 'evangelist' (*euangelistou*) designates one who proclaims the good news — a role distinct from but overlapping with pastor and teacher (cf. Eph 4:11). 'Fulfill your ministry' (*tēn diakonian sou plērophorēson*) means to carry it to completion, leaving nothing undone.
6. The Greek *spondomai* ('I am being poured out as a libation') is a sacrificial metaphor — Paul's life is being poured out like the wine offering that accompanied temple sacrifices (Num 15:5-7; Phil 2:17). The word *analyseos* ('departure, loosing, breaking camp') is a euphemism for death drawn from military or nautical language — a ship being untied from port or an army breaking camp to march. Paul faces death not with dread but with the composure of a completed mission.
7. Three perfect tenses in succession — each denoting completed action with lasting results. The 'good fight' (*kalon agōna*) may refer to an athletic contest or military campaign. The 'race' (*dromon*) is a footrace — Paul has reached the finish line. 'Kept the faith' (*tēn pistin tetērēka*) carries a double sense: he has maintained personal trust in Christ and has guarded the deposit of apostolic teaching (cf. 1 Tim 6:20). This is perhaps the most quoted passage in the Pastoral Epistles.
8. The *stephanos* ('crown, wreath') is the victor's garland, not a royal diadem (*diadēma*). The genitive 'of righteousness' may mean the crown that consists of righteousness, the crown given for righteousness, or the crown awarded by the righteous judge. Paul immediately universalizes the promise: the crown belongs to 'all who have loved his appearing' (*tois ēgapēkosin tēn epiphaneian autou*) — not just apostles but every believer. The perfect participle *ēgapēkosin* ('have loved and continue to love') indicates an ongoing disposition.
9. The shift from theological grandeur to personal urgency is jarring and deeply human. Paul is alone, facing death, and wants Timothy beside him. The imperative *spoudason* ('be diligent, hurry') conveys genuine urgency.
10. Demas is mentioned positively in Colossians 4:14 and Philemon 24 but here has 'loved this present age' (*agapēsas ton nyn aiōna*) — the same verb used of those who 'loved his appearing' in verse 8, creating a painful contrast. Crescens and Titus apparently left on legitimate missions (no negative language is used), unlike Demas who deserted (*egkatelipen*, 'abandoned').
11. Luke the physician (Col 4:14) — traditionally the author of the Gospel of Luke and Acts — is Paul's sole remaining companion. The request for Mark (John Mark) represents a remarkable reconciliation: Paul had refused to take Mark on the second missionary journey because Mark had deserted them earlier (Acts 15:37-39). Now Paul calls him *euchrēstos* ('useful, serviceable') — the same root as the name Onesimus ('useful') in Philemon.
12. Tychicus was Paul's trusted envoy, mentioned in Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7, and Titus 3:12. He may have carried this very letter and was likely sent to relieve Timothy so Timothy could travel to Paul in Rome.
13. The *phailonēn* ('cloak') was a heavy outer garment needed for a Roman winter (cf. v. 21). The request is poignantly practical — Paul is cold. The *biblia* ('books, scrolls') were likely papyrus rolls, and the *membranas* ('parchments') were animal-skin documents — possibly Old Testament Scriptures, legal documents, or Paul's own notes. The distinction between papyrus and parchment suggests different types of documents. This verse provides a rare glimpse into the material conditions of Paul's imprisonment.
14. The identification 'the coppersmith' (*ho chalkeus*) distinguishes this Alexander from others with the same common name. His 'great harm' (*polla kaka*) may have been testimony against Paul at trial. Paul does not curse Alexander but commits judgment to the Lord — echoing Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12. The future *apodōsei* ('will repay') expresses confident trust in divine justice.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 62:12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Proverbs 24:12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The warning to Timothy suggests Alexander may still be active and dangerous. The phrase *tois hēmeterois logois* ('our words') could mean Paul's legal defense or the apostolic message more broadly.
16. The *apologia* ('defense') is a legal term for a formal defense in court. The abandonment by 'all' (*pantes*) parallels Jesus' experience when the disciples fled (Matt 26:56). Paul's prayer — *mē autois logistheîē* ('may it not be reckoned to them') — echoes Stephen's dying prayer (Acts 7:60) and Jesus' words from the cross (Luke 23:34). The optative mood (*logistheîē*) expresses a genuine wish.
17. The contrast is stark: all human companions deserted, but the Lord stood by (*parestē*) — the very verb used for human support in the previous verse. The purpose of divine strengthening was not personal comfort but mission completion: full proclamation (*plērophorēthē*) to all nations (*panta ta ethnē*). The 'lion's mouth' (*stomatos leontos*) most likely alludes to Psalm 22:21 and may refer to the immediate threat of execution, to Nero, or to Satan (cf. 1 Pet 5:8).
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 22:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. Paul's confidence in rescue (*rhysetai*, future tense) is not necessarily about avoiding physical death — it is about deliverance from spiritual defeat. The ultimate salvation is entrance into 'his heavenly kingdom' (*tēn basileian autou tēn epouranion*). The doxology ('to him be the glory forever and ever, amen') follows the standard form of Jewish and early Christian praise, closing this section of the letter with worship.
19. Prisca (the formal name; Priscilla is the diminutive used in Acts) and Aquila were Paul's co-workers and hosts (Acts 18:2-3, Rom 16:3-4). The 'household of Onesiphorus' (rather than Onesiphorus himself) has led some scholars to conclude that Onesiphorus had died — Paul commended his past service in 1:16-18. However, this is not certain.
20. Erastus may be the city treasurer of Corinth mentioned in Romans 16:23. Trophimus was the Ephesian companion whose presence with Paul in Jerusalem triggered the riot in Acts 21:29. The detail that Paul left Trophimus ill (*asthenounta*) is significant — even Paul, who had healed others, did not always exercise miraculous healing.
21. The urgency 'before winter' (*pro cheimōnos*) is practical — sea travel ceased during winter, and Paul needed his cloak (v. 13). But it also carries the unspoken weight of Paul's limited time. Linus is traditionally identified as the first bishop of Rome after Peter. 'The brothers and sisters' (*hoi adelphoi*) uses the masculine plural inclusively, as is standard in Greek.
22. The closing benediction has two parts: a singular address to Timothy ('your spirit,' *sou*) and a plural blessing on the community ('with you,' *hymōn*). The shift from singular to plural suggests the letter, while personal, was also meant to be read in the congregation. The SBLGNT does not include 'Amen' in the closing, which appears in some later manuscripts. This is Paul's final recorded word: grace.

Titus

1

Summary: *Paul opens his letter to Titus with a dense theological greeting that grounds apostolic authority in God's promise of eternal life 'before the ages began.' He then addresses the reason Titus was left in Crete: to appoint elders in every town. Paul provides qualifications for these leaders — blameless character, faithful family, and sound doctrine — before turning to the specific problem on Crete: insubordinate people, especially from the circumcision party, who are disrupting whole households for dishonest gain. Paul quotes a Cretan prophet (Epimenides) — 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons' — and affirms the assessment, urging Titus to rebuke them sharply so they may be sound in the faith.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The opening sentence (vv. 1-4) is one of the longest and most theologically compressed in the Pauline corpus, containing Paul's self-designation, God's pre-temporal promise, the revelation of the word through preaching, and the address to Titus — all in a single Greek sentence. The quotation of Epimenides (v. 12) is extraordinary: Paul cites a pagan poet-prophet and calls him a 'prophet of their own' (idios autōn prophētēs), granting a measure of truthful authority to a non-Israelite voice. This creates the famous 'liar paradox' — if a Cretan says all Cretans are liars, is the statement itself a lie?*

Translation Friction: *The elder/overseer terminology (presbyteros/episkopos) appears interchangeable in this passage, which has implications for church governance debates. Paul begins with 'elder' (v. 5) and shifts to 'overseer' (v. 7) without distinction. The Epimenides quotation raises questions about Paul's use of pagan literature and cultural stereotyping — he applies a broad ethnic generalization to a specific theological problem. We render the text as given without softening or qualifying Paul's argument.*

Connections: *The elder qualifications parallel 1 Timothy 3:1-7 closely but are adapted for the Cretan context. The 'circumcision party' (v. 10) connects to the controversy in Galatians 2:12 and Acts 15. The pre-temporal promise (v. 2) echoes Romans 16:25-26 and Ephesians 1:4. The Epimenides quotation is one of three pagan citations in Paul (cf. Acts 17:28, 1 Cor 15:33).*

¹Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that accords with godliness, ²In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the present age began;. ³However, has in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed to me in keeping with to the commandment of God our Saviour;. ⁴Indeed, to Titus, mine own son following the common faith — Grace, mercy, and peace,

from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. ⁵This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you — ⁶An elder must be above reproach, faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who are not wild or disobedient. ⁷For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, ⁸However, a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate. ⁹He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able both to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it. ¹⁰For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. ¹¹They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole households by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. ¹²One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." ¹³This witness is true. For this reason rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;. ¹⁴Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of people, that redirect from the what is genuine. ¹⁵To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; both their minds and their consciences are defiled. ¹⁶They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul identifies himself as both 'servant of God' (doulos theou) — a designation shared with Moses, David, and the prophets — and 'apostle of Jesus Christ.' The dual title grounds his authority in both the Old Testament heritage and the new apostolic commission. The phrase kat' eusebeian ('according to godliness') links knowledge of truth inseparably to reverent living.
2. The Greek apseudēs ('without falsehood, who never lies') is a hapax legomenon in the New Testament, applied to God as the one whose character makes deception impossible. The phrase pro chronōn aiōniōn ('before eternal times') places God's promise in eternity past — before creation, before history, the plan of salvation was already determined.
3. The shift from eternal promise (v. 2) to historical manifestation (v. 3) spans the entire sweep of redemptive history: what God purposed before time, he revealed in time. The title 'God our Savior' (tou sōtēros hēmōn theou) is distinctive to the Pastoral Epistles and applies 'Savior' directly to God the Father, not only to Christ — a pattern that alternates throughout Titus.
4. The Greek gnēsiō teknō ('true, legitimate child') indicates that Paul was instrumental in Titus's conversion. The phrase kata koinēn pistin ('according to a shared faith') emphasizes that their bond is not ethnic or biological but rooted in the same gospel. The SBLGNT reads 'grace and peace' without 'mercy' (eleos), which appears in some manuscripts. Now 'Savior' (sōtēros) is applied to Christ Jesus — the alternation with 'God our Savior' (v. 3) is deliberate throughout Titus.
5. Paul's departure from Crete is not recorded in Acts, suggesting this letter was written during a period of ministry not covered by Acts (possibly after a release from the first Roman imprisonment). The verb epidiorthōsē ('set right, put in order') implies that the church organization on Crete was incomplete. The instruction to appoint elders (presbyterous) 'in every town' (kata polin) indicates multiple congregations across the island.
6. The qualification 'above reproach' (anengklētos, 'not able to be called to account') sets the baseline. 'Husband of one wife' (mias gynaikos anēr) is debated — it may prohibit polygamy, remarriage after divorce, or remarriage after a spouse's death, or it may more broadly require marital faithfulness. The children must be pista ('faithful, believing') — the expectation is that an elder's household reflects his leadership capacity.
7. The shift from 'elder' (presbyteros, v. 5) to 'overseer' (episkopos, v. 7) without distinction indicates that these are the same office described from different angles — presbyteros emphasizing seniority and episkopos emphasizing function. The five negatives (not arrogant, not quick-tempered, not a drunkard, not violent, not greedy) describe the vices an overseer must not have, paralleling the positive qualities that follow.
8. Six positive virtues replace the five negatives: hospitable (philoxenon, 'loving strangers'), lover of good (philagathon), self-controlled (sōphrona), upright (dikaion), holy (hosion), and disciplined (enkratē). The pairing of phil- compounds (philoxenon, philagathon) echoes the vice catalogue in 2 Timothy 3:2-4 where disordered phil- words describe the wicked.
9. The capstone qualification is doctrinal: the elder must hold firm (antechomenon, 'cling to') the faithful word. This has a dual purpose: positive instruction (parakalein, 'exhort, encourage') and negative correction (elegchein, 'rebuke, convict'). The phrase didaskalia hygiainousa ('sound/healthy doctrine') is the medical metaphor characteristic of the Pastoral Epistles.
10. The 'circumcision party' (hoi ek tēs peritomēs) refers to Jewish Christians who insisted on Torah observance (including circumcision) as necessary for Gentile believers — the same faction opposed in Galatians and Acts 15. The three descriptors — insubordinate (anypotaktoi), empty talkers (mataiologoi), and deceivers (phrenapitai, 'mind-deceivers') — escalate from disobedience to delusion.
11. The Greek epistomizein ('to stop the mouth, to muzzle, to silence') is vivid — these teachers must be gagged. The damage is domestic: 'whole households' (holous oikous) are being overturned (anatrepousin). The motive is financial — aischrou kerdous charin ('for the sake of shameful gain'). The combination of theological error and financial exploitation characterizes the false teachers throughout the Pastoral Epistles.

12. The quotation is attributed to Epimenides of Knossos (c. 6th century BC), a semi-legendary Cretan poet-prophet. Paul calls him 'a prophet of their own' (idios autōn prophētēs), granting a degree of prophetic authority to a pagan voice — similar to his citation of Aratus in Acts 17:28. The three charges — liars (pseustai), evil beasts (kaka thēria), and lazy gluttons (gasteres argai, literally 'idle bellies') — are harsh by modern standards but serve Paul's rhetorical purpose.
13. Paul's endorsement — 'this testimony is true' (hē martyria hautē estin alēthēs) — has troubled commentators. Paul is not making a universal ethnic claim but using the Cretan poet's words to describe the specific false teachers at work in the Cretan churches. The adverb apotomōs ('sharply, severely') is from a root meaning 'to cut' — the rebuke must be surgical, aimed at restoring health (hygiainōsin, 'may be healthy/sound').
14. The 'Jewish myths' (Ioudaikois mythois) likely refer to speculative elaborations on Old Testament genealogies and narratives (cf. 1 Tim 1:4, 4:7). The 'commands of people' (entolais anthrōpōn) echoes Isaiah 29:13 (cited by Jesus in Mark 7:7) — human religious regulations that replace divine truth.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 29:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. This proverbial statement (panta kathara tois katharais) addresses the food laws and purity regulations the circumcision party was imposing. It echoes Jesus' teaching in Mark 7:15-19 and Paul's argument in Romans 14:14, 20. The principle is that purity is a matter of internal disposition, not external regulation. For the defiled (memiammenois), the corruption is total — both mind (nous) and conscience (syneidēsis) are contaminated.
16. The chapter ends with a devastating verdict: verbal profession of God (homologousin eidenai) is contradicted by behavioral denial (tois ergois amountai). The three final adjectives — detestable (bdelyktoi, a term for ritual abomination), disobedient (apeitheis), and disqualified (adokimoi, 'failing the test') — are especially ironic for people who claim special knowledge of God's requirements. The term adokimoi echoes 2 Timothy 3:8 and directly opposes the 'approved' (dokimos) worker of 2 Timothy 2:15.

2

Summary: *Paul instructs Titus to teach what accords with sound doctrine, then specifies age- and gender-appropriate exhortations: older men are to be temperate and sound in faith; older women are to be reverent and train the younger women in domestic virtues; younger men are to be self-controlled, with Titus himself as a model. The chapter then soars into one of the New Testament's most concentrated theological passages: 'The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good works.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verses 11-14 constitute one of the densest christological and soteriological passages in the Pastoral Epistles. The phrase 'our great God and Savior Jesus Christ' (v. 13) is one of the clearest New Testament affirmations of Christ's deity, applying both 'God' and 'Savior' to Jesus in a single construction (the Granville Sharp rule in Greek grammar). Grace is personified as a teacher (paideuousa, v. 12) — the same grace that saves also trains. The tension between 'has appeared' (v. 11, first coming) and 'the appearing' (v. 13, second coming) structures Christian existence as life between two epiphanies.*

Translation Friction: *The household instructions in verses 2-10 reflect first-century social structures, particularly regarding women's roles. We render the Greek accurately without either modernizing or amplifying the cultural specifics. The phrase 'our great God and Savior Jesus Christ' (v. 13) is grammatically ambiguous — it could refer to one person (Jesus Christ who is both God and Savior) or two persons (God the Father and Jesus Christ the Savior). The Granville Sharp construction strongly favors the single-referent reading, which we adopt. The instruction for slaves (vv. 9-10) is rendered faithfully; Paul addresses the social reality without endorsing slavery as an institution.*

Connections: *The grace epiphany (vv. 11-14) parallels Titus 3:4-7 in structure and theology. The 'blessed hope' connects to Romans 8:23-25 and 1 Corinthians 15:51-52. Christ's self-giving 'to redeem us from all lawlessness' (v. 14) echoes Psalm 130:8 and Ezekiel 37:23. The phrase 'a people of his own' (laon periousion) quotes the Septuagint of Exodus 19:5 and Deuteronomy 14:2, applying Israel's covenant identity to the church.*

¹But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. ²Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in endurance. ³Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, ⁴That they may instruct the youthful women to be sober, to devotion their

husbands, to devotion their children,. ⁵to be self-controlled, pure, attentive to their homes, kind, and respectful toward their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be discredited. ⁶Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. ⁷Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, ⁸Use wholesome speech that cannot be criticized, so that any opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us. ⁹Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, ¹⁰Not purloining, but shewing all upright fidelity. That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all matters. ¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹²It teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age. ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴Who offered himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar those present, zealous of good deeds. ¹⁵Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The contrast with the false teachers of chapter 1 is marked by the emphatic 'you' (sy de). The verb lalei ('speak, teach') combined with prepei ('is fitting, accords with') demands that teaching content match doctrinal health. The medical metaphor *hygiainousē didaskalia* ('sound/healthy doctrine') continues from 1:9.
2. The Greek *presbytas* ('older men') refers to age, not the office of elder (*presbyteros*). The three character traits (sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled) are followed by three spheres of health: faith (*pistei*), love (*agapē*), and endurance (*hypomonē*). The medical metaphor appears again: *hygiainontas* ('being healthy/sound') in these three areas.
3. The Greek *hieroprepes* ('reverent, befitting a sacred person') literally means 'fitting for a temple' — older women are to carry themselves with priestly dignity. The prohibition against being diabolous ('slandorous') uses the same word as 'devil' — gossip makes one an agent of the accuser. The positive role *kalodidaskalous* ('teachers of good things') establishes older women as authorized teachers within the community.
4. The verb *sōphronizōsin* ('train, bring to their senses, encourage') implies practical mentoring, not merely theoretical instruction. The two *phil-* compounds — *philandrous* ('husband-loving') and *philoteknous* ('children-loving') — place domestic relationships at the center of the younger women's formation. This is mentorship by example, not classroom instruction.
5. The purpose clause — 'that the word of God may not be reviled' (*hina mē ho logos tou theou blasphēmētai*) — reveals the missional logic behind the instruction. In a Roman context where Christianity was already suspect, household disorder would bring public disgrace on the gospel. The Greek *oikourgous* ('working at home, managing the household') describes domestic productivity and management, not mere confinement.
6. The brevity is striking — younger men receive a single instruction: *sōphronein* ('to be self-controlled'). Self-control (*sōphrosynē*) is the virtue most frequently mentioned in this chapter, appearing in some form in verses 2, 4, 5, 6, and 12. It is the master virtue for the Cretan context.
7. Titus himself must be the *typon* ('pattern, model, example') — teaching is authenticated by the teacher's life. The qualities listed — *aphthorian* ('integrity, incorruptibility') and *semnotēta* ('dignity, gravity') — apply to both the content and the manner of his teaching.
8. The goal is apologetic: sound speech (*logon hygiē*) that is beyond condemnation (*akatagnōston*) removes ammunition from opponents. The Greek *entrapē* ('may be put to shame') describes the silencing of critics who can find no legitimate charge — a missional strategy through irreproachable conduct and teaching.
9. The Greek *doulous* ('slaves, bondservants') addresses the large enslaved population in the Roman world. Paul's instructions operate within the existing social structure while transforming the slave's motivation — as the next verse shows, the purpose is 'to adorn the doctrine of God.' Paul does not explicitly endorse or condemn the institution here; the Pastoral Epistles focus on conduct within existing circumstances.
10. The verb *kosmōsin* ('may adorn, may decorate') gives the passage its striking theological image: faithful living beautifies doctrine. The Christian slave's trustworthiness is not mere compliance but a form of witness — making the gospel attractive (*kosmos*, from which 'cosmetic' derives). 'God our Savior' (*tou sōtēros hēmōn theou*) applies the Savior title to God the Father, continuing the alternation noted throughout the letter.
11. The verb *epephanē* ('has appeared, has been manifested') is the root of 'epiphany' — grace arrived in history as a visible event, primarily in the incarnation and work of Christ. The adjective *sōtērios* ('saving, bringing salvation') modifies grace — grace itself is the saving agent. 'All people' (*pasin anthrōpois*) declares the universal scope of God's saving purpose, though the Pastoral Epistles do not thereby teach automatic universalism.
12. Grace is personified as a trainer (*paideuōsa*, from *paideuō* — 'to train, educate, discipline a child'). The same grace that saves also forms character. The training has two dimensions: negative (renouncing ungodliness and worldly passions) and positive (living with self-control, justice, and piety). The three adverbs — *sōphronōs* (self-controlled), *dikaiōs* (uprightly), *eusebōs* (godly) — correspond to one's relationship to self, neighbor, and God respectively.
13. The phrase *tou megalou theou kai sōtēros hēmōn Iēsou Christou* ('of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ') applies both titles — 'great God' and 'Savior' — to Jesus Christ. The Granville Sharp rule in Greek grammar (a single article governing two nouns joined by *kai* where the first noun is not

a proper name) indicates a single referent. This is among the most explicit New Testament affirmations of Christ's deity. The 'blessed hope' (makarian elpida) is the second epiphany — Christ's return in glory — which creates the frame: life between two appearances.

14. Christ's self-giving (edōken heauton) has a double purpose: redemption from lawlessness (lytrosētai, 'to ransom, to liberate by payment') and purification of a people. The phrase laon periousion ('a people for his own possession') directly quotes the Septuagint of Exodus 19:5 and Deuteronomy 14:2 — Israel's covenant identity is now applied to the church. 'Zealous for good works' (zēlōtēn kalōn ergōn) connects the doctrinal heights of verses 11-14 back to the practical ethics of the entire chapter.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 19:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 14:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. Three imperatives — speak (lalei), exhort (parakalei), rebuke (elegche) — cover the full range of pastoral communication. The phrase meta pasēs epitagēs ('with all authority') underscores that Titus acts with apostolic delegation. The final command — mēdeis sou periphronēitō ('let no one think around you, let no one disregard you') — parallels 1 Timothy 4:12 and indicates that Titus, like Timothy, may have faced challenges to his authority.

3

Summary: *Paul instructs Titus to remind the Cretan believers to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be ready for every good work, and to speak evil of no one. He grounds this ethical instruction in a stunning theological statement: God saved us not because of works done in righteousness but according to his own mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior — so that, being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Paul identifies this as a 'trustworthy saying' and urges Titus to insist on it. He warns against foolish controversies and genealogies, instructs Titus on handling divisive persons, shares travel plans, and closes with greetings.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verses 4-7 form the second great soteriological passage in Titus (paired with 2:11-14). Together they constitute a comprehensive summary of salvation: its source (God's mercy and kindness), its means (the washing of regeneration and the Holy Spirit), its agent (Jesus Christ our Savior), its legal basis (justification by grace), and its goal (becoming heirs of eternal life). The phrase 'washing of regeneration' (lutron palingenesias) is unique in the New Testament and has been central to baptismal theology since the earliest centuries. The word palingenesia ('regeneration, new birth, new creation') appears only here and in Matthew 19:28.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between 'washing of regeneration' and water baptism is debated. The language strongly evokes baptism but may describe spiritual regeneration symbolized by baptism rather than baptismal regeneration per se. We render the Greek without resolving the theological debate. The 'trustworthy saying' formula (pistos ho logos, v. 8) is the fifth and final occurrence in the Pastoral Epistles — whether it introduces or concludes the theological statement is debated. The instruction to reject a 'divisive person' after two warnings (v. 10) has shaped church discipline practices throughout history.*

Connections: *The salvation summary (vv. 4-7) parallels Titus 2:11-14, Ephesians 2:4-10, and Romans 3:21-26 in structure. The 'washing of regeneration' connects to John 3:5, Ezekiel 36:25-27, and the baptismal imagery of Romans 6:3-4. The 'pouring out' of the Spirit echoes Joel 2:28 (Acts 2:17) and Pentecost. The 'trustworthy saying' formula links to 1 Timothy 1:15, 3:1, 4:9, and 2 Timothy 2:11. The rejection of a factious person connects to Matthew 18:15-17.*

¹Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, ²To talk wicked of no person, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness to all people. ³For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. ⁴But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but in keeping with to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit; ⁶God poured out the Spirit on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷That while justified by his grace, we should be fashioned heirs according to the confident expectation of eternal life. ⁸The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. ⁹But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies,

dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. ¹⁰As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, ¹¹Being aware that he that is these people is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. ¹²When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. ¹³Do your best to speed Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way; see that they lack nothing. ¹⁴And let our people learn to devote themselves to good works, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful. ¹⁵All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek archais exousiais ('rulers and authorities') refers to civil government, not spiritual powers (as in Eph 6:12). The Cretan churches needed this instruction because the false teachers' insubordination (1:10) may have extended to civic life. The phrase 'every good work' (pan ergon agathon) recurs throughout the Pastoral Epistles as a summary of the Christian life's practical aim.
2. The scope is universal: 'no one' (mēdena) and 'all people' (pantas anthrōpous) — Christian conduct is not reserved for fellow believers but extends to everyone. The Greek epieikeis ('gentle, yielding, gracious') describes a quality that does not insist on its strict rights — the opposite of the combative false teachers.
3. Paul includes himself ('we ourselves,' hēmeis) in the pre-conversion portrait — this is not self-righteous judgment but shared confession. The catalogue of seven vices describes the human condition apart from grace: intellectual darkness (anoētoi), rebellion (apeitheis), deception (planōmenoi), slavery to desire (douleuontes), malice (kakia), envy (phthonos), and mutual hatred (misountes allēlous). This dark backdrop makes the light of verses 4-7 all the more brilliant.
4. The 'but' (de) marks the decisive turn from human depravity to divine initiative. Two divine attributes — chrēstotēs ('goodness, kindness') and philanthrōpia ('love for humanity, benevolence') — are the source of salvation. The word philanthrōpia (literally 'love of human beings') is the root of English 'philanthropy.' Once again, epephanē ('appeared') describes God's saving act as a visible, historical manifestation — paralleling 2:11.
5. The denial is categorical: 'not from works in righteousness which we did' (ouk ex ergōn tōn en dikaiosynē ha epoiēsamen hēmeis). Salvation is kata to autou eleos ('according to his mercy') — entirely God's initiative. The phrase loutrou palingenesias ('washing of regeneration') combines baptismal imagery with the concept of new birth/new creation. The word palingenesia (palin + genesis, 'again + origin') occurs only here and in Matthew 19:28 (where it refers to cosmic renewal). 'Renewal of the Holy Spirit' (anakainōseōs pneumatōs hagiou) describes the Spirit's work of making all things new — echoing Ezekiel 36:25-27.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ezekiel 36:25-27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The verb execheen ('poured out') echoes Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:17-18 — Pentecost language applied to every believer's experience of the Spirit. The adverb plousiōs ('richly, abundantly') emphasizes the lavish generosity of God's gift. 'Through Jesus Christ our Savior' (dia Iēsou Christou tou sōtēros hēmōn) places Christ as the mediator of the Spirit's outpouring — the Savior title now returns to Christ (cf. v. 4 where it applied to God the Father).
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Joel 2:28. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The sequence is complete: saved by mercy (v. 5), renewed by the Spirit (vv. 5-6), justified by grace (v. 7), and constituted as heirs (klēronomoi) of eternal life. Justification (dikaiothentes, 'having been declared righteous') is by grace (tē ekeinou chariti), not by works (v. 5). The inheritance language connects to the Old Testament land promise now transformed into 'the hope of eternal life' (kat' elpida zōēs aiōniou) — the same phrase that opened the letter (1:2).
8. The fifth and final 'trustworthy saying' (pistos ho logos) in the Pastoral Epistles likely refers back to verses 4-7. Paul's instruction to 'insist' (diabebaiousthai, 'affirm confidently, speak with certainty') shows that doctrine must be taught with conviction. The purpose is practical: believers are to 'devote themselves to good works' (kalōn ergōn proistasthai). Sound theology produces good works — the connection is causal, not coincidental.
9. The contrast with the 'profitable' things of verse 8 is explicit: these controversies are anōpheleis ('unprofitable, useless') and mataioi ('worthless, futile'). The 'genealogies' (genealogias) likely refer to speculative expansions of Old Testament genealogies — a feature of early Jewish and proto-gnostic speculation. 'Quarrels about the law' (machas nomikas) specify that the circumcision party (1:10) is still in view.
10. The Greek hairētikon ('divisive, factious, heretical') is the source of English 'heretic,' but its primary sense here is 'one who creates factions' rather than the later technical meaning of doctrinal heresy. The two-warning process before rejection shows that the goal is correction, not punishment — only persistent divisiveness warrants exclusion. This parallels the two-or-three-witness principle in Matthew 18:15-17 and Deuteronomy 19:15.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 19:15 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The Greek exēstraptai ('has been turned inside out, has been perverted') is a perfect passive — the person's distortion is established and ongoing. The striking word autokatakrites ('self-condemned') appears only here in the New Testament. The divisive person's continued factious behavior after two warnings constitutes his own verdict — no external judgment is needed because his actions condemn him.

12. Artemas is mentioned only here in the New Testament. Tychicus appears in Acts 20:4, Ephesians 6:21, Colossians 4:7, and 2 Timothy 4:12. One of them will replace Titus on Crete so Titus can join Paul. Nicopolis ('victory city') — most likely the city in Epirus, on the western coast of Greece — was a common winter destination. Paul's travel plans indicate this letter was written before the final Roman imprisonment.
13. Zenas is called 'the lawyer' (ton nomikon) — possibly an expert in Jewish law or Roman law. He appears only here. Apollos is the well-known Alexandrian teacher of Acts 18:24-28 and 1 Corinthians 1:12. 'Speed on their way' (propempson) is a technical term for providing travelers with supplies and assistance for their journey — an early form of missionary support.
14. The phrase 'our people' (hoi hēmeteroi) refers to the Cretan believers. The instruction to 'devote themselves to good works' (kalōn ergōn proistasthai) repeats the language of verse 8 — the letter ends where it has been pointing throughout. The fruit metaphor (mē ōsin akarpoi, 'not be unfruitful') connects to Jesus' vine imagery (John 15:2, 4, 8) and the broader New Testament expectation that faith produces visible results.
15. The closing follows standard Pauline form: greetings from companions, greetings to the community, and a grace benediction. 'Those who love us in the faith' (tous philountas hēmas en pistei) specifies that the love is grounded in shared faith — this is not generic well-wishing but community solidarity. The final word is charis ('grace') — the same grace that appeared in 2:11 and saved in 3:5 now accompanies the community as Paul's parting gift. The SBLGNT does not include 'Amen,' which appears in some later manuscripts.

Philemon

Summary: *Paul writes from prison to Philemon, a wealthy Christian in Colossae, on behalf of Onesimus — Philemon's runaway slave who has become a believer through Paul's ministry. Paul appeals not by apostolic authority but by love, asking Philemon to receive Onesimus back 'no longer as a slave but as a beloved brother.' He offers to repay any debt Onesimus owes, subtly reminds Philemon of his own spiritual debt to Paul, and expresses confidence that Philemon will do even more than Paul asks. The letter is a masterpiece of pastoral rhetoric, applying the gospel of reconciliation to a concrete social situation.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Philemon is the shortest of Paul's letters and the most personal. It contains no doctrinal exposition, no church controversy, and no prophecy — yet it demonstrates the gospel's power to transform human relationships more vividly than any theological treatise. Paul's rhetorical strategy is extraordinarily sophisticated: he begins with praise (vv. 4-7), establishes the basis for his appeal as love rather than authority (vv. 8-9), reveals Onesimus's new identity in Christ (vv. 10-16), makes a concrete financial offer (vv. 17-19), and applies gentle pressure through expressed confidence (vv. 20-21). The pivotal verse — 'no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother' (v. 16) — does not explicitly command manumission but creates a framework in which continued enslavement becomes morally impossible. The letter's inclusion in the canon testifies to the early church's recognition that the gospel must address the most ordinary and difficult human situations.*

Translation Friction: *Paul does not explicitly command Philemon to free Onesimus. This silence has been debated for centuries: some see Paul as accommodating slavery, others see the letter as an implicit but devastating case for manumission. We render the Greek without resolving this debate, noting Paul's careful rhetoric in the translator notes. The legal situation of Onesimus is also debated — he may have been a fugitive slave (the traditional reading) or a slave sent by Philemon who overstayed his mission. The phrase 'separated from you' (v. 15) is more neutral than 'ran away.'*

Connections: *Onesimus and the other figures appear in Colossians 4:9-17, linking these two letters. The reconciliation theme echoes 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 — God's ministry of reconciliation is now applied horizontally between master and slave. Paul's offer to absorb Onesimus's debt (v. 18) mirrors Christ's substitutionary work. The letter's rhetorical structure parallels ancient letters of intercession (e.g., Pliny's letters to Sabinianus on behalf of a freedman).*

¹Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved fellow worker, ²To our dear Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in your home:.. ³From god our father and the lord jesus christ, grace to you, and peace. ⁴I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, ⁵Listening of your love and faith, which you have toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints. ⁶I pray that your partnership in the faith will become effective as you come to understand every good thing we share in Christ Jesus. ⁷For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you. ⁸Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, ⁹Yet for love's sake I instead beseech you, being these people an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. ¹⁰I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. ¹¹Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me. ¹²I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. ¹³I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the gospel, ¹⁴However, without your mind would I do nothing. That your benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. ¹⁵For this perhaps is why he was separated from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, ¹⁶Indeed, not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother dear, specially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? ¹⁷So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. ¹⁸If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. ¹⁹I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it — to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. ²⁰Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. ²²At the same time, prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping that through your prayers I will be graciously given to you. ²³Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings, ²⁴Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers. ²⁵The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Paul identifies himself not as an apostle but as a 'prisoner' (desmios) — a deliberate rhetorical choice. The appeal that follows will be made from the position of one who has already sacrificed his freedom for the gospel, not from a position of institutional authority. Philemon is called 'beloved' (agapētō) and 'fellow worker' (synergō) — terms that establish the relationship as one of mutual respect and shared mission before the request is made.
2. Apphia is likely Philemon's wife and Archippus possibly their son (cf. Colossians 4:17). By addressing the letter not only to Philemon but to his household and the entire house church, Paul ensures that the appeal is not merely private — the community will hear it and hold Philemon accountable. The 'church in your house' (tē kat' oikon sou ekklēsia) confirms that early Christian assemblies met in private homes.
3. The standard Pauline greeting. The plural 'you' (hymen) addresses the entire group named in verses 1-2, though the letter's content primarily concerns Philemon.
4. The thanksgiving section (vv. 4-7) is the rhetorical foundation for the appeal. Paul establishes Philemon's character as generous and faithful before asking him to live up to that reputation. The phrase 'my God' (tō theō mou) is warmly personal.
5. Paul has heard reports of Philemon's love and faith — the two qualities that the forthcoming appeal will test. The structure may be a chiasm (ABBA): love—faith—Lord Jesus—all the saints, yielding faith toward the Lord Jesus and love toward all the saints. This reading connects the appeal: if Philemon loves 'all the saints,' that must now include Onesimus.
6. This verse is notoriously difficult to translate. The word koinōnia ('sharing, partnership, fellowship') may refer to Philemon's generosity, his evangelistic witness, or the mutual participation of faith. Paul prays that this koinōnia will become 'effective' (energēs, 'active, productive') through recognition (epignōsei) of every good thing in the community. The prayer subtly sets up the appeal: if Philemon can recognize the good that Christ produces in people, he will see that good in Onesimus.
7. The word splanchna ('hearts,' literally 'inner organs, intestines') appears three times in this short letter (vv. 7, 12, 20), forming a verbal thread. Philemon has 'refreshed' (anapepautai, 'given rest to, renewed') the hearts of believers — Paul will soon ask him to refresh Paul's own heart (v. 20) by receiving Onesimus. The affectionate address 'brother' (adelphē) at the end of the sentence sets the emotional tone for what follows.
8. Paul's rhetoric is masterful: he mentions his right to command (epitassein, 'to order, to give authoritative instructions') precisely so he can renounce it. By stating what he could do but choosing not to, he makes the appeal more powerful — Philemon's response will be a free act of love rather than coerced compliance. The word anēkon ('what is fitting, what is proper, what is required') implies that what Paul asks is not optional but morally necessary.

9. The word *parakalō* ('I appeal, I urge, I encourage') replaces the command language of verse 8. Paul grounds his appeal in love (*agapēn*), not authority. He adds two qualifications designed to evoke compassion: he is a *presbyteros* ('old man' or possibly 'ambassador' — the words *presbyteros* and *presbutēs* differ by one letter, and some manuscripts read the latter) and a prisoner (*desmios*). The em-dashes set off this self-description as an emotional aside.
10. Paul delays naming Onesimus until the end of the sentence — a deliberate rhetorical strategy. Before Philemon hears the slave's name, he hears 'my child' (*tou emou teknou*), establishing the relationship. The verb *egennēsa* ('I fathered, I begot') indicates Paul led Onesimus to faith during his imprisonment. The name *Onēsīmon* ('useful, profitable') will be punned on in the next verse.
11. Paul plays on Onesimus's name (*Onēsīmos*, 'useful, beneficial'): the one whose name means 'useful' was once *achrēston* ('useless') but is now *euchrēston* ('very useful'). There may also be a further pun: *achrēstos* sounds like a-Christos ('without Christ'), and *euchrēstos* sounds like eu-Christos ('good in Christ'). The transformation from useless to useful encapsulates the gospel's power to change a person's identity and value.
12. The second use of *splanchna* ('heart, inner being') is the most emotionally charged: in sending Onesimus back, Paul is sending his own heart. The identification is complete — Onesimus is not merely a protege but an extension of Paul's own person. Any treatment of Onesimus will be experienced by Paul himself. The SBLGNT does not include 'receive him' (*proslabou*), which appears in some manuscripts.
13. Paul states his preference — he wanted to keep Onesimus — but immediately subordinates it to Philemon's rights. The phrase 'on your behalf' (*hyper sou*) is significant: Onesimus's service to Paul would have been a proxy for Philemon's own service. Paul frames Onesimus's presence as a gift from Philemon, not as his own possession.
14. The contrast between *anankē* ('compulsion, necessity') and *hekousion* ('voluntary, of one's own accord') is the letter's ethical crux. Paul could have kept Onesimus and presented Philemon with a *fait accompli*. Instead, he preserves Philemon's moral agency — the right response must be freely chosen to have moral value. This principle reflects Paul's broader theology of grace: God does not coerce love but invites it.
15. The verb *echōristhē* ('he was separated') uses the divine passive — avoiding the harsh 'he ran away' and suggesting that God's providence was at work in the separation. The adverb *tacha* ('perhaps') shows appropriate tentativeness about reading divine purpose into events. The contrast between 'for a while' (*pros hōran*, literally 'for an hour') and 'forever' (*aiōnion*) reframes the entire episode: a temporary loss has become an eternal gain.
16. This is the letter's theological climax. Onesimus returns to Philemon's household with a transformed identity: 'no longer as a slave' (*ouketi hōs doulon*) but 'more than a slave — a beloved brother' (*hyper doulon, adelphon agapēton*). The phrase 'both in the flesh and in the Lord' (*kai en sarki kai en kyriō*) means that the brother-relationship is not merely spiritual ('in the Lord') but also operates in the everyday, physical realm ('in the flesh'). Paul does not formally command manumission, but the logic is clear: you cannot own your brother. The phrase 'how much more to you' (*posō de mallon soi*) argues that if Onesimus is precious to Paul, he should be even more so to Philemon, who will have him present daily.
17. The word *koinōnon* ('partner, one who shares in common, associate') echoes the *koinōnia* of verse 6. Paul draws on the established partnership to leverage the appeal: if Philemon and Paul are partners, then Onesimus — who is Paul's 'very heart' (v. 12) — must be welcomed as Paul himself. The verb *proslabou* ('receive, take to yourself, welcome') is a hospitality term implying full acceptance into the household.
18. The conditional 'if' (*ei*) is diplomatic rather than doubtful — Onesimus likely did wrong Philemon or incur a debt (perhaps by stealing to fund his flight). The verb *elloga* ('charge to my account, reckon to me') is an accounting term — Paul creates a formal IOU. This is substitutionary language: Paul absorbs Onesimus's debt, just as Christ absorbed humanity's debt (Colossians 2:14). The parallel is unmistakable and intentional.
19. Paul signs the IOU in his own handwriting, making it legally binding. Then, in one of the most brilliantly ironic sentences in ancient literature, he adds: 'to say nothing of your owing me even your own self' (*hina mē legō soi hoti kai seauton moi prosopheileis*). The phrase 'to say nothing of' (*hina mē legō*) is a rhetorical device called *paralipsis* — saying something by claiming not to say it. The effect is devastating: Onesimus may owe Philemon money, but Philemon owes Paul his very soul (presumably Paul led Philemon to faith). The larger debt swallows the smaller one.
20. The verb *onaimēn* ('may I have benefit, may I have profit') is another pun on the name *Onesimos* ('beneficial, profitable'). Paul asks Philemon to be an 'Onesimus' to Paul — to live up to the very quality that Onesimus's name represents. The third appearance of *splanchna* ('heart') closes the literary frame opened in verse 7: Philemon has refreshed the hearts of the saints; now Paul asks him to refresh Paul's own heart by welcoming Onesimus.
21. The word *hypakoē* ('obedience') is striking — Paul has insisted on appealing rather than commanding, yet he describes Philemon's response as 'obedience.' The gospel appeal carries its own authority: to refuse love's request is a form of disobedience. The phrase 'even more than I say' (*hyper ha legō poiēseis*) leaves open the possibility that Paul hopes for manumission, or even that Philemon will send Onesimus back to Paul. By not specifying, Paul leaves room for Philemon to exceed expectations.
22. The request for lodging adds gentle pressure: Paul plans to visit and will see firsthand how Philemon has responded. The verb *charisthēsomai* ('I will be graciously given, I will be granted as a gift') uses the *charis* root — Paul's release from prison will be a gift of grace mediated through the Colossians' prayers. The request also expresses optimism about his release.
23. In Colossians 4:10, Aristarchus is the 'fellow prisoner' while Epaphras is not; here the designation is reversed. Paul may use the term *synaichmalōtos* ('co-prisoner of war') loosely for anyone who shares his captivity, whether literally imprisoned or voluntarily present. Epaphras, as founder of the Colossian church, has a personal connection to Philemon.

- 24.** The same names appear in Colossians 4:10-14, confirming that both letters were sent at the same time. All four are called *synergoi* ('fellow workers, co-laborers') — an egalitarian designation that includes both Jews (Mark, Aristarchus) and Gentiles (Demas, Luke) in the shared work of the gospel.
- 25.** The closing benediction matches Philippians 4:23 almost exactly. The plural 'your' (*hymōn*) addresses the entire community, not just Philemon. Grace — the undeserved generosity of God — is the letter's final word, as it was the first (v. 3). The entire letter is framed by grace: the same grace that freed Onesimus from sin now calls Philemon to free Onesimus from slavery. The SBLGNT omits the final 'Amen' of the *Textus Receptus*.

Hebrews

1

Summary: *Hebrews 1 establishes the supremacy of God's revelation through his Son over all prior communication through prophets. The Son is declared the exact representation of God's nature, the sustainer of all things, and the one who accomplished purification for sins before sitting at God's right hand. The chapter then marshals a chain of Old Testament quotations to demonstrate the Son's superiority over angels, establishing a theme that will dominate chapters 1-2.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The opening period (verses 1-4) is one of the most carefully constructed sentences in the New Testament, a single Greek sentence with seven descriptors of the Son. The catena of Old Testament quotations (verses 5-13) draws from Psalms 2, 104, 45, 102, and 110, plus 2 Samuel 7 and Deuteronomy 32, weaving a comprehensive scriptural argument. The author assumes his audience recognizes that angels mediated the Mosaic law (cf. Galatians 3:19, Acts 7:53), making the Son-versus-angels comparison directly relevant to the old covenant versus new covenant argument.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the author is unknown; the letter is anonymous. The Greek style is the most polished in the New Testament. The phrase 'exact representation' (charakteer) in verse 3 carries philosophical weight that must be rendered without importing later Nicene categories. We render the Greek as given, noting theological implications in the study layer.*

Connections: *The opening echoes Genesis 1 (creation through the Son), Proverbs 8 (Wisdom as agent of creation), and Colossians 1:15-20 (the cosmic Christ hymn). The quotation from Psalm 110:1 in verse 13 becomes the most important Old Testament text in Hebrews, returning in chapters 5, 7, 8, 10, and 12. The 'purification for sins' language anticipates the extended priestly argument of chapters 7-10.*

¹In many parts and in many ways, God spoke long ago to our ancestors through the prophets, ²Has in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all matters, by whom as well he made the worlds; ³He is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴Being appointed so greatly better than the angels, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. ⁵For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have fathered you"? Or again, "I will be a Father to him, and he will be a Son to me"? ⁶And again, when he brings the

firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." ⁷Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his servants a flame of fire." ⁸But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy beyond your companions." ¹⁰And, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ¹¹They will perish, but you remain. They will all wear out like a garment. ¹²You will roll them up like a cloak, and like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end." ¹³But to which of the angels has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"? ¹⁴Are they not all serving spirits, sent out to serve those who are about to inherit salvation?

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *polymerōs kai polytropōs* ('in many parts and in many ways') is an alliterative pair that sets the rhetorical tone for the entire letter. The first term suggests fragmentary revelation — given piece by piece — while the second suggests varied modes (visions, dreams, direct speech, enacted parables). Together they characterize Old Testament revelation as genuine but incomplete.
1. We render 'fathers' (*patrasin*) as 'ancestors' since the reference is to the entire covenant community's forebears, not exclusively male figures.
2. The phrase *ep' eschatou tōn hēmerōn toutōn* ('in the last of these days') signals an eschatological framework — the Son's arrival inaugurates the final era. The anarthrous 'a Son' (*en huiō*, without the article) emphasizes the quality of sonship rather than identifying a specific person, though the context makes the identity clear.
2. The Greek *aiōnas* ('ages') is broader than the KJV's 'worlds' — it encompasses both time and the created order. The Son is the agent through whom God structured reality itself.
3. The Greek *apaugasma* can mean either 'radiance' (light emanating from a source) or 'reflection' (light bouncing off a surface). The context favors 'radiance' since the Son is described as active agent, not passive mirror. The term *charaktēr* ('exact expression') denotes the precise imprint made by a stamping tool — what emerges is identical to the original. This is stronger than 'image' (*eikōn*).
3. The participle *poiēsamenos* ('having made') is middle voice, suggesting the Son accomplished purification through his own action. The aorist tense marks this as a completed, once-for-all act — a contrast with the repeated sacrifices of the Levitical system that the author will develop in chapters 9–10.
3. The phrase 'sat down at the right hand' alludes to Psalm 110:1, the most quoted Old Testament verse in the New Testament and the theological backbone of Hebrews.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 110:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The Greek *genomenos* ('having become') does not imply the Son was once inferior to angels. The verb marks his exaltation after the incarnation and cross — his human journey culminated in a publicly demonstrated superiority. The 'name' (*onoma*) is debated: it likely refers to 'Son' (as verses 5–14 will argue), though some scholars see it as the divine name itself. The verb *keklēronomēken* ('has inherited') connects to verse 2's appointment as 'heir of all things.'
5. The first quotation is from Psalm 2:7, a royal enthronement psalm originally spoken at the coronation of Davidic kings. The author of Hebrews applies it to Christ's exaltation. The verb *gegennēka* ('I have begotten/fathered') in the psalm context refers to the king's divine adoption at coronation, not biological generation.
5. The second quotation is from 2 Samuel 7:14, God's promise to David regarding his descendant — the foundational text of messianic hope. The rhetorical question expects the answer 'None' — God never addressed any angel with these words.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 2:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Samuel 7:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The quotation derives from Deuteronomy 32:43 (Septuagint) or Psalm 97:7. The Septuagint reading of Deuteronomy includes 'let all God's angels worship him,' which is absent from the Masoretic Text — the author uses the Greek Old Testament. The term *prōtotokon* ('firstborn') denotes preeminence and inheritance rights, not chronological birth order. The 'world' (*oikoumenē*) is literally 'the inhabited earth,' possibly referring to the incarnation or to the second coming.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 32:43. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 97:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

7. Quoting Psalm 104:4 (Septuagint). The Greek pneumata can mean either 'spirits' or 'winds' — the Hebrew of Psalm 104:4 speaks of God making winds his messengers, which the Septuagint reversed to 'making his messengers/angels winds.' The author's point is that angels are created, mutable servants — they can be transformed into wind or fire — while the Son's throne is eternal (verse 8).
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 104:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Quoting Psalm 45:6-7, originally a royal wedding psalm. The vocative 'O God' (ho theos) addressed to the Son is the most direct divine attribution in the catena. Some scholars read it as 'God is your throne' or 'your throne is God's,' but the author of Hebrews clearly reads it as an address to the Son as God. The Greek euthytētos ('uprightness, straightness') is rendered 'uprightness' rather than 'righteousness' to distinguish it from dikaioṣunē.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 45:6-7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The continuation of Psalm 45:6-7. The phrase 'God, your God' (ho theos, ho theos sou) creates a striking paradox — the one addressed as 'God' in verse 8 also has a God. This tension is central to New Testament Christology. The anointing with 'oil of joy' (elaion agalliaseōs) refers to the coronation anointing of kings, connecting to 'Christ' (Christos = 'anointed one'). The Greek anomian ('lawlessness') is rendered as such rather than the KJV's 'iniquity' for precision.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 45:6-7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Quoting Psalm 102:25-27 (Septuagint 101:26-28). In the original psalm, these words are addressed to YHWH. The author of Hebrews applies them to the Son without explanation, implying that the Son shares the divine identity of the Creator. The phrase kat' archas ('in the beginning') echoes Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 102:25-27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 1:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The contrast is between the created order (heavens and earth) that will perish and the Son who endures. The clothing metaphor — creation wearing out like an old garment — is vivid and distinctly Hebrew in character (cf. Isaiah 51:6). The present tense 'you remain' (diameneis) against the future 'they will perish' (apolountai) emphasizes the Son's unchanging nature.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 102:25-27. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 51:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The verb helixeis ('you will roll up') pictures the Son folding up the old creation like clothing being put away — a striking image of sovereign authority over the material universe. The declaration 'you are the same' (su de ho autos ei) asserts the Son's immutability, which becomes a key theme in Hebrews (cf. 13:8, 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever'). This completes the Psalm 102 quotation.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 102:25-27. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Quoting Psalm 110:1, the most quoted Old Testament text in the New Testament and the theological anchor of Hebrews. The psalm presents a divine invitation to a human king to share God's throne — an honor never extended to any angel. The 'right hand' (dexiōn) is the position of co-regency and highest honor. This verse bookends the catena with verse 5's rhetorical question ('to which of the angels?'), forming an inclusio. Psalm 110 will return in Hebrews 5:6, 7:17, 7:21 regarding the Melchizedek priesthood.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 110:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The rhetorical question expects the answer 'Yes.' Angels are leitourgika pneumata ('ministering/serving spirits') — their role is service, not sovereignty. The verb apostellomena ('sent out') is related to 'apostle' (apostolos) — angels are commissioned agents. The phrase 'those about to inherit salvation' (tous mellontas klēronomein sōtērian) echoes the Son's inheritance language from verses 2 and 4, but here applied to believers who share in the Son's inheritance.

2

Summary: *Hebrews 2 issues the first of the letter's warning passages (verses 1-4), urging listeners not to drift from the message delivered through the Son. The author then explains why the Son became lower than the angels — not because he was inferior, but because he took on humanity to share in flesh and blood, to die, and thereby to destroy the devil's power over death. Christ's solidarity with humanity is complete: he was made like his brothers in every way so he could serve as a merciful and faithful high priest.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The quotation of Psalm 8:4-6 in verses 6-8 is a masterful reinterpretation. The psalm celebrates humanity's exalted place in creation; the author reads it as a description of Christ, the true human who fulfills humanity's intended role. The phrase 'tasting death for everyone' (verse 9) is startlingly physical. The description of Jesus as 'pioneer' (archēgos) of salvation introduces a term that will recur in 12:2.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'for a little while lower than the angels' (verse 7) could also mean 'a little lower than the angels' — the Greek brachy ti is ambiguous between time and degree, matching the same ambiguity in Psalm 8. We note both readings. The concept of Jesus being 'made perfect through suffering' (verse 10) does not imply moral imperfection but vocational completion.*

Connections: *The warning passage (verses 1-4) anticipates the more severe warnings of 6:1-8 and 10:26-31. The high priest theme introduced in verse 17 becomes the central argument of chapters 3-10. The 'pioneer' (archēgos) language returns in 12:2. Psalm 8 connects to the creation mandate of Genesis 1:26-28.*

¹For this reason, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. ²For if the message spoken through angels proved reliable, and every violation and act of disobedience received its just penalty, ³How will we escape, if we neglect so remarkable salvation. Which at the first started to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by them that listened to him;. ⁴God as well bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, in keeping with to his own will? ⁵For it is not to angels that he has subjected the coming world, about which we are speaking. ⁶But someone has testified somewhere, saying, "What is a human being that you remember him, or a son of man that you care for him? ⁷You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, ⁸You placed all things under his feet." Now in placing all things under him, God left nothing outside his control. Yet at present, we do not yet see all things subjected to him. ⁹But we do see Jesus — who was made for a little while lower than the angels — now crowned with glory and honor because of his suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. ¹⁰For it was fitting for him, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many sons and daughters to glory, to make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For both the one who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified all come from one origin. For this reason, he is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²Declaring, I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the church will I sing praise to you. ¹³And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here I am, and the children God has given me." ¹⁴Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared in the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — ¹⁵Deliver them who by way of fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. ¹⁶For surely it is not angels he helps, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every way, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God, to make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For because he himself suffered when he was tested, he is able to help those who are being tested.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek pararuōmen ('drift away') is a nautical metaphor — a ship slipping past its harbor because the crew was inattentive. The danger is not active rebellion but passive neglect. The verb prosechein ('to pay attention, to hold course toward') sustains the nautical image. This is the first of five warning passages in Hebrews (2:1-4; 3:7-4:13; 5:11-6:12; 10:26-31; 12:25-29).

2. The 'message spoken through angels' refers to the Mosaic law, which Jewish tradition held was mediated by angels at Sinai (cf. Acts 7:53, Galatians 3:19, Deuteronomy 33:2 LXX). The argument is from lesser to greater (a fortiori): if disobeying the angel-mediated law brought punishment, how much more serious is neglecting the Son-delivered message. The terms *parabasis* ('violation, stepping across a boundary') and *parakoē* ('disobedience, failure to hear') pair transgression of act with transgression of attention.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 33:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The rhetorical question expects no answer — there is no escape. The verb *amelēsantes* ('having neglected') continues the theme of passive drift rather than active rejection. The chain of transmission is explicit: the Lord spoke, those who heard him confirmed it to 'us.' This places the author in the second generation of Christians who received the gospel from eyewitnesses, which has implications for dating and authorship.
4. The fourfold attestation — signs (*sēmeiois*), wonders (*terasín*), powerful deeds (*dynamésin*), and Spirit distributions (*pneumatós hagiou merismois*) — parallels the language used in Acts for apostolic authentication. The compound verb *synepimarturomentos* ('testifying alongside, co-witnessing') means God added his own testimony to the human witnesses. The 'distributions' (*merismois*) of the Spirit suggests diverse gifts apportioned to different believers, echoing 1 Corinthians 12.
5. The phrase *tēn oikoumenēn tēn mellousan* ('the coming world/inhabited earth') introduces an eschatological horizon. The present world may involve angelic powers (cf. Daniel 10:13, 20-21), but the world to come belongs to the Son and, through him, to redeemed humanity. This sets up the Psalm 8 quotation that follows.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 10:13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Quoting Psalm 8:4-6 (LXX). The vague citation formula 'someone has testified somewhere' (*pou tis*) is not carelessness — it directs attention to the divine author rather than the human psalmist. The Greek *anthrōpos* and *huios anthrōpou* are rendered 'human being' and 'son of man' respectively. In the original psalm, these are parallel terms for humanity in general; the author of Hebrews will read them christologically.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 8:4-6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The Greek *brachu ti* can mean 'for a little while' (temporal) or 'a little bit' (degree). The Hebrew of Psalm 8 uses *me'at*, which is similarly ambiguous. The author of Hebrews reads it temporally — the Son was lower than angels only during his brief incarnation, not permanently. This temporal reading drives the argument: the lowering was temporary; the crowning is permanent. The SBLGNT omits 'and set him over the works of your hands,' which appears in some manuscripts.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 8:4-6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The author's commentary on Psalm 8 contains a crucial 'not yet' (*oupō*) — the subjection of all things is real but not yet fully realized. This 'already but not yet' tension is characteristic of New Testament eschatology. The word *anyptokton* ('unsubdued, outside of subjection') emphasizes that the divine intention leaves no exceptions, even though current reality shows incomplete fulfillment.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 8:4-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The name 'Jesus' appears here for the first time in Hebrews, and its placement is emphatic — after the description of lowering and before the description of crowning. The phrase *geusētai thanatou* ('taste death') is viscerally physical — death is experienced, not merely encountered. The preposition *hyper* ('for, on behalf of') with *pantos* ('everyone') asserts the universal scope of Christ's death. Some manuscripts read 'apart from God' (*chōris theou*) instead of 'by the grace of God' (*chariti theou*), but the SBLGNT follows the majority reading.
10. The verb *eprepen* ('it was fitting') argues not from necessity but from divine appropriateness — God's character made this the right path. The Greek *archēgon* ('pioneer, founder, leader, captain') denotes one who goes first and opens the way for others to follow. It will recur in 12:2 for Jesus as 'pioneer and perfecter of faith.' The verb *teleiōsai* ('to make perfect, to bring to completion') does not imply moral deficiency but vocational completion — Jesus was made fully fit for his saving role through the experience of suffering.
10. We render 'sons' (*huios*) as 'sons and daughters' since the Greek plural can be inclusive and the theological point — believers being brought to glory — applies to all.
11. The phrase *ex henos* ('from one') is deliberately ambiguous — it could mean 'from one Father,' 'from one source,' or 'of one nature.' The ambiguity serves the author's purpose: whatever the precise reference, the sanctifier and the sanctified share a common origin, which grounds Jesus's willingness to identify with humanity. The present passive participle *hagiazomenoi* ('being sanctified') suggests an ongoing process, while the active *hagiazōn* ('sanctifying') points to Jesus as the agent.
12. Quoting Psalm 22:22. This psalm begins with the cry of dereliction ('My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?') and moves to praise in the midst of the assembly. The author of Hebrews places these words on Jesus's lips — the Son identifies believers as 'my brothers' (*adelphois mou*). The Greek *ekklēsia* ('assembly, congregation') here translates the Hebrew *qahal* of the psalm.

12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 22:22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Two quotations from Isaiah 8:17-18. The first ('I will put my trust in him') shows the Son exercising the same faith that believers exercise — a profound statement of solidarity. The second ('Here I am and the children') originally referred to Isaiah and his children as signs to Israel; the author applies it to Jesus and his spiritual children. Together, these quotations establish that the Son shares humanity's dependence on God.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 8:17-18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The verb kekoinōnēken ('have shared, have participated in') is perfect tense — humanity's participation in flesh and blood is an ongoing state. The verb meteschen ('he shared in') is aorist — the Son's participation was a decisive, historical act. The difference in tense is theologically significant: we are always flesh and blood; he entered that condition by choice. The verb katargēsē ('destroy, render powerless, nullify') does not necessarily mean annihilation but rather the stripping of effective power.
15. The phrase dia pantos tou zēn ('throughout all of living') emphasizes that the fear of death pervaded the entirety of human existence, not just its final moments. The word douleia ('slavery, bondage') characterizes the human condition under death's shadow as a form of captivity. Christ's death breaks the power of this fear by removing death's finality.
16. The verb epilambanetai ('takes hold of, helps, grasps') is debated. The KJV reads it as 'took on the nature of,' but the more natural meaning is 'takes hold of to help' or 'comes to the aid of.' The present tense suggests ongoing action: Christ continually assists Abraham's descendants, not just at the incarnation. The phrase 'seed of Abraham' (spermatos Abraam) connects to the covenant promises of Genesis 12, 15, and 17.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. This is the first appearance of archiereus ('high priest') in Hebrews — the title that will dominate the letter's central argument. The verb hilaskesthai ('to make atonement, to propitiate, to make expiation') corresponds to the Hebrew kipper (כִּפֶּה) and the mercy seat (hilastērion/kapporet). The requirement that the high priest be both 'merciful' (eleēmōn) and 'faithful' (pistos) defines the two qualities that chapters 3-5 will develop — faithfulness in chapter 3 (comparison with Moses) and mercy in chapter 5 (sympathy with human weakness).
18. The Greek peirastheis/peirazomenois ('tested/being tested') can mean either 'tempted' or 'tested' — the semantic range covers both moral temptation and trial by suffering. In context, the emphasis is on suffering as the mode of testing. The perfect tense peponthen ('has suffered') indicates that Jesus's suffering remains a present reality in his experience — it is not something he has left behind but something that equips him to help. The verb boēthēsai ('to help, to come to aid') is the same word used for crying out for help in battle.

3

Summary: *Hebrews 3 compares Jesus to Moses, arguing that while Moses was faithful as a servant in God's house, Jesus is faithful as a Son over God's house. The chapter then transitions into an extended warning passage based on Psalm 95:7-11, urging the audience not to repeat the wilderness generation's rebellion at Meribah. The hardening of hearts, the provocation in the wilderness, and the failure to enter God's rest become a cautionary paradigm for the Christian community.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The comparison with Moses is structurally daring — Moses held unparalleled authority in Judaism, yet the author subordinates him to Christ not by diminishing Moses but by elevating the category: servant versus Son, part of the house versus builder of the house. The Psalm 95 quotation initiates an argument that extends through chapter 4, making it the longest sustained Old Testament exposition in Hebrews.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'apostle and high priest of our confession' (verse 1) is the only place in the New Testament where Jesus is called 'apostle.' The warning language is strong — 'evil, unbelieving heart' (verse 12) — and the question of whether genuine believers can fall away remains debated. We render the text without resolving the theological tension.*

Connections: *The Moses comparison continues themes from Exodus 32-34 and Numbers 14. Psalm 95's 'rest' (katapausis) links to Genesis 2:2 (God's Sabbath rest) and will be developed in chapter 4. The 'house' language connects to the temple/tabernacle theology of chapters 8-9. The warning echoes Deuteronomy's exhortations to faithfulness.*

¹Therefore, holy brothers and sisters who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, ²He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all of God's household. ³For Jesus

has been considered worthy of more glory than Moses, just as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. ⁴For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. ⁵Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, as a testimony to the things that would be spoken later. ⁶But Christ was faithful as a Son over God's house — and we are his house, if we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope we boast in. ⁷Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸Indeed, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the desert:. ⁹Indeed, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and noticed my works forty years. ¹⁰For this reason I was grieved with that generation, and stated, They do alway err in their heart. Then they have not known my ways. ¹¹So I swore in my anger, 'They will never enter my rest.'" ¹²Watch out, brothers and sisters, so that none of you has an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³Instead, encourage one another every day, as long as it is still called 'today,' so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we have become partners with Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm until the end. ¹⁵As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." ¹⁶For who were the ones who heard and rebelled? Was it not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, if not to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. This is the only verse in the New Testament that calls Jesus 'apostle' (apostolon, 'sent one'). The title pairs with 'high priest' to define Jesus's dual role: sent from God to humanity (apostle) and representing humanity before God (high priest). The word 'confession' (homologias) refers to the community's shared profession of faith. The verb katanoēsatē ('consider, fix your mind on, examine carefully') demands sustained intellectual attention, not casual thought.
2. The verb poiēsanti ('the one who made/appointed him') could mean 'created' or 'appointed.' In context, 'appointed' is more suitable since the comparison is about role and function, not ontology. The phrase 'in all his house' (en holō tō oikō autou) alludes to Numbers 12:7 (LXX), where God vindicates Moses: 'He is faithful in all my house.' The author affirms Moses's faithfulness before surpassing it.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 12:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The argument is an analogy: as builder exceeds building, so Christ exceeds Moses. The verb kataskeuāsas ('the one who built, prepared, established') implies not just construction but design and purpose. Moses is part of the house (the people of God); Jesus built the house. The passive ēxiōtai ('has been considered worthy') is a divine passive — God has conferred this greater glory on Jesus.
4. This verse serves as a bridge in the argument. If every house requires a builder, and God is the ultimate builder of all things, then the one who built God's house (verse 3) operates with divine authority. The implication — that Jesus as builder shares in the creative work of God — is left for the reader to infer.
5. The Greek therapōn ('servant, attendant') is a more honorable term than doulos ('slave'). It denotes a trusted household attendant — Moses's role was noble but subordinate. The phrase eis martyrion tōn lalēthēsomenōn ('as a testimony to things that would be spoken later') casts Moses's entire ministry as preparatory and prophetic — pointing forward to Christ's fuller revelation.
6. The contrast is complete: Moses was faithful in (en) the house as servant; Christ is faithful over (epi) the house as Son. The conditional 'if' (ean) introduces the first of several conditional statements in the warning passages — membership in God's house is genuine but contingent on perseverance. The Greek parrēsia ('confidence, boldness, openness of speech') and kauchēma ('boast, ground of boasting') describe an outward, expressive faith. Some manuscripts add 'firm to the end' (mechri telous bebaian), but the SBLGNT omits it.
7. The quotation of Psalm 95:7-11 begins here and continues through verse 11. The attribution to the Holy Spirit (to pneuma to hagion) rather than to David reflects the author's view that Scripture's ultimate author is God himself. The word 'today' (sēmeron) becomes a key term — the author will apply this 'today' to the present moment of his audience in verses 13 and 15.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 95:7-11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Greek parapikrasmo ('rebellion, provocation, embitterment') translates the Hebrew Meribah ('strife, contention') from Psalm 95:8, which refers to the events at Meribah and Massah (Exodus 17:1-7). The Septuagint translates the place name as a description of the act. The verb sklērūnēte ('harden') echoes the Pharaoh narrative in Exodus — the same word group describes Pharaoh's hardened heart. The author warns against repeating the pattern.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 95:7-11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 17:1-7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The shift from 'do not harden your hearts' to God speaking in first person ('me,' 'my works') is dramatic — God himself recounts the offense. The Greek dokimasia ('testing, trial, proving') suggests they put God on trial, demanding proof. Despite seeing God's works (*erga mou*), they still refused to trust — a failure of will, not evidence.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 95:7-11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The author separates 'forty years' from the preceding verse and attaches it to God's anger rather than to the works — a subtle interpretive move that emphasizes the duration of God's displeasure. The verb *prosōchthisa* ('was angry, was disgusted, was grieved') is stronger than mere sadness — it carries overtones of revulsion. The Greek *planōntai* ('go astray, wander') pictures a people who have lost their way, a deliberate irony for a generation literally wandering in the wilderness.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 95:7-11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The Greek *ei eiseleusontai* ('if they will enter') reproduces a Hebrew oath formula — 'if they enter' means 'they certainly will not enter.' The concept of God's 'rest' (*katapausin mou*) is multivalent: it refers to the promised land (which that generation forfeited), to God's Sabbath rest (Genesis 2:2), and potentially to an eschatological rest that chapter 4 will develop. The divine oath seals the exclusion with ultimate finality.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 95:7-11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 2:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The verb *blepete* ('watch out, be on guard') shifts from psalm quotation to direct application. The phrase *kardia ponēra apistias* ('evil heart of unbelief') is shocking in its directness — unbelief is not a minor failing but an evil disposition. The infinitive *apostēnai* ('to turn away, to stand away from') is the root of 'apostasy.' The title 'living God' (*theou zōntos*) heightens the gravity: the one they would be turning from is not an abstraction but the living, active God.
13. The imperative *parakaleite* ('encourage, exhort') is plural and reciprocal — perseverance is a community project, not an individual achievement. The phrase *achris hou to sēmeron kaleitai* ('as long as it is still called today') turns the psalm's 'today' into a limited window of opportunity. The personification of sin as deceptive (*apatē tēs hamartias*) suggests that the hardening process is gradual and disguised — people do not recognize their own drift until the heart is already hardened.
14. The term *metochoi* ('partners, sharers, participants') is stronger than casual association — it implies shared ownership and joint participation. The phrase *tēn archēn tēs hypostaseōs* ('the beginning of our confidence/substance') is debated: hypostasis can mean 'confidence' (subjective) or 'reality/substance' (objective). In context, 'confidence' fits — the initial assurance that marked their conversion must be maintained to the end. The conditional *ean* ('if indeed') is more emphatic than simple *ean* ('if').
15. The psalm quotation from verse 7-8 is repeated, but now 'today' carries the full weight of the intervening argument — it is no longer just a word in an ancient psalm but a present-tense demand on the audience. The repetition functions as a literary hinge between the exposition of the psalm (verses 7-11) and its application (verses 16-19).
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 95:7-8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The rhetorical questions in verses 16-18 form a devastating catechism. The answer to each is obvious and condemning. The word *parepikranan* ('rebelled, provoked') echoes *parapikrasmos* from verse 8. The shocking point: it was not some fringe group but 'all' (*pantes*) who came out of Egypt — the very people who witnessed the greatest deliverance in Israel's history. Privilege of experience did not guarantee faithfulness.
17. The Greek *kōla* ('limbs, bodies, corpses') is more graphic than 'carcasses' — it evokes bodies literally falling and lying scattered across the desert landscape. The image is drawn from Numbers 14:29, 32 where God declares that the bodies of the rebellious generation would fall in the wilderness. The forty years of anger corresponds to the forty years of wandering.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 14:29. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The Greek *apeithēsas* ('those who were disobedient') can also mean 'those who were unbelieving' — the semantic overlap between disobedience and unbelief is significant. In Hebrew thought, to disbelieve God is to disobey him, and to disobey is to disbelieve. The author will make this connection explicit in verse 19.
19. The chapter's conclusion is stark: the wilderness generation's failure was ultimately a failure of faith (*apistian*, 'unbelief'). The verb *ēdunēthēsan* ('they were able') is negated — their unbelief made entry impossible, not merely unlikely. The verse links disobedience (verse 18) with unbelief (verse 19), establishing that the two are inseparable. The 'rest' that was forfeited through unbelief will be explored further in chapter 4 as still available to the present audience.

4

Summary: *Hebrews 4 continues the argument about God's rest, demonstrating that the promise of entering God's rest still stands because neither Joshua nor the wilderness generation fully realized it. The rest is not merely the promised land but a Sabbath-rest that God has enjoyed since creation — a rest believers can enter through faithful obedience. The chapter then pivots with two powerful declarations: the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword (verse 12), and Jesus the Son of God is a great high priest who sympathizes with human weakness, inviting believers to approach the throne of grace with confidence (verses 14-16).*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The argument about rest is subtle and layered: the rest God offered was not exhausted by Joshua's conquest because David, centuries later in Psalm 95, still speaks of 'today' — implying the rest remains available. The word-of-God passage (verses 12-13) is among the most memorized in the New Testament. The high priest transition (verses 14-16) forms a literary bridge from the warning section (chapters 3-4) to the priestly exposition (chapters 5-10).*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'rest' (katapausis/sabbatismos) is debated — eschatological, spiritual, or eternal. We render the terms without forcing a single interpretation. The Greek Iēsous in verse 8 refers to Joshua (the same name in Greek), not Jesus of Nazareth, which English translations must clarify. The relationship between verses 12-13 (word of God) and the surrounding argument is debated; it may function as a warning about divine judgment or as motivation for perseverance.*

Connections: *The rest theme connects to Genesis 2:2 (God's Sabbath), Psalm 95 (continued from chapter 3), and Joshua's conquest. The word-of-God imagery echoes Isaiah 49:2 and Revelation 1:16. The high priest declaration (verse 14) formally introduces the topic that will dominate chapters 5-10. The invitation to the 'throne of grace' (verse 16) anticipates the access through the curtain described in 10:19-22.*

¹Therefore, let us fear, since a promise of entering his rest still stands, that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ²For we also have had good news proclaimed to us, just as they did. But the message they heard did not benefit them, since it was not combined with faith in those who heard it. ³For we who have believed are entering that rest, just as he has said, "As I swore in my anger, "They will never enter my rest!" — even though his works have been finished since the foundation of the world. ⁴For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." ⁵And again in this passage: "They will never enter my rest." ⁶Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, ⁷Again, he limiteth a certain day and stated in David, To day, following so long a time. As it is stated, To day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. ⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. ⁹So then, a Sabbath rest remains for the people of God. ¹⁰For the one who has entered God's rest has also rested from his own works, just as God rested from his. ¹¹Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by following the same pattern of disobedience. ¹²For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating to the point of dividing soul from spirit, joints from marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and exposed before the eyes of the one to whom we must give account. ¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens — Jesus the Son of God — let us hold firmly to our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in every way as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the right time.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The subjunctive phobēthōmen ('let us fear') is startling — the author includes himself. The participle kataleipomenēs ('being left, remaining') emphasizes that the promise is still active and unclaimed. The verb husterēkenai ('to have fallen short, to have come too late') suggests missing a deadline or arriving after the door has closed. The fear is not servile terror but reverent urgency.

2. The verb *euēngelismenoi* ('having received good news') is the same root as 'gospel' — the wilderness generation received a form of good news (the promise of rest), just as Christians have. The textual variant is significant: some manuscripts read 'not united by faith with those who heard' (referring to Joshua and Caleb who did believe), while others read 'not combined with faith in those who heard.' The SBLGNT reading emphasizes that hearing without faith is useless.
3. The present tense *eisērchometha* ('we are entering') describes an ongoing experience — believers are in the process of entering the rest, not merely hoping for it in the future. The parenthetical about God's works being finished since creation introduces the next argument: God's rest has existed since Genesis 2, which means the 'rest' offered to Israel was participation in God's own eternal rest, not merely settlement in Canaan.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 95:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Quoting Genesis 2:2 (LXX). The casual citation formula 'somewhere' (*pou*) again directs attention to the divine author rather than to the specific text location. The author's argument: God's rest began at creation and has continued ever since — it is an existing reality, not a future creation. The verb *katēpausen* ('rested, ceased') does not imply exhaustion but completion and satisfaction.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 2:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The author juxtaposes Genesis 2:2 (God rested) with Psalm 95:11 (they will not enter my rest). The logic: the rest God enjoys since creation is the same rest the wilderness generation forfeited. Since that rest predates and outlasts the promised land, it must still be available.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 95:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 2:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The word *apeitheian* ('disobedience') here replaces *apistian* ('unbelief') from 3:19, reinforcing the interchangeability of the two concepts. The logic is compact: the rest exists (Genesis 2:2), the first recipients forfeited it (Psalm 95), therefore it must remain available for others.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 2:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 95. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The crucial argument: David wrote Psalm 95 centuries after Joshua led Israel into Canaan. If Joshua's conquest had fulfilled the promise of rest, David would not still be warning about it and offering a 'today.' The very existence of Psalm 95 proves the rest was not exhausted by the conquest. The verb *horizei* ('appoints, designates, defines') suggests God deliberately set a new day of opportunity.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 95:7-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Greek *Iēsous* here refers to Joshua, not Jesus of Nazareth — both names are the same in Greek (from Hebrew *Yehoshua*). Context makes the reference clear since the subject is the conquest of Canaan. The conditional is contrary-to-fact: Joshua did not give the ultimate rest, therefore the rest still awaits. The author's logic reaches its conclusion in verse 9.
9. The author introduces a new term: *sabbatismos* ('Sabbath rest'), found only here in the New Testament and rare in Greek literature. This is not the generic *katapausis* ('rest') used throughout the argument but a specifically Sabbath-quality rest — a rest modeled on God's own cessation on the seventh day. The term is the climax of the argument: what remains is not merely a promised land or a cessation of labor but a participation in God's own eternal rest.
10. The parallel is precise: as God ceased from the work of creation on the seventh day, so the believer who enters God's rest ceases from their own works. The meaning of 'works' (*ergōn*) here is debated — it could mean laborious self-effort for salvation, or it could mean the completion of one's life mission. The Genesis 2:2 echo suggests satisfaction and completion rather than exhaustion or relief.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 2:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The verb *spoudasōmen* ('let us be diligent, make every effort, be eager') is not contradictory to 'rest' — the effort is to enter the rest, not to earn it. The word *hypodeigmati* ('pattern, example, model') turns the wilderness generation's failure into a cautionary template. The verb *pesē* ('fall') echoes the 'falling bodies' of 3:17 — the same fate awaits those who follow the same path.
12. The phrase *logos tou theou* ('word of God') likely refers to God's spoken declaration (as in the psalm quotations and the gospel message) rather than to Scripture as a written text or to Christ as the living Word, though all three layers may be present. The four adjectives — living (*zōn*), active (*energēs*), sharp (*tomōteros*), penetrating (*diiknoumenos*) — build in intensity. The division of 'soul and spirit' does not establish a trichotomist anthropology but uses merismus (a literary device listing extremes to indicate totality) — the word penetrates everything, even the most intimate interior spaces. The term *kritikos* ('able to judge, discerning') is the root of 'critic' — God's word is the ultimate judge of inner reality.

- 13.** The shift from 'word of God' (verse 12) to 'his sight' and 'his eyes' personalizes the logos — the word that judges is inseparable from the God who sees. The Greek tetrachēlismēna ('laid bare, exposed') literally means 'bent back the neck' — a term from wrestling (an opponent pinned with neck exposed) or from sacrifice (an animal's throat bared for slaughter). The final phrase pros hon hēmin ho logos ('to whom our account/word is due') is a wordplay — our logos must answer to the divine logos.
- 14.** This verse marks a major transition, formally introducing the high priest theme that will dominate chapters 5-10. The phrase 'passed through the heavens' (dielēluthota tous ouranous) pictures Jesus traversing the celestial realms as the high priest passed through the outer courts to enter the Holy of Holies. The full title 'Jesus the Son of God' combines his human name with his divine status. The exhortation kratōmen tēs homologias ('let us hold firmly to our confession') echoes 3:1 and 3:6, framing the warning section.
- 15.** The double negative (ou ... mē dynamenon, 'not unable') is a rhetorical understatement (litotes) that emphatically affirms: our high priest can and does sympathize. The Greek sympathēsai ('to sympathize, to suffer with') means not just intellectual understanding but shared experience of suffering. The phrase kata panta kath' homoiotēta ('in every respect in the same way') asserts the completeness of Jesus's testing. The qualifier chōris hamartias ('without sin') does not diminish the reality of the testing but affirms its outcome — he was genuinely tested and genuinely victorious.
- 16.** The verb proserchōmetha ('let us approach') is a priestly term — the same word used for priests approaching the altar. Because of this high priest, all believers have priestly access. The 'throne of grace' (thronō tēs charitos) transforms a throne of judgment into a throne of generosity — the same throne that terrifies in verse 13 invites in verse 16. The two gifts — mercy (eleos) for past failure and grace (charin) for future need — together cover the full scope of human need. The phrase eis eukairon boētheian ('for timely help') literally means 'for well-timed assistance' — grace arrives at precisely the right moment.

5

Summary: *Hebrews 5 begins the Melchizedek priesthood argument by establishing the qualifications of any high priest: he must be taken from among humans, he must be able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward because of his own weakness, and he must be called by God. The author then shows how Christ meets these qualifications — particularly through his anguished prayers during his earthly life and his learning obedience through suffering. God designated him a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. The chapter ends with a rebuke: the audience should be teachers by now but still need elementary instruction.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verse 7 contains a vivid and emotionally raw depiction of Jesus's prayer life — 'loud cries and tears' — likely alluding to Gethsemane. The statement that Jesus 'learned obedience through what he suffered' (verse 8) is among the most theologically daring in the New Testament. The introduction of Melchizedek via Psalm 110:4 opens an argument the author will not complete until chapter 7, creating intentional suspense.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'he was heard because of his reverent submission' (verse 7) is debated — Jesus prayed to be saved from death, and he did die. In what sense was he 'heard'? Options include: heard in the sense of being rescued from death through resurrection, or heard in the sense that his prayer was received. We note both readings. The rebuke in verses 11-14 is sharp and raises questions about the audience's spiritual state.*

Connections: *Psalm 2:7 (verse 5) was already quoted in 1:5. Psalm 110:4 (verse 6) introduces the Melchizedek theme from Genesis 14:18-20 that dominates chapter 7. The Gethsemane allusion connects to the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 14:32-42 and parallels). The 'milk versus solid food' metaphor (verses 12-14) parallels 1 Corinthians 3:1-3.*

¹For every high priest chosen from among humans is appointed to represent them before God, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. ²He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is also subject to weakness. ³Because of this, he is obligated to offer sacrifices for sins not only for the people but also for himself. ⁴And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. ⁵So also Christ did not glorify himself to become high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son; today I have fathered you." ⁶As he also says in another passage, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." ⁷During the days of his life in the flesh, he offered up prayers and pleas with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹And having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰Called of God an high priest following the order of Melchisedec. ¹¹We have much to say about this, and it is difficult to explain since you have become slow to

understand. ¹²For by this time you ought to be teachers, yet you need someone to teach you again the basic elements of God's oracles. You have come to need milk, not solid food. ¹³For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since such a person is an infant. ¹⁴But solid food is for the mature — for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *ex anthrōpōn lambanomenos* ('taken from among humans') establishes the first qualification: solidarity with humanity. The high priest must share the condition of those he represents. The verb *kathistatai* ('is appointed') indicates divine appointment, not self-selection. The twin offerings — gifts (*dōra*, voluntary offerings) and sacrifices (*thysias*, sin-related offerings) — cover the full range of priestly service.
2. The Greek *metriopathein* ('to deal gently, to moderate one's feelings') is a rare term — it describes a measured emotional response, neither indifferent nor overwhelmed. It was a term from Stoic philosophy for the moderation of passion. The Levitical high priest could be gentle because he knew his own frailty. This is both the strength and limitation of the old system — a weakness Christ transcends (he sympathizes without sharing the weakness of sin, 4:15).
3. This obligation to sacrifice for himself distinguishes the Levitical high priest from Christ. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest first offered a bull for his own sins before offering for the people (Leviticus 16:6, 11). Christ, being without sin (4:15), has no such need — a superiority the author will develop in 7:27.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 16:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The second qualification: divine calling. The high priesthood is not an office one can seize — it requires God's appointment. The reference to Aaron (Exodus 28:1) grounds this in the Levitical system. The author will immediately show that Christ too was divinely called (verses 5-6), satisfying this requirement through a different but equally valid divine appointment.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 28:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Psalm 2:7 returns from 1:5, now applied not to Christ's superiority over angels but to his priestly appointment. The logic: the same God who declared Jesus 'Son' also appointed him priest. The verb *edoxasen* ('glorified') indicates that the high priesthood is an honor (*doxa*/glory), not a position Christ arrogated to himself.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 2:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Quoting Psalm 110:4, which the author will expound at length in chapter 7. This is the key text for the entire priestly argument of Hebrews. The phrase *kata tēn taxin Melchisedek* ('according to the order of Melchizedek') establishes a priesthood that is neither Aaronic nor Levitical but of a different and prior order — the order of the priest-king who blessed Abraham in Genesis 14:18-20. The word *taxin* ('order, arrangement, succession') means a category or type of priesthood, not a sequential organization.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 110:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 14:18-20. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The phrase *en tais hēmerais tēs sarkos autou* ('in the days of his flesh') refers to Jesus's entire earthly life, though the 'loud cries and tears' (*kraugēs ischyra kai dakryōn*) likely allude specifically to Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42). The word *hiketērias* ('pleas, supplications') originally referred to olive branches held by those seeking mercy — it denotes urgent, desperate petition. The phrase *eisakoustheis apo tēs eulabeias* ('heard because of his reverent submission') is much debated. The preposition *apo* could mean 'because of' or 'out of.' His prayer to be saved from death was 'heard' — but he still died. Most scholars understand this as being heard through resurrection: God saved him not from dying but from remaining dead.
7. The Greek *eulabeia* ('reverent submission, godly fear, devotion') describes not terror but reverent awe before God's will.
8. The Greek *emathēn ... epathēn* ('he learned ... he suffered') is a deliberate wordplay — learning and suffering are paired by sound and by theology. The statement does not imply that Jesus was previously disobedient, but that obedience became experientially his through the process of suffering. As Son, he was always obedient; through suffering, he experienced what obedience costs in a fallen world. This is the 'perfecting' of verse 9 — vocational completion, not moral correction.
9. The passive *teleiōtheis* ('having been made perfect/complete') is the same verb used in 2:10. It describes vocational completion through suffering — Jesus was fully equipped as high priest through the full experience of human obedience under pressure. The word *aitios* ('source, cause, author') identifies Jesus not merely as an example of salvation but as its origin. The phrase 'all who obey him' (*pasin tois hypakouousin autō*) makes obedience the correlate of faith — those who are saved are those who respond with obedient trust.
10. The verb *prosaгореutheis* ('designated, addressed as, named') is a formal term — it denotes an official declaration or title conferral. God did not merely allow Jesus to function as priest; he formally proclaimed him one. This returns to Psalm 110:4 from verse 6 and completes the christological argument: Jesus meets both qualifications (solidarity with humanity, divine appointment) and exceeds them (his priesthood is of a superior order).

10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 110:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The Greek *dysermēneutos* ('difficult to explain, hard to interpret') is a rare word indicating the complexity of the Melchizedek argument. But the difficulty is not in the subject matter alone — it is in the audience. The word *nōthroi* ('slow, sluggish, dull') suggests a regression, not an original state. They have 'become' (*gegonate*) sluggish — they were once more receptive. This sharp transition from christological exposition to pastoral rebuke is characteristic of Hebrews.
12. The phrase *dia ton chronon* ('because of the time') indicates they have been believers long enough to be mature. The 'basic elements' (*ta stoicheia tēs archēs*) literally means 'the ABC's of the beginning' — the elementary principles. The word *logia* ('oracles') refers to God's authoritative utterances. The milk/solid food metaphor parallels Paul's use in 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 and reflects a common ancient educational analogy. The regression from solid food back to milk represents spiritual decline.
13. The phrase *apeiros logou dikaiosynēs* ('unskilled in the word/message of righteousness') could mean 'inexperienced in the teaching about righteousness' or 'unfamiliar with the righteous word/message.' The metaphor is straightforward: infants cannot digest solid food, and immature believers cannot process advanced theological teaching — specifically, the Melchizedek argument the author wants to make.
14. The Greek *teleiōn* ('the mature, the complete') contrasts with *nēpios* ('infant') in verse 13. The word *aisthētēria* ('faculties, senses, organs of perception') refers to the spiritual equivalent of the physical senses — the capacity to perceive and evaluate theological truth. The verb *gegymnasmena* ('trained, exercised') is from the gymnasium — spiritual maturity requires regular, disciplined exercise, not merely accumulated time. The phrase *diakrisin kalou te kai kakou* ('distinguishing good from evil') echoes the tree of knowledge in Genesis 2:17 — maturity involves the capacity for moral and theological discernment.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 2:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

6

Summary: *Hebrews 6 contains the letter's most severe warning (verses 4-8), declaring that those who have experienced the full blessings of the new covenant and then fall away cannot be renewed to repentance. This alarming passage is immediately balanced by pastoral encouragement (verses 9-12): the author is confident of better things for his audience. The chapter concludes with a meditation on the unshakeable nature of God's promise to Abraham, confirmed by divine oath, which serves as an anchor for the soul — a hope that enters behind the curtain where Jesus has gone as forerunner and eternal high priest.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The warning of verses 4-8 is the most debated passage in Hebrews and one of the most contested in the entire New Testament. The five participial phrases describing the spiritual experience of those who fall away (enlightened, tasted, shared, tasted, participated) are maximally strong — these are not superficial inquirers. The agricultural metaphor (verses 7-8) grounds the abstract warning in vivid imagery. The shift to Abraham's oath (verses 13-20) provides the positive counterweight: God's promise is doubly guaranteed.*

Translation Friction: *The impossibility of restoration (verse 4) has generated centuries of debate. Does it describe a hypothetical impossibility, a practical impossibility, or an absolute theological impossibility? We render the text as written without resolving the debate. The phrase 'crucifying the Son of God again' (verse 6) is particularly strong. The connection between the warning section and the Abraham/oath section is debated but likely functions as comfort: God's promises are more reliable than human failure.*

Connections: *The warning echoes Numbers 14 (the wilderness generation's irreversible forfeiture of the land). The Abraham oath recalls Genesis 22:16-17. The 'anchor of the soul' (verse 19) draws on ancient navigation imagery. The 'forerunner' (*prodromos*, verse 20) introduces a term unique in the NT applied to Christ. The Melchizedek reference (verse 20) resumes the argument interrupted in 5:10.*

Therefore, leaving behind the elementary teaching about Christ, let us press on toward maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ²Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of care, and of resurrection of the no longer alive, and of eternal the time of reckoning. ³And this we will do, if God permits. ⁴For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, ⁵Have tasted the good message of God, and the powers of the world to come,. ⁶and then fall away — it is impossible to restore them to repentance. By their rejection they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and exposing him to public disgrace. ⁷For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it and produces a crop useful to those for whom it

is cultivated receives a blessing from God. ⁸But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and its end is burning. ⁹But in your case, dear friends, we are convinced of better things — things that accompany salvation — even though we speak this way. ¹⁰For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name by serving the saints — as you still do. ¹¹And we want each one of you to show the same diligence toward the full assurance of hope until the end, ¹²That you be not slothful, but followers of them who by way of faith and patience inherit the promises. ¹³For when God made his promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater to swear by, he swore by himself, ¹⁴Declaring, Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you. ¹⁵And so Abraham, having waited patiently, obtained the promise. ¹⁶For people swear by something greater than themselves, and the oath serves as a confirmation that ends every dispute. ¹⁷In the same way, when God wanted to show even more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable nature of his purpose, he guaranteed it with an oath, ¹⁸That by a pair of immutable matters, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we may possess a strong consolation, who possess fled for refuge to lay hold upon the confident expectation set prior to us:. ¹⁹We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure, which enters the inner place behind the curtain, ²⁰Indeed, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever following the order of Melchisedec.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb *pherōmetha* ('let us press on, let us be carried along') suggests both active effort and divine momentum — like a ship under full sail. The 'elementary teaching' (*ton tēs archēs tou Christou logon*) is literally 'the word of the beginning of Christ' — the foundational instruction. The author does not reject these basics but insists on moving beyond them. The six foundational elements listed in verses 1-2 appear to constitute an early catechetical curriculum.
2. The six foundation stones are grouped in three pairs: repentance and faith (verse 1), washings and laying on of hands (verse 2a), resurrection and judgment (verse 2b). The plural *baptismōn* ('washings') rather than the singular *baptisma* ('baptism') is noteworthy — it may include instruction distinguishing Christian baptism from Jewish ritual washings and John's baptism (cf. Acts 19:1-5). These elements appear to reflect a basic catechism for new believers.
3. The conditional 'if God permits' (*eanper epitrepē ho theos*) is not mere piety — in light of what follows (verses 4-6), it carries a solemn undertone. Whether the audience can indeed advance to maturity depends partly on their own response and partly on God's enabling. The subjunctive *epitrepē* leaves the outcome genuinely open.
4. The word *adynaton* ('impossible') stands emphatically at the head of the sentence. The five participial phrases (verses 4-5) describe the richest possible spiritual experience: enlightenment (*photisthentas* — possibly referring to baptism, which early Christians called 'illumination'), tasting the heavenly gift, sharing in the Holy Spirit, tasting God's good word, and experiencing the powers of the coming age. Each term is stronger than casual or superficial contact.
5. The 'good word of God' (*kalon theou rhēma*) echoes the promised land scouts' report: the land was 'good' (Numbers 14:7). Those who tasted the land's fruit still refused to enter. The 'powers of the coming age' (*dynameis mellontos aiōnos*) refers to eschatological realities — healings, spiritual gifts, transformed life — already experienced in the present. These people have sampled the age to come and found it real.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 14:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The participle *parapesontas* ('having fallen away') describes a decisive act of apostasy, not merely stumbling. The two present participles — *anastaurountas* ('crucifying again') and *paradeigmatizontas* ('exposing to public shame') — describe the ongoing significance of the fall: apostasy reenacts the crucifixion and makes a public spectacle of Christ. The impossibility is not that God's grace is insufficient but that the apostate has exhausted the only remedy — there is no sacrifice beyond Christ to which one can appeal.
7. The agricultural metaphor illustrates the warning by analogy. Land that receives rain (divine blessing) and produces good crops (faithful response) receives further blessing. The imagery draws on Isaiah 5:1-7 (the vineyard song) and Deuteronomy 11:10-17 (rain contingent on obedience). The verb *piousa* ('having drunk') personalizes the land — it has received God's provision.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 5:1-7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 11:10-17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The thorns and thistles (*akanthas kai tribolous*) echo Genesis 3:18 — the curse on the ground after Adam's fall. Land that produces only cursed vegetation despite receiving rain is *adokimos* ('worthless, rejected, failing the test'). The burning (*kausin*) refers to the ancient agricultural practice of burning unproductive fields, but here carries eschatological overtones. Note that the text says 'close to cursing' (*kataras engys*), not 'cursed' — even in this severe warning, there remains a space before final judgment.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 3:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The address 'dear friends' (agapētoi, 'beloved') is the only time in Hebrews the author uses this endearment — it signals a deliberate pastoral shift from the severe warning to confident encouragement. The perfect tense pepeismetha ('we are convinced, we have been persuaded') indicates a settled confidence, not a tentative hope. The phrase ta kreissona ('the better things') uses the comparative that runs throughout Hebrews — the audience belongs to the 'better' category.
10. The litotes 'not unjust' (ou adikos) affirms God's absolute justice and faithfulness — he cannot overlook genuine service. The evidence of their salvation is practical: they served (diakonēsantes, aorist — past action) and continue serving (diakonountes, present — ongoing action) the saints. Their love is demonstrated in deed, not merely profession. This verse grounds the author's confidence from verse 9.
11. The phrase hekaston hymōn ('each one of you') individualizes the exhortation — corporate encouragement is not enough; each person must persevere. The word plērophorian ('full assurance, complete confidence') describes a hope that has reached its maximum capacity — not wishful thinking but settled certainty. The phrase achri telous ('until the end') repeats the perseverance theme from 3:6 and 3:14.
12. The word nōthroi ('sluggish') returns from 5:11, forming an inclusio around the warning section. The antidote to sluggishness is imitation (mimētai) of the faithful — a concept the author will develop extensively in chapter 11's catalogue of faith. The pair 'faith and patience' (pisteōs kai makrothymias) represents the active and enduring dimensions of perseverance. The verb klēronountōn ('inheriting') echoes the inheritance language of 1:2 and 1:14.
13. The Abraham narrative now provides positive support for perseverance. The logic of God's oath is elegant: human oaths invoke a higher authority as guarantor, but God has no superior — so he swore by himself, making his own nature the guarantee. This draws on Genesis 22:16-17, where God's oath follows Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 22:16-17 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Quoting Genesis 22:17. The Hebrew construction behind the Greek (infinitive absolute + finite verb) expresses emphasis through repetition: 'blessing I will bless' means 'I will absolutely, without question, bless.' We render this emphatic construction with 'surely' and 'certainly' rather than preserving the repetitive form that sounds unnatural in English.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 22:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The verb makrothymēsas ('having waited patiently, having been long-suffering') picks up the 'patience' (makrothymia) of verse 12 — Abraham is the model of the patience the author recommends. The word epetychen ('obtained, attained') indicates successful arrival at the goal. Abraham waited twenty-five years for Isaac — the patience was not passive but active trust sustained over decades.
16. The author explains the universal logic of oath-taking: people invoke a higher authority to settle disputes. An oath brings finality (peras, 'end, limit, boundary') and confirmation (bebaiōsin, 'ratification, guarantee'). This human practice establishes the framework for understanding God's oath — if human oaths settle matters, how much more does a divine oath?
17. The word ametatheton ('unchangeable, irrevocable, immutable') is emphatic — God's purpose cannot be altered, reversed, or modified. The verb emesiteusen ('guaranteed, mediated, interposed') means God inserted an oath between his promise and its fulfillment as a mediating guarantee. The 'heirs of the promise' (klēronomoi tēs epangelias) extends beyond Abraham to include all who inherit the Abrahamic blessing — including the Christian audience.
18. The 'two unchangeable things' (duo pragmatōn ametaethetōn) are God's promise and God's oath — either alone would suffice, but together they provide double assurance. The phrase 'impossible for God to lie' (adynaton pseusasthai ton theon) asserts a divine impossibility — not a limitation but a perfection. The image of 'fleeing for refuge' (kataphygontes) evokes the Old Testament cities of refuge (Numbers 35:9-15), where those who fled found legal protection.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 35:9-15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The anchor metaphor is unique in the New Testament, though common in Greco-Roman literature as a symbol of stability. What is remarkable is where this anchor is fixed — not in the ocean floor but behind the curtain (katapetasmatos) of the heavenly sanctuary. The imagery combines nautical and temple language: the soul is anchored in the Holy of Holies. The adjectives asphalē ('firm, safe, unfailing') and bebaian ('secure, reliable, confirmed') double the assurance.
20. The term prodromos ('forerunner') is used only here of Christ in the New Testament. A forerunner goes ahead to prepare the way for others to follow — unlike the Levitical high priest who entered the Holy of Holies alone, Jesus enters on behalf of others who will follow him in. The phrase 'forever according to the order of Melchizedek' returns the argument to Psalm 110:4 from 5:6, resuming the Melchizedek discussion that the warning passage (5:11-6:12) interrupted. Chapter 7 will now expound this priesthood in full.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 110:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

7

Summary: *Hebrews 7 develops the Melchizedek priesthood argument at full length. The chapter moves in three stages: first, an exposition of Genesis 14:18-20 showing Melchizedek's superiority to Abraham and therefore to Levi (verses 1-10); second, an argument that the change from Levitical to Melchizedek priesthood implies a change of law (verses 11-19); third, the superiority of Christ's permanent, oath-guaranteed priesthood over the temporary, death-limited Levitical priesthood (verses 20-28). The chapter culminates in a description of Jesus as the perfect high priest — holy, innocent, undefiled, exalted above the heavens.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Melchizedek argument is the most sophisticated typological exegesis in the New Testament. The author uses the silence of Genesis (no recorded parents, birth, or death) as positive evidence — what the text does not say about Melchizedek becomes a type of Christ's eternal priesthood. The tithing argument (verses 4-10) is brilliantly constructed: Levi, though unborn, paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham's body, proving Melchizedek's superiority to the entire Levitical system.*

Translation Friction: *The argument from silence about Melchizedek's genealogy (verse 3) is a hermeneutical method unfamiliar to modern readers. The claim that the Levitical system is 'set aside' (verse 18) raises significant questions about continuity and discontinuity between the covenants. We render the text as the author presents it without adjudicating between dispensational and covenantal frameworks.*

Connections: *Genesis 14:18-20 (Melchizedek's appearance) and Psalm 110:4 (the divine oath) are the two pillars. The argument about a change of law (verse 12) anticipates the new covenant argument of chapter 8. The 'indestructible life' (verse 16) connects to the resurrection. The oath without repentance (verse 21) echoes the oath certainty of 6:13-20.*

¹For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, met Abraham as he was returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, ²To whom as well Abraham offered a tenth part of all. First being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that as well King of Salem, which is, King of peace. ³Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever. ⁴Now consider how great this man was — even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the finest spoils. ⁵Now the descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment under the law to collect tithes from the people — that is, from their own brothers and sisters — even though they too are descended from Abraham. ⁶But this man, who does not trace his descent from them, received tithes from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises. ⁷And beyond all dispute, the lesser is blessed by the greater. ⁸In the one case, mortal men receive tithes; but in the other case, one receives them of whom it is testified that he lives. ⁹And, so to speak, even Levi, who collects tithes, paid tithes through Abraham. ¹⁰For he was still in the body of his ancestor when Melchizedek met Abraham. ¹¹Now if perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood — for on the basis of it the people received the law — what further need would there have been for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, rather than being designated according to the order of Aaron? ¹²For when the priesthood is changed, there must also be a change of law. ¹³For the one about whom these things are said belongs to a different tribe, from which no one has ever served at the altar. ¹⁴For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. ¹⁵And this becomes even more clear when another priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, ¹⁶Who is made, not following the law of a carnal commandment, but following the authority of an endless life. ¹⁷For it is testified of him, "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." ¹⁸For on the one hand, a former commandment is set aside because of its weakness and uselessness — ¹⁹For the instruction of Moses fashioned nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better confident expectation did. By the which we draw nigh to God. ²⁰And this was not without an oath. For others became priests without an oath, ²¹For those priests were made without an oath. But this with an oath by him that stated to him, The Lord swears and will not turn back, you are a priest for ever following the order of Melchisedec. ²²Accordingly, Jesus has also become the guarantee of a better covenant. ²³The former priests were

many in number because death prevented them from continuing in office. ²⁴But because he remains forever, he holds a permanent priesthood. ²⁵Therefore he is able to save completely those who approach God through him, since he always lives to intercede for them. ²⁶For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest: holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself. ²⁸For the law appoints as high priests men who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The author begins expounding Genesis 14:18-20 verse by verse. Melchizedek holds two offices simultaneously — king and priest — a combination forbidden under the Mosaic law (kings came from Judah, priests from Levi). Only Christ unites both offices. 'Salem' (Salēm) is traditionally identified with Jerusalem (cf. Psalm 76:2). The Greek *kopēs* ('defeat, slaughter, cutting down') refers to Abraham's military victory over the four kings who had captured Lot.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 14:18-20. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 76:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The author interprets both the name and the title etymologically. Melchizedek (Hebrew *malki-tsedeq*) means 'king of righteousness.' Salem (Hebrew *shalem*) means 'peace.' The combination — righteousness and peace — echoes Psalm 85:10 ('righteousness and peace have kissed') and Isaiah 32:17 ('the fruit of righteousness will be peace'). The order matters: righteousness first, then peace — reflecting the biblical principle that true peace is founded on justice. Abraham's tithe to Melchizedek is the key datum for the argument in verses 4-10.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 14:18-20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 85:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 32:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The three alpha-privative adjectives — *apatōr* ('without father'), *amētōr* ('without mother'), *agenealogētos* ('without genealogy') — describe what Genesis does not record about Melchizedek, not necessarily what was historically true. The argument is typological: because the text records no beginning or end for Melchizedek, his literary portrait resembles the eternal Son. The crucial verb is *aphōmoiōmenos* ('made to resemble, being likened to') — Melchizedek resembles the Son, not the reverse. The type points to the reality, not the reality to the type. He 'remains' (*menei*) a priest *eis to diēnekes* ('in perpetuity, forever').
4. The imperative *theōreite* ('consider, observe') calls for careful thought. The word *pēlikos* ('how great') asks the audience to measure Melchizedek's stature. The word *akrothinion* ('finest spoils, choicest portion of plunder') indicates Abraham gave not a random tenth but the best of the best. The title 'patriarch' (*patriarchēs*) — the highest dignity in Jewish memory — is deliberately used to heighten the contrast: even the great Abraham paid tribute to this figure.
5. The argument builds: Levitical priests collect tithes from fellow descendants of Abraham. They tithe equals. But Melchizedek collected tithes from Abraham himself — the superior tithing the inferior. The phrase *exelēluthotas ek tēs osphyos Abraam* ('having come from the loins of Abraham') uses vivid physical language to emphasize shared ancestry.
6. Melchizedek stands outside the Levitical genealogical system entirely (*mē genealogoumenos ex autōn*) — his authority derives from a different source. Two actions demonstrate his superiority: he received tithes from Abraham, and he blessed Abraham. Verse 7 will explain why the second action proves superiority.
7. This is stated as an axiom: *chōris pasēs antilogias* ('beyond all dispute, without any contradiction'). Blessing flows downward — from the greater to the lesser. Since Melchizedek blessed Abraham, Melchizedek was the greater party. This inverts the expected hierarchy: Abraham, the father of the nation, the recipient of divine promises, was the lesser in this encounter.
8. The contrast is between Levitical priests who die (*apothnēskontes anthrōpoi*, 'dying humans') and Melchizedek of whom Scripture testifies 'he lives' (*hoti zē*). Since Genesis records no death for Melchizedek, the silence of the text functions as testimony to ongoing life. This argument from silence is characteristic of the author's exegetical method.
9. The cautious phrase *hōs epos eipein* ('so to speak, one might even say') shows the author is aware this is a bold claim. Levi, the ancestor of all priests, himself paid tithes to Melchizedek — not directly, but through his ancestor Abraham. The argument depends on the concept of corporate solidarity: descendants are present in their ancestors' actions.

10. The Greek *osphyi* ('loins, body') refers to the procreative capacity of the ancestor. Levi was 'in' Abraham seminally — his existence was contained within Abraham's future line. This concept of ancestral representation was common in ancient thought and appears in the rabbinic principle that what the fathers do affects the children. The argument is complete: if Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham, then the Melchizedek priesthood is superior to the Levitical.
11. The argument shifts from Melchizedek's superiority (verses 1-10) to the insufficiency of the Levitical system (verses 11-19). The word *teleiōsis* ('perfection, completion, accomplishment') refers to the ability to bring worshipers into full, permanent relationship with God. If the Levitical system could do this, Psalm 110:4 would be unnecessary. The parenthetical note — the people received the law on the basis of the Levitical priesthood — shows how deeply intertwined priesthood and law were. To change one is to change the other (verse 12).
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 110:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The verb *metatithemenēs* ('being changed, being transferred') and the noun *metathesis* ('change, transfer, alteration') share the same root, creating emphasis through repetition. The logic is compact and revolutionary: priesthood and law are an integrated system. If the priesthood changes from Levitical to Melchizedek, the entire legal framework built on the Levitical priesthood must also change. This is the author's most direct statement about the obsolescence of the Mosaic law.
13. The practical proof: Jesus belongs to the tribe of Judah, not Levi. Under Mosaic law, no Judahite could serve as priest. The very fact that a non-Levite is declared priest confirms that the legal framework has changed. The phrase *proschēken tō thysiastērīō* ('attended to/served at the altar') refers to the priestly ministry of sacrifice.
14. The verb *anatetalken* ('has risen, has sprung up') is used for the rising of a star or the sprouting of a plant — both messianic images (Numbers 24:17, Isaiah 11:1). The phrase 'our Lord' (*ho kyrios hēmōn*) is one of the few times Hebrews uses 'Lord' for Jesus (cf. 2:3, 13:20). Moses's silence about Judahite priests is decisive: the Mosaic law made no provision for what God accomplished in Christ.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 24:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 11:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The phrase *katadēlon estin* ('it is thoroughly clear, it is abundantly evident') intensifies the argument. The word *homoiotēta* ('likeness, resemblance, similarity') echoes verse 3's *aphōmoiōmenos* — the resemblance between Melchizedek and Christ is the hinge of the entire argument.
16. The contrast is between two foundations for priesthood: *nomou entolēs sarkinēs* ('a law of fleshly/physical commandment') — meaning the genealogical requirement that priests descend from Aaron — and *dynameōs zōēs akatalytou* ('power of indestructible life'). The word *sarkinēs* ('fleshly, physical') is not pejorative but describes a system based on physical lineage. The word *akatalytou* ('indestructible, unable to be dissolved') is powerful — Christ's life cannot be terminated, making his priesthood permanent.
17. Psalm 110:4 is quoted again (cf. 5:6), now as scriptural testimony supporting the claim of verse 16. The 'forever' (*eis ton aiōna*) is the key word — it is the permanence of Christ's priesthood, grounded in his indestructible life, that distinguishes it from the temporary Levitical priesthood.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 110:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The word *athetēsis* ('setting aside, annulment, abrogation') is a legal term for the cancellation of a regulation. The 'former commandment' (*proagousēs entolēs*) refers to the Levitical priesthood system and its associated laws. The two reasons for annulment — weakness (*asthenes*, 'inability to accomplish its purpose') and uselessness (*anōpheles*, 'unprofitableness, inability to help') — are not moral judgments on the law itself but assessments of its capacity to bring perfection (verse 11).
19. The stark declaration 'the law made nothing perfect' (*ouden eteleiōsen ho nomos*) is the hinge of the argument. What the law could not do — bring people into full, permanent access to God — the 'better hope' (*kreittōn elpis*) accomplishes. The verb *engizomen* ('we draw near') is a priestly term for approaching God's presence, now democratized — all believers draw near, not just the high priest once a year. The word 'better' (*kreittonos*) is the signature adjective of Hebrews, appearing thirteen times.
20. The argument shifts to the oath guarantee. Levitical priests were appointed by genealogical qualification, not by divine oath. Christ's priesthood, by contrast, was established by God's sworn oath in Psalm 110:4. An oath-backed appointment is inherently more authoritative and permanent than one based on birth.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 110:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Quoting Psalm 110:4 with a new element emphasized: the oath includes the clause 'will not change his mind' (*ou metamelēthēsetai*). The Greek *metamelēthēsetai* ('will not repent, will not regret, will not change his mind') asserts the irrevocability of God's decision. Unlike human appointments that can be reversed, God's oath-backed priesthood stands permanently. Some manuscripts add 'according to the order of Melchizedek,' but the SBLGNT omits it here.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 110:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

- 22.** The word *engyos* ('guarantee, surety, bondsman') appears only here in the New Testament. A guarantor personally stakes themselves that an agreement will be honored. Jesus is not merely the mediator of the new covenant but its personal guarantee — his very person ensures its fulfillment. The word *diathēkēs* ('covenant') introduces the covenant theme that will dominate chapter 8. This is the first time in Hebrews that the new covenant is called 'better' (*kreittōn*).
- 23.** The argument is simple but devastating: the Levitical system required a succession of priests because each one died. The accumulation of priests (*pleiones*, 'many, numerous') is itself evidence of the system's impermanence. Each death was a disruption, requiring a new priest to be installed.
- 24.** The Greek *aparabaton* ('permanent, untransferable, inviolable') describes a priesthood that cannot be passed to another. The word literally means 'not passing to another' — Christ's priesthood has no successor because he never vacates the office. This is the practical implication of the 'indestructible life' of verse 16.
- 25.** The phrase *sōzein eis* *panteles* ('to save completely/to the uttermost') can mean both 'completely' (in scope — every dimension of salvation) and 'forever' (in duration — to the final end). Both meanings are likely intended. The present participle *proserchomenous* ('those who are approaching') describes an ongoing habit, not a one-time act. The word *entynchanein* ('to intercede, to appeal on behalf of') describes Christ's perpetual priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary — his saving work did not end at the cross but continues through intercession.
- 26.** Five attributes describe the ideal high priest, moving from moral character to cosmic status: *hosios* ('holy, devout, pious' — holy in personal character, distinct from *hagios* which emphasizes consecration), *akakos* ('innocent, without evil, guileless'), *amiantos* ('unstained, undefiled, pure'), *kechōrismenos apo tōn hamartōlōn* ('separated from sinners' — not in the sense of avoiding them, since he was 'made like his brothers in every way' in 2:17, but in the sense of being untouched by sin), and *hypsēloteros tōn ouranōn genomenos* ('having become higher than the heavens' — his exaltation to cosmic supremacy).
- 27.** Three contrasts with the Levitical system: frequency (daily versus once for all), sequence (first for himself, then for the people — Christ has no sins requiring atonement), and substance (animal sacrifices versus himself). The adverb *ephapax* ('once for all') is the most important word — it asserts the unrepeatable, completely sufficient nature of Christ's self-offering. This word will recur in 9:12 and 10:10 as the defining characteristic of the new covenant sacrifice.
- 28.** The chapter's concluding summary compresses the entire argument into one sentence with two contrasts: the law versus the oath, and weak men versus the perfected Son. The phrase *meta ton nomon* ('after the law') is chronologically significant — Psalm 110 was written after the Mosaic legislation, meaning God's oath supersedes the earlier arrangement. The perfect participle *teteleōmenon* ('having been made perfect') describes a completed state — the Son's perfection through suffering (2:10, 5:8-9) is permanent and irreversible.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 110 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

8

Summary: *Hebrews 8 is the theological summit of the letter's central argument. Christ is a high priest who serves in the true heavenly sanctuary, not the earthly copy. The earthly tabernacle and its priesthood were a shadow of the heavenly reality. The chapter then quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34 in its entirety — the longest Old Testament quotation in the New Testament — to demonstrate that God himself declared the first covenant would be replaced by a new and better covenant. The chapter concludes with a devastating inference: by calling the covenant 'new,' God made the first one old, and what is old and aging is about to disappear.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Jeremiah 31 quotation is the longest continuous Old Testament quotation in the New Testament (verses 8-12). The author lets the prophet's words carry the full weight of the argument — the new covenant is not a Christian invention but a divine promise through Israel's own prophet. The four promises of the new covenant (law written on hearts, direct knowledge of God, universal knowledge, forgiveness of sins) define the essence of the Christian experience.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between the 'shadow' (*skia*) and the 'true' (*alēthinos*) sanctuary reflects a Platonic-sounding framework that the author may draw from Hellenistic Judaism (particularly Philo). Whether this indicates direct Platonic influence or independent theological reasoning is debated. The final verse's statement that the first covenant 'is about to disappear' may reflect a pre-70 AD date (before the temple's destruction) or may be theological rather than historical language.*

Connections: *Jeremiah 31:31-34 is the foundational new covenant text, echoed in the Last Supper narratives (Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25). The shadow/reality framework draws on Exodus 25:40 (the heavenly pattern shown to Moses). The obsolescence of the first covenant connects to 7:12 (change of priesthood requires change of law). The new covenant promises will be applied practically in 10:15-18.*

¹Now the main point of what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ²He serves in the true sanctuary, the genuine tabernacle set up by the Lord and not by any human being. ³For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; therefore it was necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. ⁴Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are already those who offer gifts according to the law. ⁵They serve in a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of the heavenly one, just as Moses was warned when he was about to construct the tent: "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain." ⁶But now Christ has obtained a ministry that is as much more excellent as the covenant he mediates is better, since it is enacted on better promises. ⁷For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second. ⁸For he finds fault with them when he says: "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah — ⁹Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I picked up them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. Because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, says the Lord. ¹⁰For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they will be my people. ¹¹And they will not teach each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹²For I will be merciful toward their wrongdoing, and I will remember their sins no more." ¹³By calling it 'new,' he has made the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is about to disappear.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word *kephalaion* ('main point, summary, chief matter') signals that what follows is the central thesis of the entire letter. The phrase 'seated at the right hand' (*ekathisen en dexia*) returns to Psalm 110:1 from 1:3, 13 — the Son's session at God's right hand frames the entire argument. The title 'Majesty' (*megalōsynēs*) avoids the divine name while conveying supreme authority.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 110:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The word *leitourgos* ('minister, servant, one who performs public service') is a cultic term for priestly service. The phrase *tēs skēnēs tēs alēthinēs* ('the true tent/tabernacle') introduces the shadow/reality distinction. The 'true' (*alēthinos*) tabernacle is not 'true' as opposed to 'false' but 'true' as opposed to 'copy' — the heavenly original versus the earthly reproduction. The Lord (*kyrios*) pitched this tent, distinguishing it from the human-made tabernacle of Exodus.
3. The logic is simple: a priesthood requires an offering. Since Christ is a high priest, he must have an offering. The author does not specify the offering here — that revelation comes in 9:12-14 (his own blood) and 9:26 (himself). The verb *prosenegkē* (aorist subjunctive of *prospherō*) points to a definitive, singular offering rather than repeated acts.
4. The conditional is contrary-to-fact: Christ is not on earth but in the heavenly sanctuary. On earth, only Levitical priests could serve, and Christ is from Judah (7:14). His priesthood operates in a different sphere — the heavenly sanctuary. The present tense 'there are' (*ontōn*) those who offer according to the law suggests the earthly temple is still functioning when this letter was written, possibly indicating a pre-70 AD date.
5. Quoting Exodus 25:40. The terms *hypodeigmati* ('copy, imitation') and *skia* ('shadow') describe the earthly tabernacle's relationship to the heavenly reality. A shadow proves the existence of the object casting it but is not the object itself. The word *typon* ('pattern, model') shown to Moses on Sinai was the heavenly original — Moses built a replica. This framework is central to the author's argument: the earthly system was always derivative, pointing to the true reality where Christ now serves.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 25:40 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The verse establishes a proportion: ministry excellence corresponds to covenant excellence. Three uses of 'better' (*diaphorōteras, kreittōn, kreittosin*) drive the comparison. The word *mesitēs* ('mediator') describes one who stands between two parties to guarantee an agreement. The phrase *epi kreittosin epageliais nenomothetai* ('enacted on better promises') introduces the Jeremiah 31 quotation — the new covenant's superiority lies in its promises.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 31. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The logic parallels 4:8 (if Joshua had given rest, no second day would be appointed) and 7:11 (if perfection came through the Levitical priesthood, no Melchizedek priest would be needed). The word *amemptos* ('faultless, blameless, without defect') does not mean the first covenant was sinful but that it was unable to accomplish its ultimate purpose — permanent access to God. The very existence of Jeremiah 31's 'new covenant' prophecy proves the first was insufficient.

7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 31. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Jeremiah 31:31-34 quotation begins here — the longest continuous Old Testament quotation in the New Testament. The Greek *memphomenos* ('finding fault with') could be directed at the people (*autous*, 'them') or at the covenant. The author reads Jeremiah's prophecy as God's own critique of the first covenant's inadequacy. The verb *synteleō* ('I will establish, I will bring to completion') suggests not mere replacement but fulfillment. The specification of 'Israel and Judah' encompasses the entire covenant people — both kingdoms.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 31:31-34 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The image of God taking Israel 'by the hand' (*epilabomenou mou tēs cheiros autōn*) is tender — like a parent leading a child. The contrast with their subsequent unfaithfulness is poignant. The Greek *ēmelēsa autōn* ('I showed no concern for them, I neglected them') translates a difficult Hebrew phrase in Jeremiah. The Septuagint rendering differs from the Masoretic Text's 'though I was a husband to them.' The author follows the Septuagint, which emphasizes God's withdrawal rather than his continued commitment.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 31:31-34. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The first two promises of the new covenant: internalized law and restored relationship. The move from external stone tablets to internal inscription (*dianoian*, 'mind'; *kardias*, 'hearts') transforms obedience from external compliance to internal disposition. The covenant formula 'I will be their God and they will be my people' (*esomai autois eis theon*) is the most ancient covenant declaration, running from Exodus 6:7 through Revelation 21:3. In the new covenant, this relationship is fully realized.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 6:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The third promise: universal, direct knowledge of God. The double negative *ou mē* ('they will never, they will not at all') is emphatic. The knowledge promised is not intellectual information about God but relational knowing (*gnōthi*, from *ginōskō*) — the personal, experiential knowledge of covenant intimacy. The phrase 'from the least to the greatest' (*apo mikrou heōs megalou*) asserts that this knowledge crosses all social and spiritual hierarchies.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The fourth promise and the foundation of all the others: complete forgiveness. The word *hileōs* ('merciful, gracious, propitious') is related to *hilaskomai* ('to atone,' cf. 2:17) — God's mercy toward sin is rooted in atonement. The phrase *ou mē mnēsthō eti* ('I will never again remember') does not mean God literally forgets but that he will not hold sins against his people — they will never be counted in the record. This promise is what makes the new covenant 'better': the sin problem is definitively resolved. The author will return to this verse in 10:17 as the clinching argument.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 31:31-34. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The author's commentary on the Jeremiah quotation is surgically precise: the single word 'new' (*kainēn*) in Jeremiah 31:31 logically renders the first covenant 'old' (*pepalaiōken*, 'has made old/obsolete'). The two participles — *palaioumenon* ('becoming obsolete') and *gēraskon* ('growing old, aging') — describe a process rather than a sudden event. The phrase *engys aphanismou* ('near disappearance') is debated: is this a pre-70 AD prediction of the temple's destruction, or a theological statement about the first covenant's status regardless of the temple's physical fate? The text does not specify, and we leave it unresolved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 31:31 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

9

Summary: Hebrews 9 provides a detailed comparison between the earthly tabernacle and the heavenly sanctuary. The chapter describes the furniture and rituals of the old covenant tabernacle (verses 1-10), then declares that Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary once for all through his own blood, obtaining eternal redemption (verses 11-14). Christ is the mediator of the new covenant, and his death is both sacrifice and testament-inauguration (verses 15-22). The chapter climaxes with the declaration that Christ appeared once at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and will appear a second time not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him (verses 23-28).

What Makes This Remarkable: The tabernacle typology is the most sustained in the New Testament. The author describes the outer and inner sanctuaries, their furnishings, and the annual Day of Atonement ritual, all as shadows of Christ's work. The phrase 'once for all' (ephapax, verse 12) is the theological center of gravity. The double-entendre of diathēkē as both 'covenant' and 'testament/will' (verses 16-17) is a unique wordplay that works because a will requires the testator's death.

Translation Friction: The author's description of the tabernacle furniture (verses 2-5) contains some details that differ from the Old Testament layout (e.g., the golden altar of incense placed inside the Holy of Holies rather than outside). Scholars debate whether this reflects a different tradition, a theological point about the altar's function, or the Day of Atonement ritual when incense entered the inner chamber. We render the text as written and note the discrepancy.

Connections: The tabernacle description draws on Exodus 25-30. The Day of Atonement ritual follows Leviticus 16. The blood-of-the-covenant language echoes Exodus 24:8 and Jesus's words at the Last Supper (Mark 14:24). The 'once for all' theme connects to 7:27 and 10:10. Christ's second appearing (verse 28) connects to the eschatological hope throughout the New Testament.

¹Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. ²For a tent was prepared — the outer section — in which were the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the Presence. This is called the Holy Place. ³Behind the second curtain was a tent called the Most Holy Place. ⁴It had the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, in which were a golden jar holding the manna, Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the covenant. ⁵Above the ark were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. But we cannot speak about these things in detail now. ⁶With these arrangements in place, the priests continually enter the outer tent to carry out their duties of worship, ⁷However, into the second traveled the high priest alone once every year, not apart from blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. ⁸By this the Holy Spirit was showing that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the outer tent still had standing. ⁹This is a symbol for the present time, during which gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, ¹⁰These were outward regulations about food, drink, and various ceremonial washings — rules that applied only until the time when God would set things right. ¹¹But when Christ appeared as high priest of the good things that have come, he entered through the greater and more perfect tent — not made with hands, that is, not of this creation — ¹²Neither by the lifeblood of goats and calves, but by his own lifeblood he went into in once into the sacred location, possessing obtained eternal redemption for us. ¹³For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them for the purification of the body, ¹⁴Purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living god?, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God. ¹⁵For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. ¹⁶For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. ¹⁷For a will takes effect only at death; it has no force while the one who made it is still alive. ¹⁸Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. ¹⁹For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the scroll itself and all the people, ²⁰Indeed, declaring, This is the blood of the testament which God has enjoined to you. ²¹And in the same way he sprinkled the tent and all the vessels used in worship with blood. ²²Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. ²³Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves require better sacrifices than these. ²⁴For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by hands — a mere copy of the true one — but into heaven itself, to appear now in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶Otherwise, he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷And just as it is appointed for people to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸So Christ was once offered to bear the wrongdoings of numerous. And to them that pay attention for him will he appear the second moment without sin to salvation.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The adjective *kosmikon* ('earthly, worldly, of this world') does not mean 'cosmetic' or 'ornamental' but 'belonging to this created order' — as opposed to the heavenly sanctuary. The word *dikaiōmata* ('regulations, ordinances') refers to the divinely prescribed rules of worship. The author acknowledges the first covenant had legitimate worship — it was real but provisional.
2. The author describes the tabernacle's two-chamber structure from Exodus 26. The 'first' (*prōtē*) tent is the outer chamber, the Holy Place. Its furnishings are: the lampstand (*lychnia*, the seven-branched menorah of Exodus 25:31-40), the table (*trapeza*, for the showbread, Exodus 25:23-30), and the prothesis *tōn artōn* ('the setting forth of the bread,' the bread of the Presence renewed weekly). We render 'the Holy Place' (*Hagia*) to distinguish it from the inner chamber.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 26. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 25:31-40. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The 'second curtain' (*deuteron katapetasma*) separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (*Hagia Hagiōn*, literally 'Holy of Holies'). Only the high priest could pass this curtain, and only once a year on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:2). This curtain is the same one that the author says Jesus has passed through (6:19, 10:20).
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 16:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The word *thymiaterion* can mean either 'censer' (a portable incense burner) or 'altar of incense.' In the Old Testament, the altar of incense stood in the Holy Place, not in the Most Holy Place (Exodus 30:6). The author may be associating it with the inner room because on the Day of Atonement the high priest brought incense inside the curtain (Leviticus 16:12-13), or he may be describing a functional relationship rather than physical location. The three items inside the ark — manna (Exodus 16:33), Aaron's budded staff (Numbers 17:10), and the tablets (Exodus 25:16) — are all covenant tokens.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 30:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 16:12-13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 16:33. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 17:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 25:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The cherubim (*Cheroubin doxēs*, 'cherubim of glory') are the golden figures described in Exodus 25:18-22, their wings forming the space where God's presence was manifest. The word *hilastērion* ('mercy seat, place of atonement') is the same word Paul uses in Romans 3:25 for Christ as the 'place of atonement.' It is the lid of the ark where the high priest sprinkled blood on the Day of Atonement. The author deliberately abbreviates — his purpose is not a tour of the tabernacle but the contrast between the old system and Christ.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 25:18-22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The regular priests entered the Holy Place daily to tend the lampstand, set out the bread, and offer incense. The phrase *dia pantos* ('continually, at all times') emphasizes the repetitive nature of this service. The author's point will become clear in contrast: where the ordinary priests go continually, the high priest goes once a year (verse 7), and Christ goes once for all (verse 12).
7. Three restrictions govern the high priest's access to the Most Holy Place: only the high priest (*monos*), only once a year (*hapax tou eniautou*, on the Day of Atonement), and never without blood (*ou chōris haimatos*). These limitations demonstrate the imperfection of the system — access to God's presence was severely restricted. The word *agnoēmātōn* ('sins of ignorance, unintentional errors') refers to sins committed unknowingly, following Leviticus 4-5. Deliberate, defiant sins had no sacrificial remedy under the old system (Numbers 15:30-31).
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 4-5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 15:30-31. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Holy Spirit is identified as the interpreter of tabernacle symbolism — the physical structure communicated a spiritual lesson. The closed curtain between the two chambers was not merely a liturgical boundary but a divine sign: full access to God's presence was 'not yet disclosed' (*mēpō pephanerōsthai*). The phrase 'still had standing' (*eti echousēs stasin*) could refer to the physical first chamber of the tabernacle or, figuratively, to the entire old covenant system.
9. The word *parabolē* ('symbol, parable, illustration') identifies the tabernacle as a parabolic structure — it teaches by analogy. The critical phrase is *kata syneidēsīn teleiōsai* ('to perfect with respect to conscience'). The old sacrifices could not cleanse the inner person — they dealt with external ritual purity but left the conscience (*syneidēsis*, the internal moral awareness) unresolved. This is the fundamental deficiency Christ's sacrifice addresses

(verse 14).

10. The phrase *dikaiōmata sarkos* ('regulations for the body/flesh') characterizes the old system as externally focused — food laws, drink laws, and ritual washings (baptismois, cf. 6:2). The word *diorthōseōs* ('new order, reformation, setting right') is used only here in the New Testament. It describes the time when the external, provisional regulations would be replaced by internal, permanent realities. The author identifies that time as the present — Christ's coming is the *diorthōsis*.
11. The Greek shifts dramatically from the old system to Christ. Some manuscripts read 'good things to come' (*mellontōn*) rather than 'good things that have come' (*genomenōn*); the SBLGNT reads *genomenōn*, emphasizing that the good things are already realized in Christ. The heavenly tent is described by three negatives: not made with hands (*ou cheiropoiētou*), not of this creation (*ou tautēs tēs ktiseōs*) — it belongs to an entirely different order of reality.
12. This verse is the theological center of Hebrews. Three contrasts with the Day of Atonement ritual: the medium (animal blood versus his own blood), the frequency (annually versus once for all, *ephapax*), and the result (temporary cleansing versus eternal redemption, *aiōnian lytrōsin*). The word *lytrōsin* ('redemption, ransoming, liberation by payment') evokes the Old Testament *go'el* — the kinsman who pays the price to set family members free. Christ's blood is both the means of entry and the price of redemption.
13. The argument is from lesser to greater (*a fortiori*). The three ritual elements — blood of goats, blood of bulls (Day of Atonement, Leviticus 16), and ashes of a heifer (the red heifer ceremony, Numbers 19) — achieved genuine but limited cleansing: purification of the 'flesh' (*sarkos*), meaning external ritual purity. The author concedes the old system's effectiveness within its domain before arguing for Christ's greater effectiveness.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The phrase *posō mallon* ('how much more') completes the *a fortiori* argument. Three elements make Christ's sacrifice superior: the agent (Christ, not an animal), the means (through the eternal Spirit, not through ritual procedure), and the quality (without blemish, *amōmon* — the sacrificial perfection requirement of Leviticus 1:3 applied to Christ's moral perfection). The result penetrates where the old system could not: it cleanses the conscience (*syneidēsin*), not just the body. The purpose is positive — not merely forgiveness but enablement: 'to serve the living God' (*latreuein theō zōnti*).
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 1:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. Christ's death has retroactive power — it atones for sins committed under the first covenant as well as the second. The word *apolytrōsin* ('redemption, ransoming') extends the liberation language of verse 12. The phrase 'those who are called' (*hoi keklēmenoi*) uses the perfect passive — their calling is a completed divine act with ongoing effect. The 'eternal inheritance' (*aiōniou klēnomias*) echoes the inheritance language of 1:2, 14.
16. The author exploits the double meaning of *diathēkē*: in verses 15 and earlier, it means 'covenant'; here and in verse 17, it means 'will/testament.' A will becomes operative only when the testator dies. The wordplay works because the same Greek word serves both legal concepts. This is not a switch in meaning but an exploitation of the semantic overlap — Christ's death activates the new covenant just as a death activates a will.
17. The legal principle is straightforward: a will is valid (*bebaia*, 'secure, in force') only after the testator's death. It has no legal power (*ischyei*, 'is strong, is operative') during the testator's lifetime. Applied to Christ: the new covenant's blessings became operative through his death. This is the author's explanation of why the new covenant required a death — not merely to provide blood for sacrifice but to activate the testamentary provisions.
18. The verb *engekainistai* ('was inaugurated, was dedicated, was put into effect') indicates the formal activation of the covenant. The principle applies universally: both covenants required blood for their inauguration. The first covenant's inauguration with blood (Exodus 24:3-8) foreshadowed the new covenant's inauguration with Christ's blood.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 24:3-8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The author describes the covenant inauguration ceremony of Exodus 24:3-8, adding details not found in the Exodus account (goats, water, scarlet wool, hyssop, and sprinkling of the scroll). These additional elements may come from a tradition that combined the covenant ceremony with the Day of Atonement and red heifer rituals, or from a textual tradition no longer extant. The hyssop and scarlet wool appear in the red heifer ceremony (Numbers 19) and the leper cleansing (Leviticus 14).
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 24:3-8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 19. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 14. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Quoting Exodus 24:8 with slight modification. The Hebrew/LXX reads 'which the LORD has made with you'; the author writes 'which God has commanded for you' (*eneteilato pros hymas*). The verb *eneteilato* ('commanded') emphasizes the obligatory nature of the covenant. Jesus's words at the Last Supper — 'This is my blood of the covenant' (Mark 14:24) — deliberately echo this covenant-inauguration language.

- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 24:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** The sprinkling of the tabernacle and its vessels with blood is not directly recorded in Exodus 24 but is attested in Leviticus 8:15, 19 (the consecration of the tabernacle) and in Josephus (*Antiquities* 3.206). Every element of the worship system was consecrated by blood, reinforcing the principle of verse 22.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 8:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 22.** The qualifier 'almost' (*schedon*) is precise — some purification under the law used water (Numbers 31:23), fire (Numbers 31:23), or flour (Leviticus 5:11-13) rather than blood. But the general principle stands: blood is the primary means of purification and atonement. The final clause — *chōris haimatekchysias ou ginetai aphesis* ('without blood-shedding there is no forgiveness/release') — is one of the most foundational statements in biblical theology. The word *haimatekchysias* ('blood-shedding') appears only here in the New Testament.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 31:23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 5:11-13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** The argument: if the earthly copies (*hypodeigmata*) required animal blood for purification, the heavenly originals require a better sacrifice — Christ's own blood. The plural 'sacrifices' (*thysiais*) is surprising since Hebrews emphasizes the singularity of Christ's offering; it may be a plural of category ('sacrifices of a better kind') rather than quantity.
- 24.** Three contrasts define Christ's superior priestly ministry: the sanctuary (handmade copy versus heaven itself), the timing (now — presently, continuously), and the purpose (on our behalf — *hyper hēmōn*, his presence before God is for us). The word *antitypa* ('copies, counterparts, representations') identifies the earthly tabernacle as a reproduction, not the original. The verb *emphanisthēnai* ('to appear, to be manifest') describes Christ's visible presence before God's face (*prosōpō*, literally 'face') — he stands before God representing us.
- 25.** The adverb *pollakis* ('repeatedly, often, many times') contrasts with the 'once for all' of verse 12. The phrase *en haimati allotriō* ('with blood belonging to another, with blood not his own') highlights both the distance between the Levitical high priest and his sacrifice (he offers someone else's blood) and between the Levitical system and Christ (who offers his own blood). Christ's self-offering is both more costly and more effective.
- 26.** The *reductio ad absurdum*: if Christ's sacrifice were not once-for-all sufficient, he would have needed to suffer repeatedly throughout all of history. The phrase *epi synteleia tōn aiōnōn* ('at the culmination of the ages') places Christ's sacrifice at the climax of history — all previous ages were leading to this moment. The verb *atheēsō* ('to put away, to set aside, to annul') uses the same word from 7:18 (the annulment of the old commandment) — here it is sin itself that is annulled.
- 27.** The analogy: human beings die once (*hapax*), not repeatedly. Death is a singular, unrepeatable event followed by judgment. Christ's death follows the same pattern — singular and unrepeatable — but with a different sequel: not judgment but salvation (verse 28). The word *apokeitai* ('is appointed, is laid up, is stored away') suggests a divine decree — death is not random but ordained.
- 28.** The chapter ends with a sweeping christological summary in three acts: Christ's first appearing was to deal with sin (verse 26), his present ministry is intercession before God (verse 24), and his second appearing will bring final salvation (this verse). The phrase *pollōn anenenkein hamartias* ('to bear the sins of many') echoes the Servant Song of Isaiah 53:12. The words *chōris hamartias* ('without sin, apart from sin') mean his second coming will have nothing to do with sin — the sin problem was fully and finally resolved at the cross. The verb *apekdechomenois* ('eagerly waiting, expectantly anticipating') describes an active, longing hope.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 53:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

10

Summary: *Hebrews 10 completes the central priestly argument and transitions to exhortation. The chapter first demonstrates that animal sacrifices could never take away sins (verses 1-4), then presents Christ's self-offering as the fulfillment of Psalm 40 — 'a body you have prepared for me' (verses 5-10). Christ's single offering has perfected believers forever (verses 11-18). The author then draws three practical conclusions: approach God with confidence, hold fast to hope, and encourage one another (verses 19-25). A fourth warning passage warns of judgment for deliberate sin after receiving the truth (verses 26-31). The chapter closes by urging the audience to remember their earlier endurance and not throw away their confidence (verses 32-39).*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Psalm 40 quotation (verses 5-7) is theologically decisive — it places on Christ's lips a declaration that God does not desire animal sacrifices but has prepared a body for the purpose of doing God's will. The 'new and living way through the curtain, that is, his flesh' (verse 20) is one of the most profound metaphors in the letter. The warning passage (verses 26-31) is the most severe in the New Testament after the unforgivable sin passages.*

Translation Friction: *The Septuagint reading of Psalm 40:6 ('a body you have prepared for me') differs from the Masoretic Text ('ears you have dug/opened for me'). The author depends on the Septuagint reading for his argument. The warning of verses 26-31 raises the same questions about apostasy as 6:4-8. The phrase 'trampled the Son of God underfoot' (verse 29) is among the harshest in the New Testament.*

Connections: *The Psalm 40 quotation connects to the incarnation theology of chapter 2. The new covenant quotation from Jeremiah 31 returns in verses 16-17, closing the argument begun in chapter 8. The 'new and living way' (verse 20) connects to the 'forerunner' of 6:20. The call to perseverance (verses 32-39) anticipates the faith catalogue of chapter 11. The Habakkuk 2:3-4 quotation (verses 37-38) will be developed in chapter 11.*

¹For since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who draw near. ²Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered, since the worshipers, once cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year after year. ⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. ⁵Therefore, when Christ comes into the world, he says, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me. ⁶In burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷Then I said, 'See, I have come — in the scroll of the book it is written about me — to do your will, O God.'" ⁸When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" — these are offered according to the law — ⁹Then stated he, Lo, I arrive to do your will, O God. He takes off the initially, that he may establish the second. ¹⁰By that will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ¹¹And every priest stands day after day ministering and offering the same sacrifices repeatedly, which can never take away sins. ¹²But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³Since that time, he waits for his enemies to be made a footstool under his feet. ¹⁴For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. ¹⁵And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying, ¹⁶"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds," ¹⁷Then he adds: "I will never again remember their sins and lawless acts." ¹⁸Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. ¹⁹Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰He opened a new and living way for us through the curtain — that is, through his body. ²¹After an high priest over the house of God; ²²And our bodies washed with pure water, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. ²³Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for the one who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves as one, as the kind of some is. But exhorting one another — and so much the more, as you see the day approaching. ²⁶For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷However, a certain

fearful looking for of the time of reckoning and fiery indignation, which will devour the adversaries. ²⁸Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. ²⁹How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified as an ordinary thing, and who has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰For we know the one who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." ³¹It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. ³²But recall the earlier days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings. ³³Sometimes you were publicly exposed to ridicule and affliction, and sometimes you became partners with those who were treated that way. ³⁴For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better and lasting possession. ³⁵Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what is promised. ³⁷For, "In just a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay. ³⁸But my righteous one will live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." ³⁹But we are not among those who shrink back and are destroyed, but among those who have faith and preserve their souls.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The distinction between 'shadow' (skian) and 'true form' (eikona, literally 'image') refines the typology of 8:5. A shadow gives outline but no substance; the 'image' (eikōn) is the thing itself in its true form. The repetition of sacrifices 'year after year' (kat' eniauton) is itself evidence of their inadequacy — if they worked, they would not need repeating. The verb teleiōsai ('make perfect') carries the full weight of Hebrews' perfection concept: to bring into complete, permanent right relationship with God.
2. The rhetorical question expects the answer 'Yes.' If the sacrifices actually cleansed the conscience (syneidēsin hamartiōn, 'consciousness of sins'), they would be unnecessary after the first offering. The fact that they continue proves they have not accomplished their purpose. The word hapax ('once') here means 'once and for all' — genuine cleansing would be definitive.
3. The word anamnēsis ('reminder, remembrance, memorial') is deeply ironic: the sacrifices meant to deal with sin actually function as an annual reminder that sin has not been dealt with. The same word appears in the Last Supper accounts ('do this in remembrance of me,' Luke 22:19) — but Christ's memorial is of accomplished redemption, not unresolved guilt.
4. The declaration adynaton ('impossible') is categorical — not 'difficult' or 'unlikely' but absolutely impossible. The verb aphairein ('to take away, to remove') describes complete elimination. Animal blood could cover sins ceremonially (Leviticus 17:11) but could not remove them from the conscience or from God's account. This blunt assessment sets up the Psalm 40 quotation as the divine alternative.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 17:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 40. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Quoting Psalm 40:6-8 (LXX 39:7-9). The Greek sōma katērtisō moi ('a body you have prepared for me') differs from the Hebrew 'ears you have dug/opened for me.' The Septuagint translators apparently interpreted the Hebrew idiom (ears opened = readiness to hear and obey) with a broader reference to the whole body given for obedience. The author of Hebrews depends on this Septuagint reading — the 'body prepared' becomes the body Christ offered on the cross. The author places these words on Christ's lips as he enters the world (eiserchamenos eis ton kosmon), making the incarnation itself a priestly act of willing obedience.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 40:6-8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The holokautōmata ('burnt offerings,' where the entire animal is consumed) and peri hamartias ('sin offerings') represent the full range of Levitical sacrifice. God's displeasure is not with the sacrifices themselves but with their inability to accomplish what he desires — the permanent removal of sin and the restoration of relationship.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 40:6-8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The phrase en kephalidi bibliou ('in the scroll/heading of the book') likely refers to the Torah, where God's will for the Messiah is recorded. Christ's statement 'I have come to do your will' replaces the entire sacrificial system with personal, willing obedience. The obedience of the incarnate Son — culminating in the cross — is what God always desired, and what animal sacrifice could only symbolize.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 40:6-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The author now interprets the psalm quotation. Four categories of sacrifice are listed comprehensively (sacrifices, offerings, burnt offerings, sin offerings) and all four are rejected. The parenthetical 'these are offered according to the law' (kata nomon prosperontai) is significant: God does not desire the very sacrifices his own law prescribed. This paradox — God commanded what he did not ultimately want — is resolved by understanding

the sacrificial system as preparatory and typological.

9. The author's conclusion is decisive: the verb *anairei* ('he abolishes, he takes away, he removes') eliminates the first system (animal sacrifice), and the verb *stēsē* ('he may establish, he may set up') installs the second (Christ's willing obedience unto death). The 'first' and 'second' refer to the two systems, not the two covenants directly, though the implication is the same.
10. The phrase *en hō thelēmati* ('by that will') connects directly to Psalm 40:8 — Christ's doing of God's will is the instrument of our sanctification. The perfect passive *hēgiasmenoi esmen* ('we have been sanctified') describes a completed state with ongoing effect — the sanctification accomplished by Christ's offering is permanent. The word *ephapax* ('once for all') appears for the climactic fourth time in Hebrews (7:27, 9:12, 9:26, 10:10), definitively closing the argument about sacrifice.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 40:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The posture of the Levitical priests is significant: they stand (*hestēken*). There was no chair in the tabernacle because their work was never finished. The repetitive language — 'day after day' (*kath' hēmeran*), 'the same' (*tas autas*), 'repeatedly' (*pollakis*), 'never' (*oudepote*) — creates a sense of futile, endless repetition. The verb *perielein* ('take away, remove completely') is stronger than *aphairein* (verse 4) — these sacrifices cannot strip sin away.
12. The contrast with verse 11 is total: where Levitical priests stand (work unfinished), Christ sat down (work completed). Where they offer the same sacrifices repeatedly, Christ offered one sacrifice (*mian thysian*). The phrase *eis to diēnekes* ('for all time, in perpetuity') can modify either the offering ('one sacrifice that is effective for all time') or the sitting ('he sat down permanently'). Both readings are theologically true. The return to Psalm 110:1 ('sat down at the right hand') signals the completion of the priestly argument.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 110:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Quoting Psalm 110:1b. Christ's present activity is described as 'waiting' (*ekdechamenos*) — his sacrificial work is done, and he awaits the consummation when all opposition is subdued. The 'enemies made a footstool' imagery is ancient Near Eastern — a conquered king's enemies were placed under his feet as a sign of total subjection.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 110:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. This verse is the theological summary of the entire priestly argument. The perfect tense *teteleiōken* ('he has perfected') describes a completed act with permanent results. The present passive *hagiazomenous* ('those who are being sanctified') describes an ongoing process. The combination is precise: the sacrifice is complete and unrepeatable (perfect tense), but its application to believers is progressive (present tense). Believers are already perfected in status but still being sanctified in experience.
15. The Holy Spirit is again identified as the author of Scripture (cf. 3:7). The 'testimony' (*martyrei*) is from Jeremiah 31:33-34, returning to the new covenant passage quoted in full in chapter 8. The author now uses only the portions most relevant to his conclusion.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 31:33-34 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The Jeremiah 31:33 quotation is repeated from 8:10 with slight variations in word order — hearts before minds rather than minds before hearts. This may reflect citation from memory or a different manuscript tradition. The author extracts the two promises most relevant to his argument: internalized law (verse 16) and forgiveness (verse 17).
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 31:33. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. This is the clinching verse. The double negative *ou mē mnēsthēsomai* ('I will never, ever remember') from Jeremiah 31:34 asserts the absolute finality of new covenant forgiveness. The author has built an elaborate argument about sacrifice, priesthood, and covenant, and it all comes down to this: God will not remember sins.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 31:34. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The conclusion is elegant and final: if sins are forgiven, no further sacrifice is needed. The word *aphesis* ('forgiveness, release, sending away') describes sins fully dismissed. The phrase *ouketi prosphora peri hamartias* ('no longer any offering for sin') closes the priestly argument — the sacrificial system is not merely superseded but rendered unnecessary by accomplished forgiveness. The argument that began in 5:1 reaches its definitive conclusion.
19. The transition from exposition to exhortation is marked by 'therefore' (*oun*). Everything argued in chapters 5-10 now yields practical application. The word *parrēsian* ('confidence, boldness, freedom of speech') describes the access believers now possess — access that was restricted to one person, one day per year under the old system. The Most Holy Place (*tōn hagiōn*) is now open through Jesus's blood.
20. The phrase *hodon prosphaton kai zōsan* ('a new and living way') describes a path that is freshly opened (*prosphaton*, 'newly slaughtered/newly made' — originally a sacrificial term) and living (*zōsan* — this is not a dead ritual path but one animated by resurrection life). The identification of the curtain with Christ's flesh (*toutestin tēs sarkos autou*) is one of the letter's most compressed theological statements: just as the high priest passed through the curtain to reach God's presence, so Christ's death (the tearing of his flesh) opened permanent access to God.

21. The title 'great priest' (hierea megan) echoes the 'great high priest' of 4:14. The phrase 'over the house of God' (epi ton oikon tou theou) returns to the language of 3:6, where Christ was described as 'Son over God's house.' The two grounds for confidence are now stated: we have access (verses 19-20) and we have a priest (verse 21).
22. The first of three exhortations (verses 22, 23, 24-25). Drawing near (proserchōmetha) is the priestly access language of 4:16. The requirements parallel the high priest's preparation for the Day of Atonement: sprinkling of blood (Leviticus 16:14-15, here applied to the heart) and washing with water (Leviticus 16:4, here likely a reference to baptism). The four qualifications — sincere heart, full faith, sprinkled conscience, washed body — unite inner disposition and outward sign.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 16:14-15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The second exhortation. The word *aklinē* ('without wavering, unbending, firm') describes a confession that does not tilt or lean. The ground for unwavering hope is not human determination but divine faithfulness — *pistos ho epangeilamenos* ('faithful is the one who promised'). This echoes 6:13-20 on the certainty of God's oath.
24. The third exhortation is communal. The verb *katanoōmen* ('let us consider, let us pay careful attention to') demands thoughtful observation of one another's needs. The word *paroxysmon* ('stirring up, provocation, sharp incitement') is usually negative (cf. Acts 15:39, sharp disagreement), but here it is positive — provoking one another to love. Faith is not solitary but mutually dependent.
25. The word *episynagōgēn* ('gathering together, assembling') refers to the Christian community's regular meetings. Some were already abandoning corporate worship — a danger the author treats as serious, since isolation makes apostasy easier (cf. 3:13, mutual daily encouragement). The 'Day' (*tēn hēmeran*) is the day of Christ's return (9:28), which serves as both motivation and deadline.
26. The fourth and most severe warning passage begins. The word *hekousiōs* ('deliberately, willfully, voluntarily') contrasts with the sins of ignorance covered by the Levitical system (9:7). The present participle *hamartanontōn* ('sinning, continuing to sin') suggests a sustained pattern, not a single lapse. The phrase *epignōsin tēs alētheias* ('full knowledge of the truth') describes someone who has understood the gospel completely. The devastating conclusion: for such a person, *ouketi apoleipetai thysia* ('no sacrifice remains') — Christ's sacrifice is the last and only one, and if it is rejected, nothing else can atone.
27. The Greek *phobera tis ekdochē kriseōs* ('a certain fearful expectation of judgment') describes the dread anticipation of divine judgment. The phrase *pyros zēlos* ('fury/jealousy of fire') alludes to Deuteronomy 4:24 and Isaiah 26:11 — God's jealous fire consuming those who oppose him. The word *hupēnantios* ('adversaries, opponents') is strong — those who reject Christ's sacrifice place themselves among God's enemies.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 4:24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 26:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. Referring to Deuteronomy 17:2-6, which prescribed death for covenant violators when verified by two or three witnesses. The *a fortiori* argument follows: if rejection of the Mosaic law brought physical death, how much worse is the punishment for rejecting Christ?
28. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 17:2-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
29. Three acts of sacrilege are described with escalating severity: trampling the Son of God (*katapatēsas* — treating him as worthless, walking on him), treating the covenant blood as common/profane (*koinon hēgisamenos* — 'common' means 'not holy,' treating the sacred as ordinary), and outraging the Spirit of grace (*enyubrisas* — to insult with arrogant contempt). The phrase 'by which he was sanctified' (*en hō hēgiasthē*) is significant — the apostate was genuinely sanctified by Christ's blood, making the rejection more culpable.
30. Two quotations from Deuteronomy 32:35-36 (the Song of Moses). The first ('vengeance is mine') asserts God's exclusive right to execute justice — vengeance is not human prerogative but divine. The second ('the Lord will judge his people') is ominous in this context: the word 'his people' (*ton laon autou*) means that God's judgment falls on his own covenant community, not just outsiders. Those inside the covenant who violate it face divine judgment.
30. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 32:35-36 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
31. The adjective *phoberon* ('terrifying, fearful, dreadful') describes not irrational fear but appropriate terror before unmediated divine power. The verb *empesein* ('to fall into') suggests helpless collapse — not voluntary approach but involuntary exposure. The title 'living God' (*theou zōntos*) appears for the third time in Hebrews (3:12, 9:14), each time emphasizing God's active, dangerous vitality. This is not a philosophical abstraction but a God who acts.
32. The tone shifts from warning to encouragement. The word *phōtisthentes* ('enlightened') echoes 6:4 and may refer to baptism. The word *athlēsin* ('struggle, contest, fight') is an athletic metaphor — their faith was tested in a grueling competition. The verb *hypemeinate* ('you endured') is the same word used of Jesus in 12:2-3. Their past endurance is evidence that they are capable of continuing.

33. The verb *theatrizomenoi* ('publicly exposed, made a spectacle') comes from *theatron* ('theater') — they were put on public display for mockery. The two dimensions of their suffering: direct persecution (ridicule and affliction) and solidarity with others who suffered (becoming partners/*koinōnoi* with the persecuted). Both are costly: one involves personal pain, the other the risk of guilt by association.
34. The Greek *synepathēsate* ('you sympathized with, you suffered alongside') recalls the sympathy language of 4:15. They visited and supported imprisoned believers at personal risk. Even more remarkably, they accepted the confiscation (*harpagēn*, 'plundering, seizure') of their property with joy (*meta charas*). The reason: they possessed something better (*kreitton* — the signature comparative) and lasting (*menousan*, 'remaining, enduring'). Earthly possessions could be taken; heavenly possession could not.
35. The imperative *mē apobalēte* ('do not throw away') pictures a deliberate discarding of something valuable. Their *parrēsian* ('confidence, boldness') — the same word from verse 19 — is not something to be lightly abandoned. It carries a great reward (*megalēn misthapodosian*, 'great repayment, great recompense'). The word *misthapodosian* connects to 11:6 ('God is a rewarder of those who seek him') and 11:26 (Moses looked to the reward).
36. The word *hypomonēs* ('endurance, patient steadfastness') is the essential virtue for the Hebrews community. It bridges the gap between doing God's will (to *thelēma tou theou poiēsantes* — echoing Christ's words from Psalm 40 in verse 7) and receiving the promise (*tēn epangelian*). The gap requires time, and time requires endurance.
36. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 40. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
37. Quoting a combination of Isaiah 26:20 (LXX) and Habakkuk 2:3-4 (LXX). The phrase *mikron hoson hoson* ('a very little while, just a bit more') intensifies the brevity of the remaining wait. The Septuagint's 'the one who is coming' (*ho erchomenos*) personalizes Habakkuk's vision — it is not an event but a person who is anticipated. This messianic reading was widely shared in early Christianity.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Habakkuk 2:3-4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 26:20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. The Habakkuk 2:4 quotation is also foundational for Paul (Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11), but the author of Hebrews uses it differently — Paul emphasizes justification by faith; Hebrews emphasizes perseverance in faith. The phrase *ek pisteōs zēsetai* ('will live by/from faith') describes faith as the sustaining principle of the righteous person's life. The warning — 'if he shrinks back' (*ean hyposteilētai*) — describes cowardly retreat, withdrawal from the battle.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Habakkuk 2:3-4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. The chapter ends with a confident declaration that echoes 6:9 ('we are convinced of better things'). The two categories are starkly contrasted: *hypostolēs eis apōleian* ('shrinking back leading to destruction') versus *pisteōs eis peripoīēsin psychēs* ('faith leading to the preservation of the soul'). The word *peripoīēsin* ('preservation, obtaining, possession') means the soul is kept safe, secured, possessed. This verse serves as the bridge to chapter 11's great catalogue of faith — 'we are people of faith' leads naturally to 'now let me tell you what faith looks like.'

11

Summary: *Hebrews 11 is the celebrated 'Faith Hall of Fame,' a sweeping survey of Old Testament figures who lived and acted by faith. The chapter opens with a definition of faith (verse 1), then moves chronologically from Abel through Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, and a compressed catalogue of judges, kings, and prophets. Each example demonstrates that faith is not passive belief but active trust that shapes decisions, risks everything, and looks beyond present reality to future promise. The chapter concludes with the sobering note that none of these heroes received what was promised — God had planned something better, so that they would not be made perfect apart from the community of faith that includes the present audience.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The definition in verse 1 has shaped Christian theology for two millennia. The chapter functions as a narrative commentary on the entire Old Testament, selecting episodes that demonstrate the faith principle. The faith of women is specifically noted (Sarah, Rahab, the mothers of verse 35). The catalogue of unnamed sufferers in verses 35-38 is among the most harrowing passages in the Bible. The final twist — that these heroes are not complete without the present audience — transforms a historical survey into a pastoral appeal.*

Translation Friction: The attribution of faith to Sarah (verse 11) is textually disputed — some manuscripts make Abraham the subject. The assertion that Moses 'considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt' (verse 26) applies Christian categories to a pre-Christian figure. We render the text as written and note the interpretive framework. The compressed catalogue of verses 32-38 covers centuries in a few sentences.

Connections: The chapter draws on Genesis 4 (Abel), Genesis 5 (Enoch), Genesis 6-9 (Noah), Genesis 12-25 (Abraham and Sarah), Genesis 27 (Isaac), Genesis 48-49 (Jacob), Genesis 50 (Joseph), Exodus 1-14 (Moses), Joshua 2-6 (Rahab and Jericho), and dozens of Judges, Kings, and Prophets passages. The 'cloud of witnesses' in 12:1 refers back to this entire catalogue. The 'something better' of verse 40 echoes the 'better' theme throughout Hebrews.

¹Now faith is the reality of things hoped for, the proof of things not seen. ²For by this the people of old received commendation. ³By faith we understand that the ages were formed by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made from things that are visible. ⁴By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God himself commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. ⁵By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death, and he was not found because God had taken him. For before he was taken up, he was commended as having pleased God. ⁶And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. ⁷By faith Noah, being warned by God about events yet unseen, acted with reverent caution and constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. ⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance, and he went out not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he lived as a stranger in the land of promise, as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, co-heirs of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even though she was past the age, since she considered faithful the one who had promised. ¹²Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, there were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as innumerable as the sand on the seashore. ¹³All these died in faith without having received what was promised, but they saw it and greeted it from a distance, and they acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴For people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of the land they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. ¹⁷By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was in the act of offering his only son, ¹⁸Of whom it was stated, That in Isaac will your seed be called:. ¹⁹He considered that God was able even to raise from the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back from the dead. ²⁰Through faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau regarding what was still to happen. ²¹By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. ²²By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, mentioned the exodus of the Israelites and gave instructions about his bones. ²³By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. ²⁴By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵He chose to suffer alongside the people of God rather than enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶He considered the reproach suffered for Christ as greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward. ²⁷By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger, for he endured as one who sees the invisible God. ²⁸By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch them. ²⁹By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as if on dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so, they were drowned. ³⁰By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had welcomed the spies in peace. ³²And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets — ³³Indeed, who by way of faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,. ³⁴They quenched raging fires, escaped death by the sword. Their weakness was turned to strength. They became powerful in battle

and routed foreign armies. ³⁵Women received back their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might gain a better resurrection. ³⁶Others endured mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, afflicted, mistreated — ³⁸(Of whom the present age was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the world. ³⁹And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰God after provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be appointed perfect.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek hypostasis ('reality, substance, assurance, foundation') in this context means not merely subjective confidence but the substantial reality that gives content to hope. Faith is the present reality of what is hoped for, not mere wishful thinking. The word elegchos ('proof, conviction, evidence') means the inner conviction that unseen realities are real — faith functions as evidence in the court of the soul. Together, hypostasis and elegchos define faith as the capacity to live as though the unseen promises are already substantial and proven.
2. The phrase hoi presbyteroi ('the elders, the people of old') refers to the Old Testament figures about to be catalogued. The passive emartyrēthēsan ('received testimony, were commended') indicates that God himself bore witness to their faith — the verb martyreō ('to testify, to bear witness') runs through the chapter as a refrain.
3. Before cataloguing the faith of specific individuals, the author grounds faith in creation itself. The phrase tous aiōnas ('the ages') is the same word from 1:2 — the entire framework of time and space. The declaration that the visible came from the invisible (eis to mē ek phainomenōn to blepomenon gegonenai) asserts that the most fundamental reality is unseen — creation itself rests on the invisible word of God. Faith, which trusts the unseen (verse 1), thus aligns with the deepest structure of reality.
4. The catalogue begins with Abel (Genesis 4:1-16). The adjective pleiona ('more, greater, better') does not specify what made Abel's sacrifice superior — Genesis does not explain it either. The author attributes the difference to faith. The phrase apothanōn eti lalei ('though he died, he still speaks') is a powerful conclusion — Abel's faith outlived his murder. The 'speaking' may refer to his blood crying from the ground (Genesis 4:10) or to the ongoing testimony of his example.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 4:3-10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Enoch's translation (Genesis 5:21-24) is described with the verb metatethē ('was transferred, was removed') — the same root used in 7:12 for the 'change' of priesthood. The Septuagint of Genesis 5:24 reads 'Enoch pleased God' (euairestēkenai tō theō) where the Hebrew reads 'Enoch walked with God.' The author works from the Septuagint text. The verb 'was not found' (ouch hēurisketo) echoes Genesis 5:24 — Enoch simply disappeared.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 5:24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. This verse generalizes from Enoch's example to a universal principle. Two beliefs are necessary: that God exists (hoti estin, 'that he is') and that he rewards seekers (misthapodotēs ginetai, 'he becomes a rewarder'). The word ekzētousin ('earnestly seek, diligently search for') implies more than casual interest — it describes active, sustained pursuit. The word misthapodotēs ('rewarder') appears only here in the New Testament and connects to 10:35 (the 'great reward' of confidence) and 11:26 (the 'reward' Moses looked to).
7. Noah's faith (Genesis 6-9) exemplifies the definition of verse 1 — he acted on things 'not yet seen' (mēdepō blepomenōn). The word eulabētheis ('having acted with reverent caution, having revered') describes motivated obedience rooted in awe, not paralyzing fear. Noah's ark-building was itself an act of judgment — his obedience condemned the disobedient world by contrast. The phrase 'righteousness that comes by faith' (tēs kata pistin dikaiosynēs) connects to Habakkuk 2:4 and Paul's language in Romans.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 6:13-22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 6-9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Habakkuk 2:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Abraham's faith (Genesis 12:1-4) is the paradigmatic case in the chapter, receiving the most extended treatment (verses 8-19). The participle kaloumenos ('when he was called, while being called') suggests he obeyed during the calling — immediately, without delay. The phrase mē epistamenos pou erchetai ('not knowing where he was going') captures the essence of Abrahamic faith: obedience without complete information, trusting the caller rather than the destination.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 12:1-4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The verb parōkēsen ('lived as a stranger, sojourned') means Abraham never owned the promised land — he lived in it as a resident alien. The tents (skēnais) are concrete symbols of impermanence. The three generations sharing the same condition — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all dwelling in tents — demonstrates that the promise was not fulfilled in their lifetimes. They were synklēronomōn ('co-heirs, joint inheritors') of a promise they never

saw completed.

10. Abraham's tent-dwelling was not aimlessness but anticipation. He looked for a permanent city (polin, with foundations — themelious) in contrast to his temporary tents (without foundations). The two titles for God — *technitēs* ('architect, designer, craftsman') and *dēmiourgos* ('builder, creator, maker') — distinguish design from construction. God both designed and built the permanent city. This city will be identified in 12:22 and 13:14 as the heavenly Jerusalem.
11. The text is debated: some manuscripts and scholars read Abraham as the subject, with Sarah mentioned parenthetically. The SBLGNT includes 'Sarah herself' (autē Sarra) as the subject, which we follow. Despite her initial laughter (Genesis 18:12-15), Sarah ultimately trusted God's promise. The phrase *para kairon hēlikias* ('past the time of age') is a euphemism for post-menopausal. The reason for her faith: she considered God 'faithful' (*piston*) — the same word applied to Christ in 2:17 and 3:2.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 18:11-14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The phrase *nenekrōmenou* ('as good as dead') describes Abraham's advanced age — his body was effectively dead with respect to reproductive capacity (cf. Romans 4:19). The imagery of stars (Genesis 15:5) and sand (Genesis 22:17) represents the two great covenant promises of innumerable offspring. The contrast between the one dead man and the countless descendants demonstrates the power of God's promise working through faith.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 15:5. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 22:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. This is the first of two summary statements (the second is verses 39-40). The patriarchs died *mē labontes tas epangelias* ('not having received the promises') — they died with the promise unfulfilled. Yet they 'saw' (*idontes*) the fulfillment from afar and 'greeted' (*aspasamennoi*) it — like travelers who spot their destination on the horizon and wave to it. The self-identification as 'strangers and exiles' (*xenoi kai parepidēmoi*) quotes Genesis 23:4 and 47:9. Their impermanence on earth testified to the permanence of their heavenly hope.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 23:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The word *patrida* ('homeland, fatherland') is the place of origin, the place where one belongs. By calling themselves strangers on earth, the patriarchs revealed that earth was not their home — they were seeking their true homeland elsewhere.
15. Abraham could have returned to Mesopotamia — it was physically possible. The fact that he did not proves that his 'homeland' was not an earthly place. The verb *emnēmoneuon* ('were remembering, were thinking of') in the imperfect tense suggests sustained thought — if they had kept thinking of their origin, they could have gone back. Their forward orientation proved their faith was in the unseen future, not the visible past.
16. The word *kreittōnos* ('better') is the signature adjective of Hebrews for the final time in this chapter. The statement 'God is not ashamed to be called their God' (*ouk epaischynetai autous ho theos theos epikaleisthai autōn*) echoes Exodus 3:6 ('I am the God of Abraham') — God voluntarily binds his name to these faith-filled sojourners. The 'city' (*polin*) recalls verse 10 and will be identified in 12:22 as the heavenly Jerusalem.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 3:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The Aqedah, the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22), is the supreme test of faith. The perfect tense *prosenēnochen* ('has offered') indicates a completed act, while the imperfect *prosepheren* ('was offering') describes the ongoing process — Abraham was in the act of sacrificing when God intervened. The word *monogenē* ('only, unique, one and only') emphasizes that Isaac was irreplaceable — the entire promise line depended on him.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 22:1-10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. Quoting Genesis 21:12. The paradox is sharp: God promised descendants through Isaac, then commanded Isaac's sacrifice. Abraham's faith held both realities simultaneously — the promise and the command — trusting that God could reconcile what appeared irreconcilable.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 21:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The verb *logisamenos* ('having reckoned, having considered') describes rational faith — Abraham calculated that if God promised descendants through Isaac and demanded Isaac's death, then God must be able to raise the dead. The phrase *en parabolē* ('figuratively, in a parable, as a type') indicates that Abraham's receiving Isaac back was a figure or type of resurrection — Isaac's near-death and restoration prefigured the death and resurrection of Christ.
20. Isaac's faith (Genesis 27) is demonstrated in his blessing, which spoke of future realities he could not see. Even though the blessing was obtained through deception, Isaac recognized it as binding and prophetic (Genesis 27:33). The order 'Jacob and Esau' (rather than Esau and Jacob, the birth order) reflects the reversal that was God's intention from the beginning (Genesis 25:23).

- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 27:27-29 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 25:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 21.** Jacob's faith (Genesis 48) was exercised at death — crossing his hands to give the greater blessing to the younger son Ephraim rather than Manasseh, trusting God's choice over natural order. The detail of worshiping while leaning on his staff comes from Genesis 47:31 (LXX), where the Hebrew 'bed' (mittah) was read as 'staff' (matteh) by the Septuagint translators. The author follows the Septuagint.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 48:15-16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 21.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 47:31. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 22.** Joseph's faith (Genesis 50:24-25) looked beyond his own death to the future exodus. His command about his bones — that they be carried out of Egypt — was a concrete expression of faith in God's promise to bring Israel to the promised land. He refused to be permanently buried in Egypt because he believed Israel's future lay elsewhere. The word *exodou* ('exodus, departure') here refers to the departure from Egypt.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 50:24-25. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** Moses's parents (Exodus 2:1-3) acted in faith by defying Pharaoh's decree to kill all Hebrew male infants. The word *asteion* ('beautiful, fine, elegant') is the same word used in the Septuagint of Exodus 2:2 and in Acts 7:20 ('beautiful before God'). They saw something in the child that gave them courage to risk their lives. The phrase *ouk ephobēthēsan* ('they were not afraid') echoes the courage demanded of faith throughout the chapter.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 2:2-3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 24.** Moses's personal faith now takes over from his parents' faith. The verb *ērēsato* ('refused, denied, rejected') describes a deliberate choice — he actively turned away from royal privilege and identity. The phrase *megas genomenos* ('having become great/grown up') marks the transition from childhood to adult decision-making.
- 25.** The verb *synkakoucheisthai* ('to suffer with, to be mistreated alongside') emphasizes solidarity — Moses chose shared suffering over solitary comfort. The phrase *proskairin apolausin hamartias* ('temporary enjoyment of sin') does not deny that sin offers pleasure, but qualifies it as *proskairos* — 'for a season, temporary, fleeting.' The comparison between lasting suffering with God's people and fleeting pleasure through sin mirrors the audience's own choice.
- 26.** The phrase *ton oneidismōn tou Christou* ('the reproach of Christ') is striking: the author reads Moses's suffering as participation in Christ's reproach — a suffering that belongs to the Messiah and is shared by all who follow him across all eras. The verb *apeblepen* ('was looking away toward') describes a focused gaze that looks past the present to fix on the future. The *misthapodosian* ('reward, recompense') is the same word from 10:35 and 11:6.
- 27.** Whether this refers to Moses's flight after killing the Egyptian (Exodus 2:14-15) or the exodus itself is debated. The phrase *mē phobētheis ton thymon tou basileōs* ('not fearing the king's anger') better fits the exodus, since Exodus 2:14 says Moses 'was afraid.' The concluding phrase *ton aoraton hōs horōn* ('seeing the unseen one') is a paradox that encapsulates the chapter's entire message: faith sees what is invisible. The verb *ekartērēsen* ('he endured, he held firm') appears only here in the New Testament.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 2:14-15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** Moses's faith in instituting the Passover (Exodus 12) meant trusting that lamb's blood on the doorframes would protect against death — an extraordinary act of faith in the invisible. The word *proschysin* ('sprinkling, pouring') refers to the application of blood to the doorposts and lintel. The *olothreūōn* ('the destroyer') is the death-dealing agent of God's judgment, distinct from God himself.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 12:21-23 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** The faith here is corporate — the people (implied subject) crossed together. The phrase *hōs dia xēras gēs* ('as through dry ground') from Exodus 14:21-22. The Egyptians' attempt to cross using the same path failed — the distinction between the two groups was faith, not technique. The verb *katēpothēsan* ('were swallowed up, were drowned') is vivid — the sea consumed them.
- 29.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 14:21-29. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 30.** The conquest of Jericho (Joshua 6) required faith expressed through obedience to an absurd military strategy — marching around a city for seven days. The walls fell not by siege engines but by faith and divine power. The passive *kyklōthenta* ('having been encircled') emphasizes the action of faithful obedience.

- 30.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 6:12-20 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 31.** Rahab (Joshua 2) is the second Gentile woman in the faith catalogue (after the implied inclusion of non-Israelite women among the mothers). Her designation as *hē pornē* ('the prostitute') is not sanitized — the text preserves her identity while celebrating her faith. The rest of Jericho is described as *apeithēsasin* ('the disobedient/unbelieving'), connecting disobedience and unbelief as in 3:18-19. Her faith was expressed in action: she welcomed (*dexamenē*) the spies.
- 31.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Joshua 2:1-21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 32.** The author shifts to a rapid catalogue, acknowledging that the full account of faith would take longer than the letter allows. The names are not in chronological order (Gideon precedes Barak in Judges; Samson follows both; Jephthah precedes Samson). The arrangement may be deliberate, grouping by type or significance rather than timeline. The move from individuals to 'the prophets' (*tōn prophētōn*) signals a transition to categories of faith-action.
- 32.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Judges 6:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 33.** The compressed catalogue begins with triumphant deeds. 'Conquered kingdoms' may refer to Joshua, David, or the judges. 'Administered justice' (*eirgasanto dikaio synēn*) applies to all righteous rulers. 'Obtained promises' refers to partial fulfillments (though the ultimate promise remained outstanding, verse 39). 'Shut the mouths of lions' alludes to Daniel in the lions' den (Daniel 6:22).
- 33.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 6:22 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 34.** More triumphant deeds: 'quenched fire' alludes to Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3). 'Escaped the sword' may refer to David fleeing Saul or Elijah fleeing Jezebel. 'Made strong out of weakness' (*edynamōthēsan apo astheneias*) is the pattern of divine reversal — Gideon, Samson, Hezekiah's recovery from illness. 'Put foreign armies to flight' summarizes the judges and the Maccabean resistance.
- 34.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 35.** The tone shifts dramatically at the middle of this verse. 'Women received their dead by resurrection' alludes to the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:17-24) and the Shunammite woman (2 Kings 4:17-37). Then the catalogue turns dark: 'others were tortured' (*etympanisthēsan*, literally 'beaten on a drum' — stretched on a rack or wheel and beaten to death). They refused release (*apolytrōsin* — the same word used for Christ's 'redemption' in 9:15) because they sought a 'better resurrection' (*kreittōnos anastaseōs*) — not temporary resuscitation but permanent, eschatological resurrection.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Kings 17:17-24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 35.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Kings 4:17-37 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 36.** The catalogue of suffering continues. Mocking (*empaigmōn*) may allude to the prophets ridiculed for their messages. Flogging (*mastigōn*) recalls Jeremiah's treatment (Jeremiah 20:2). Chains and imprisonment point to Joseph (Genesis 39:20), Micaiah (1 Kings 22:27), and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 37:15-16).
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 20:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 39:20. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Kings 22:27. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 36.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 37:15-16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 37.** The violence escalates: stoning (Zechariah son of Jehoiada, 2 Chronicles 24:21; Naboth, 1 Kings 21), sawing in two (tradition holds Isaiah was sawn in two by Manasseh), death by sword (1 Kings 19:10, Uriah the prophet in Jeremiah 26:23). Then the catalogue shifts to deprivation: sheepskins and goatskins as clothing (Elijah's mantle, 1 Kings 19:13, 2 Kings 1:8), destitution, affliction, mistreatment. Some manuscripts include *epeirasthēsan* ('they were tested/tempted') between 'sawn in two' and 'killed with the sword.'
- 37.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Chronicles 24:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 37.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 19:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 26:23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
37. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 1:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
38. The parenthetical judgment 'of whom the world was not worthy' (hōn ouk ēn axios ho kosmos) is one of the most powerful interjections in the New Testament. The world rejected these people, but the author reverses the judgment: it was the world that was unworthy of them. Their hiding in deserts, mountains, and caves recalls Elijah (1 Kings 19:9), David (1 Samuel 22:1), and the Maccabean resisters (1 Maccabees 2:29-30).
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Kings 19:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
38. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Samuel 22:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
39. The second summary statement (cf. verse 13). The martyrethentes ('commended, attested, testified about') returns the chapter to its opening refrain (verse 2). The stunning admission: ouk ekomisanto tēn epangelian ('they did not receive the promise'). Despite all their faith, suffering, and triumph, the ultimate promise remained unfulfilled in their lifetimes. The reason follows in verse 40.
40. The chapter's final verse is its theological climax. God had 'provided something better' (kreitton ti problepsamenou) for the present generation — the fulfillment in Christ that the Old Testament heroes could only anticipate. The phrase 'apart from us they would not be made perfect' (hina mē chōris hēmōn teleiōthōsin) means the old covenant saints and the new covenant community complete each other. The perfection (teleiōsis) that Hebrews has argued for throughout the letter is corporate — it requires the full company of the redeemed across all ages. The 'cloud of witnesses' of 12:1 awaits the arrival of the present audience to complete the assembly.

12

Summary: *Hebrews 12 opens with the famous exhortation to run the race of faith surrounded by the 'great cloud of witnesses' from chapter 11, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith. The chapter then interprets suffering as divine discipline — God trains his children as a father disciplines his sons — and calls for endurance. A warning against Esau's profanity follows. The chapter reaches its climax in a dramatic comparison between Sinai (the old covenant) and Zion (the new covenant): the terrifying mountain of law versus the joyful city of grace. The final warning declares that God's voice now speaks from heaven, and those who refuse him face a shaking that will remove everything except the unshakeable kingdom.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The 'cloud of witnesses' (12:1) transforms the historical survey of chapter 11 into a present reality — the heroes of faith are spectators watching the present generation run. The Sinai/Zion contrast (verses 18-24) is the most vivid typological comparison in Hebrews, moving from terror to celebration. The phrase 'consuming fire' (verse 29) echoes Deuteronomy 4:24 and closes the letter's theological argument with awe.*

Translation Friction: *The 'spirits of righteous people made perfect' (verse 23) raises questions about the intermediate state. The 'sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than Abel's' (verse 24) compresses enormous theology into a single phrase. The final shaking (verses 26-27) draws on Haggai 2:6 but applies it eschatologically. We render without resolving the many interpretive debates.*

Connections: *The cloud of witnesses connects to chapter 11. The discipline teaching draws on Proverbs 3:11-12. The Esau warning connects to Genesis 25:29-34 and the irreversibility theme of 6:4-8. The Sinai scene draws on Exodus 19-20 and Deuteronomy 4-5. Mount Zion anticipates the heavenly city of 13:14. The Haggai quotation develops the eschatological hope of 1:10-12.*

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ²Keep your eyes on Jesus, who began and will complete our faith. For the joy that lay ahead of him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne. ³Consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. ⁴You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood in your struggle against sin. ⁵And

have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons and daughters? "My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor grow weary when you are corrected by him. ⁶For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every child he accepts." ⁷Endure your trials as discipline. God is treating you as his children. For what child is there whom a father does not discipline? ⁸But if you are without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not true sons and daughters. ⁹Besides, we had earthly fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them. Should we not much more submit to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, so that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹All discipline seems painful at the time rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. ¹²Therefore, strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees, ¹³Make straight paths since your ankles, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way. But let it rather be healed. ¹⁴Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God, that no 'root of bitterness' springs up and causes trouble, and through it many become defiled, ¹⁶Lest there be any sexually immoral person, or godless individual, as Esau, who for a single meal traded away his inheritance rights. ¹⁷For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no opportunity to change his father's mind, even though he sought the blessing with tears. ¹⁸For you have not come to something that can be touched — a blazing fire, darkness, gloom, and a storm, ¹⁹The sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words. Which voice they that listened to intreated that the message should not be spoken to them any more:. ²⁰Since they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it will be stoned, or thrust by way of with a dart:. ²¹And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear." ²²But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festive assembly, ²³To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are recorded in the heavens above, and to God the pass the time of reckoning on of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,. ²⁴To Jesus the mediator of the new binding agreement, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. ²⁵See to it that you do not refuse the one who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! ²⁶At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also heaven." ²⁷This phrase 'yet once more' indicates the removal of what can be shaken — that is, created things — so that what cannot be shaken may remain. ²⁸Therefore, since we are receiving an unshakeable kingdom, let us be thankful, and so offer worship pleasing to God with reverence and awe, ²⁹Our God is indeed a consuming fire.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The athletic metaphor is sustained: *nephos martyron* ('cloud of witnesses') pictures the chapter 11 heroes as spectators in a stadium surrounding the runners. They are 'witnesses' (*martyron*) in a double sense — they testified to their own faith and now witness ours. The word *ogkon* ('weight, bulk, mass') refers to excess weight an athlete would shed before competing. The phrase *euperistaton hamartian* ('the sin that easily entangles/besets') is debated — the word *euperistatos* may mean 'easily encircling,' 'closely clinging,' or 'admired by many.' The athletic image suggests anything that hinders the runner. The race (*agona*) is an endurance event, not a sprint — *hypomonē* ('endurance, perseverance') is the required virtue.
2. The verb *aphorontes* ('looking away to, fixing the gaze on') means looking away from everything else to focus exclusively on Jesus. The two titles — *archegon* ('pioneer,' cf. 2:10) and *teleiōtēn* ('perfecter, completer') — describe Jesus as both the one who began faith and the one who brought it to completion. He is the supreme example of the faith described in chapter 11. The phrase *anti tēs prokeimenēs autō charas* ('for/instead of the joy set before him') is debated: *anti* can mean 'for the sake of' (he endured the cross to obtain the joy) or 'instead of' (he chose the cross rather than the joy he could have had). Both readings work theologically. The phrase *aischynēs kataphronēsas* ('disregarding the shame') treats the cross's disgrace as beneath consideration — not denied but dismissed.
3. The verb *analogisasthe* ('consider, think through, calculate') demands careful comparison — measure your suffering against his. The word *antilogian* ('hostility, opposition, contradiction') describes the opposition Jesus faced from sinners. The two dangers — *kamēte* ('grow weary, become exhausted') and *eklyomenoi* ('lose heart, become faint, go slack') — describe the spiritual fatigue the audience is experiencing. The remedy is sustained contemplation of Jesus's example.
4. The phrase *mechris haimatos* ('to the point of blood') means they have not yet been martyred. This is not dismissive but comparative — their suffering, while real, has not reached the ultimate cost. Jesus resisted to the point of blood (the cross); they have not yet been required to do the same. The athletic metaphor continues with *antagonizomenoi* ('struggling against, competing against') — sin is the opponent in the contest.

5. Quoting Proverbs 3:11-12 (LXX). The verb eklelēsthe ('have you forgotten?') suggests their suffering has caused them to lose sight of this foundational teaching. The word paideias ('discipline, training, education') is the key term for the passage — it means not punishment for punishment's sake but training for maturity. The two errors to avoid: oligōrei ('regard lightly, make little of') — dismissing discipline as meaningless — and eklyou ('grow weary, lose heart') — collapsing under it.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Proverbs 3:11-12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The paradox: discipline is evidence of love (agapa), not rejection. The verb mastigoi ('chastises, scourges') is strong — divine training can be painful. The word paradechetai ('accepts, receives, welcomes') means the child who is disciplined is a child who belongs. The logic reverses the audience's interpretation of their suffering: instead of evidence that God has abandoned them, their trials prove they are his children.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 3:11-12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The imperative hypomenete ('endure') can also be read as indicative ('you are enduring'). The rhetorical question expects the answer 'None' — every father disciplines his children. The analogy assumes that good parenting involves correction, not permissiveness.
8. The argument from reverse: the absence of discipline would be worse than its presence, indicating that one is not a genuine child (nothoi, 'illegitimate children, born outside the family'). The word metochoi ('participants, sharers') from 3:1 and 3:14 — all genuine children share in the discipline.
9. The a fortiori argument: if we respected human fathers who disciplined us, how much more should we submit to God? The title 'Father of spirits' (patri tōn pneumatōn) distinguishes divine fatherhood from human ('fathers of our flesh'). The verb zēsomen ('and live') connects obedience to the discipline with life itself — submission to God's training leads to spiritual vitality.
10. Two contrasts: duration (short time versus permanent benefit) and quality (as seemed best to imperfect humans versus for genuine benefit from a perfect Father). The goal of divine discipline is metalabein tēs hagiōtētos autou ('to share in his holiness') — participation in God's own character. This is not legal status but transformative reality.
11. The author concedes the reality of pain — discipline does not 'seem' (dokei) joyful because it is not joyful in the moment. But the metaphor shifts from athletics to agriculture: discipline produces 'fruit' (karpon). The compound phrase karpon eirēnikon dikaiosynēs ('peaceful fruit of righteousness') describes the harvest — a life characterized by both peace and righteousness. The verb gegymnasmēnois ('trained') returns the athletic metaphor from 5:14 — discipline is training that produces capacity.
12. Alluding to Isaiah 35:3. The imagery is physical — hands hanging limp from exhaustion, knees buckling from fatigue. The verb anorthōsate ('straighten up, strengthen, restore') calls for physical and spiritual renewal. The athletic and military imagery continues — a runner or soldier whose hands and knees give out cannot finish the course.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 35:3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Quoting Proverbs 4:26 (LXX). The 'straight paths' (trochias orthas) are both literal (running paths) and moral (right conduct). The concern for 'what is lame' (to chōlon) suggests the weaker members of the community — if the path is straight, even the injured can follow it. The verb ektrapē ('be turned aside, be dislocated, be put out of joint') continues the physical metaphor. The community's responsibility is to create conditions where the weak can be healed rather than lost.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Proverbs 4:26 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. Two pursuits are commanded: peace (eirēnē) with all people and holiness (hagiasmon). The verb diōkete ('pursue, chase, run after') is intense — these are not passive states but active goals. The warning — 'without which no one will see the Lord' (hou chōris oudeis opsetai ton kyrion) — is absolute. Holiness is not optional but essential for the vision of God. This connects to 10:14 (perfected for holiness) and 12:10 (sharing God's holiness).
15. The verb episkopountes ('watching over, overseeing') makes perseverance a communal responsibility. The phrase riza pikrias ('root of bitterness') quotes Deuteronomy 29:18 (LXX), which warns against a person whose apostasy infects the community. The danger is not isolated failure but contagion — one bitter person can defile many (mianthōsin polloi). This is why the author urges communal vigilance.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 29:18 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. Esau (Genesis 25:29-34) serves as the negative example to counter the positive examples of chapter 11. The word bebēlos ('godless, profane, irreverent') describes someone who treats sacred things as common — precisely the danger warned against in 10:29. Esau traded eternal blessing for immediate gratification. Whether pornos ('sexually immoral') applies to Esau specifically or is a separate warning is debated; the terms may form a hendiadys: 'immoral or irreverent.'
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 25:29-34. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

17. The phrase *metanoias topon ouch heuren* ('he found no place/opportunity for repentance/change of mind') is debated: does it mean Esau could not repent, or that Isaac could not reverse the blessing, or that God would not grant Esau a reversal? The grammar allows 'he found no opportunity to change [his father's] mind' (the feminine *autēn* referring to the blessing or to *metanoia*). The connection to 6:4-6 (impossibility of restoration for apostates) is clear — some choices are irreversible. The tears (*meta dakryōn*) make the scene devastating.
18. The Sinai/Zion contrast begins. The description of Sinai (Exodus 19-20, Deuteronomy 4-5) emphasizes its terrifying sensory impact: fire, darkness (*gnophō*), deep gloom (*zophō*), and storm (*thyellē*). The word *psēlaphōmenō* ('something that can be touched') emphasizes the physical, earthly nature of the Sinai revelation — it was tangible but terrifying. The 'not' (*ou*) sets up the contrast with what they have come to in verse 22.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 19-20 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 4-5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The trumpet blast (Exodus 19:16, 19) and the divine voice (Exodus 20:1, 18-19) were so overwhelming that the people begged Moses to mediate. They could not endure hearing God directly. The verb *parētēsanto* ('begged off, refused, asked to be excused') indicates their request that no more words be added — they had reached the limit of what they could bear.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 19:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 20:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. Quoting Exodus 19:12-13. The severity of the Sinai holiness — even an animal trespassing the boundary around the mountain must die — illustrates the unapproachable nature of God under the old covenant. Access was forbidden, contact was fatal. This is the opposite of the 'draw near' language of 4:16 and 10:22.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 19:12-13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Even Moses — the greatest figure of the old covenant — was terrified. The phrase *ekphobos eimi kai entromos* ('I am full of fear and trembling') is not directly quoted from the Sinai narrative in Exodus but may draw from Deuteronomy 9:19 (where Moses feared God's anger after the golden calf) or from an extracanonical tradition. The point is that the old covenant experience terrified even its greatest leader.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 9:19. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The contrast with Sinai is total. Instead of a mountain that could not be touched, they come to Mount Zion — the mountain of grace. Instead of terror, there is celebration (*panēgyrei*, 'festive assembly, joyful gathering'). The city is identified three ways: Mount Zion (the traditional name), the city of the living God (echoing 3:12 and 10:31), and the heavenly Jerusalem (the eternal city of 11:10, 16). The 'innumerable angels' (*myriasin angelōn*) are the hosts of heaven in celebration.
23. The list continues: the *ekklēsia* ('assembly, church') of the firstborn (*prōtotokōn*, plural — all believers share in Christ's firstborn status) whose names are registered (*apogegrammōn*) in heaven. Then God himself as judge (*kritē*) of all — not a terrifying judge as at Sinai but the judge who is present in the celebration. The 'spirits of the righteous made perfect' (*pneumasin dikaiōn teteleiōmenōn*) refers to the chapter 11 heroes who have now been 'made perfect' (*teleiōsis*, the goal of the entire letter) through Christ's work.
24. The climax of the list: Jesus himself, identified as *mesitē* ('mediator') of the new (*neas*) covenant. The sprinkled blood (*haimati rhanismou*) is the blood of Christ applied in the heavenly sanctuary. This blood 'speaks' (*lalounti*) — it has a voice, and that voice says something better (*kreitton*) than Abel's blood. Abel's blood cried out for vengeance (Genesis 4:10); Christ's blood speaks forgiveness and reconciliation. The comparative *kreittōn* makes its final appearance.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 4:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. The fifth and final warning passage. The *a fortiori* argument returns: if Israel could not escape judgment for rejecting the earthly Sinai revelation (*ton epi gēs chrēmatisationata*), how much more inescapable is judgment for rejecting the heavenly revelation (*ton ap' ouranōn*). The verb *apostrophomenoi* ('turning away from, rejecting') is stronger than *paraiteēsamenoi* ('refused') — it implies a deliberate turning of the back.
26. Quoting Haggai 2:6. At Sinai, God's voice shook the earth (Exodus 19:18). But a greater shaking is promised — one that will affect not only the earth but heaven itself. The phrase *eti hapax* ('yet once more') indicates a final, definitive event. The author interprets this eschatologically in verse 27.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Haggai 2:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
26. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 19:18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
27. The author interprets Haggai: the 'once more' shaking will remove (*metathesis*, 'removal, change, transfer') everything that is shakable — the entire created order (*hōs pepoiēmenōn*, 'as things that have been made'). What remains is the unshakeable (*ta mē saleuomena*) — the kingdom of God. This is the ultimate expression of the permanent/temporary distinction that runs throughout Hebrews.

28. The present participle *paralambanontes* ('receiving') describes an ongoing reception — the kingdom is being received now, not merely in the future. The phrase *echōmen charin* can mean 'let us have grace' or 'let us be thankful' — both meanings are likely intended. The worship response to receiving an unshakeable kingdom is not casualness but *eulabeias kai deous* ('reverence and awe') — the same *eulabeia* from 5:7 and 11:7.
29. Quoting Deuteronomy 4:24. The chapter ends where Deuteronomy ends its Sinai account — with the declaration that God is *pyr katanaliskon* ('consuming fire'). This is not a contradiction of the grace celebrated in verses 22–24 but its complement: the same God who welcomes in grace judges in fire. The fire consumes everything that is shakeable, leaving only the unshakeable kingdom. The word 'our' (*hēmōn*) is significant — this consuming fire is not a distant, alien deity but our God.
29. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 4:24. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

13

Summary: *Hebrews 13 is the letter's practical conclusion, moving from theological argument to community ethics. The chapter covers hospitality, marriage, contentment, leadership, the unchanging Christ, and sacrificial living. Theologically, it declares that Jesus suffered outside the city gate to sanctify the people with his own blood, and calls believers to go to him 'outside the camp,' bearing his reproach. The chapter concludes with a benediction, personal notes, and greetings — the only section of Hebrews that reads like a typical first-century letter.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The declaration 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever' (verse 8) is one of the most memorized verses in the Bible. The 'outside the camp' theology (verses 11–14) connects Jesus's crucifixion site to the old covenant practice of burning sin offerings outside the camp (Leviticus 16:27). The benediction (verses 20–21) is one of the most complete in the New Testament, containing resurrection, covenant, shepherd, and sanctification themes. The mention of Timothy (verse 23) provides the only personal connection to the Pauline circle.*

Translation Friction: *The final chapter's style differs from the rest of the letter — more practical, less theological, with personal notes. Some scholars view chapter 13 as a later addition, though this is a minority view. The 'outside the camp' language was used by various early Christian groups to justify separation from Judaism or from established religious institutions. We render the text without endorsing any particular ecclesiological application.*

Connections: *The hospitality command (verse 2) connects to Genesis 18 (Abraham's angelic visitors). 'Jesus Christ is the same' (verse 8) echoes 1:12 (Psalm 102). The 'outside the camp' imagery draws on Leviticus 16:27 and Numbers 19:3. The heavenly city (verse 14) completes the promise of 11:10, 16 and 12:22. The shepherd imagery (verse 20) echoes Psalm 23, Isaiah 40:11, and John 10. The 'great shepherd' title connects to 1 Peter 5:4.*

1Let mutual love continue. 2Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some have entertained angels without knowing it. 3Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. 4Let marriage be honored by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers. 5Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for he himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." 6So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" 7Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. 8And for ever, Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day. 9Do not be carried away by various and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those who have been occupied with them. 10We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. 11For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the Most Holy Place by the high priest as a sin offering are burned outside the camp. 12Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. 13Therefore let us go out to him outside the camp, bearing his reproach. 14For here we have no lasting city, but we are seeking the city that is to come. 15Through him, then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. 16And do not neglect doing good and sharing with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. 17Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to

you. ¹⁸Pray for us, for we are confident that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. ¹⁹I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you sooner. ²⁰Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, by way of Jesus Christ. To him be glory by way of every one of the ages. Amen. ²²I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you only briefly. ²³You should know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he comes soon enough, I will see you with him. ²⁴Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy send you greetings. ²⁵Grace be with all of you.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The word philadelphia ('brotherly love, mutual love, love for fellow believers') describes the distinctive affection of the Christian community. The verb *menetō* ('let it continue, let it remain') assumes this love already exists — the command is not to start it but to sustain it. The brevity of the command is striking after twelve chapters of theological argument.
2. The word *philoxenias* ('hospitality, love of strangers') is the practical outworking of philadelphia. The reference to 'entertaining angels unawares' (*elathon tines xenisantes angelous*) alludes to Abraham and Sarah's hospitality to the three visitors at Mamre (Genesis 18:1-15), who turned out to be divine messengers. The implication: any stranger could be an angel, so treat all strangers with generous welcome.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 18:1-15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The command recalls 10:34 (showing sympathy to prisoners) and 10:33 (becoming partners with those who suffered). The phrase *hōs syndedemenoi* ('as though bound together with them') demands imaginative solidarity — placing oneself mentally and emotionally in their condition. The reminder 'you also are in the body' (*hōs kai autoi ontes en sōmati*) means either 'you also have physical bodies subject to the same treatment' or 'you are members of the same body (of Christ).'
4. The adjective *timios* ('honored, precious, valuable') elevates marriage as a respected institution. The phrase *hē koitē amiantos* ('the bed undefiled') uses *koitē* (literally 'bed,' euphemistic for sexual relations) to affirm marital sexuality as pure. The two categories of violators — pornous ('sexually immoral,' any sexual activity outside marriage) and *moichous* ('adulterers,' those who violate existing marriages) — face divine judgment (*krinei ho theos*). The statement is declarative, not conditional — God will judge.
5. The word *aphilargyros* ('free from love of money, not greedy') contrasts with the contentment (*arkoumenoi*, 'being satisfied') that trusts God's provision. The quotation combines Deuteronomy 31:6, 8 and Joshua 1:5. The Greek contains five negatives (*ou mē se anō oud' ou mē se enkatalipō*) — an emphatic accumulation: 'I will never, never, never, never, never leave or abandon you.' In context, freedom from greed is grounded not in asceticism but in God's promise of presence.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 31:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 1:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Quoting Psalm 118:6 (LXX 117:6). The confidence (*tharrountas*, 'being bold, being of good courage') is not self-generated but flows from God's promise in verse 5. The rhetorical question 'What can anyone do to me?' does not deny that people can inflict suffering (the audience has already experienced it, 10:32-34) but asserts that no human action can separate the believer from God's help.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 118:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The word *hēgoumenōn* ('leaders, those who lead') appears three times in this chapter (verses 7, 17, 24), framing the community's relationship to its leadership. These particular leaders are past tense — they 'spoke' (*elalēsan*, aorist) the word of God, and their 'way of life' (*anastrophēs*) has a visible 'outcome' (*ekbasin*), suggesting they have died, possibly as martyrs. The command is to imitate (*mimeisthe*) their faith — echoing the imitation theme of 6:12.
8. This verse stands as an independent declaration, functioning as both a conclusion to verse 7 (your leaders change; Christ does not) and an introduction to verse 9 (therefore do not be carried away by strange teachings). The three temporal markers — *echthes* ('yesterday,' the past), *sēmeron* ('today,' the present), and *eis tous aiōnas* ('forever,' the endless future) — assert Christ's absolute immutability. This echoes 1:12 ('you are the same, and your years will never end') and is the practical application of the Christology developed throughout the letter.
9. The verb *parapheresthe* ('be carried away, be swept along') pictures being blown off course. The 'various and strange teachings' (*didachais poikilais kai xenais*) likely refer to Jewish food regulations or cultic meals that some were promoting as necessary. The contrast is between grace (*chariti*) and foods (*brōmasin*) as the foundation for spiritual stability. The author dismisses food regulations as having provided no benefit (*ouk ōphelēthēsan*) to those who followed them.

10. The 'altar' (thysiastrōn) is likely a reference to the cross or to Christ's sacrifice itself — not a physical altar but the sacrifice from which Christians 'feed' (in the Eucharist or spiritually). Those who serve the old covenant tent (tē skēnē latreuontes) have no access to what this altar provides. The statement asserts a Christian exclusive — the benefits of Christ's sacrifice are available only to those who embrace the new covenant.
11. The author draws on Leviticus 16:27, which prescribes that the bodies of the Day of Atonement sin offerings be burned outside the camp. The blood goes inside (into the Most Holy Place); the bodies go outside (beyond the camp). This creates the typological framework for what follows: Jesus's blood enters the heavenly sanctuary, but his body suffered outside the city.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 16:27. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The typological connection: as the sin offering was burned outside the camp, so Jesus suffered exō tēs pylēs ('outside the gate') — outside the walls of Jerusalem. The crucifixion site was deliberately outside the city, fulfilling the sin-offering typology. The purpose clause 'in order to sanctify' (hina hāgiasē) identifies Christ's death as the definitive act of consecration — his blood does what animal blood could not (9:13-14).
13. The practical application: since Jesus suffered outside, believers must go to him there — outside the familiar, respectable structures. The phrase exō tēs parembolēs ('outside the camp') symbolizes departure from the security of established religious systems. The word oneidismōn ('reproach, disgrace') echoes 11:26 (Moses's choosing 'the reproach of Christ'). Following Jesus means accepting social disgrace.
14. This verse completes the 'city' theme that runs from 11:10 (Abraham looked for the city with foundations), through 11:16 (God prepared a city), 12:22 (the heavenly Jerusalem), to this final statement. The present city (whatever earthly security the audience clings to) is not lasting (menousan, 'remaining, permanent'). The future city (tēn mellousan) is the heavenly Jerusalem. The verb epizētoumen ('we are seeking') echoes 11:14 — believers are still seeking the homeland.
15. The old animal sacrifices have been replaced by a new kind of sacrifice: thysian aineseōs ('sacrifice of praise'), echoing Hosea 14:2 (LXX) and Psalm 50:14, 23. The phrase karpon cheileōn ('fruit of lips') from Hosea 14:3 (LXX) identifies praise as the produce of the mouth. The word homologountōn ('confessing, acknowledging') connects to the 'confession' (homologia) theme of 3:1, 4:14, and 10:23. Praise is offered 'through him' (di' autou) — Christ is the mediator even of worship.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Hosea 14:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 50:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. Two more sacrifices replace the old system: eupoiias ('doing good, beneficence') and koinōnias ('sharing, fellowship, generosity'). Together with praise (verse 15), these constitute the new covenant sacrificial system. The verb euarestetai ('is pleased, is well pleased') echoes Enoch's commendation (11:5, 6) — what pleases God is not ritual but faith expressed in praise, goodness, and generosity.
17. The second reference to leaders (hēgoumenoi, cf. verse 7). The verb peithesthe ('obey, be persuaded by, trust') implies willing submission based on trust rather than coerced compliance. The leaders agrypnousin ('keep watch, stay awake') — a word used for sleepless vigilance. They will give an account (logon apodōsontes) to God for their care of souls. The practical concern: difficult members who cause leaders to groan (stenazein) rather than rejoice create a situation that is alysiteles ('unprofitable, harmful') for everyone.
18. The request for prayer reveals the author's pastoral relationship with the audience. The claim of a 'clear conscience' (kalēn syneidēsin) may respond to suspicion or criticism. The verb anastrephesthai ('to conduct oneself, to live') describes the whole pattern of life. The plural 'us' (hēmōn) may refer to the author and his associates.
19. The switch to first person singular (parakalō, 'I urge') is one of the few personal moments in Hebrews. The verb apokatastatō ('be restored, be returned') implies the author has been separated from the community, possibly by imprisonment or travel. The urgency suggests a genuine desire for reunion.
20. The benediction is one of the richest in the New Testament. 'God of peace' (theos tēs eirēnēs) is a common Pauline title (Romans 15:33, 16:20). This is the only explicit reference to the resurrection in Hebrews (anagagōn ek nekron, 'having brought up from the dead'). The title 'great shepherd' (poimena ton probatōn ton megan) echoes Isaiah 63:11 (LXX) and Ezekiel 34:23 (the Davidic shepherd). The phrase en haimati diathēkēs aiōniou ('by the blood of the eternal covenant') may modify the resurrection ('God raised Jesus on the basis of the eternal covenant blood') or the shepherding ('Jesus shepherds by virtue of covenant blood').
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 63:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ezekiel 34:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The verb katartisai ('equip, make complete, put in order, restore') is the same root as 'prepared' in 10:5 ('a body you have prepared for me') — God who prepared Christ's body now equips believers for service. The phrase poiōn en hēmin to euareston ('working in us what is pleasing') asserts that good works are ultimately God's work in the believer, mediated through Christ (dia Iēsou Christou). The doxology — 'to whom be glory forever' — may refer to Christ or to God; the grammar allows either.
22. The phrase logou tēs paraklēseōs ('word of exhortation') is the same phrase used in Acts 13:15 for a synagogue sermon. The author characterizes the entire letter as an exhortation. The claim to have written 'briefly' (dia bracheōn) is either self-deprecating humor (the letter is not short) or relative — compared to what could be said, he has been concise.

- 23.** This is the only personal name in Hebrews besides Jesus and the Old Testament figures. Timothy is identified as 'our brother' (ton adelphon hēmōn), linking the author to the Pauline circle. The word apolelumenon ('released, set free') implies Timothy was imprisoned, though no other New Testament text records this. The conditional 'if he comes soon' (ean tachion erchētai) suggests uncertain travel plans.
- 24.** The third reference to leaders (hēgoumenoi) alongside 'all the saints' (pantas tous hagious) — the greeting encompasses the entire community. The phrase hoi apo tēs Italias ('those from Italy') is ambiguous: it could mean 'those who are in Italy' (the letter is being sent from Italy) or 'those who are from Italy' (Italian Christians now living elsewhere, sending greetings back home). If the latter, the letter may be addressed to a Roman church.
- 25.** The closing benediction is simple and universal: hē charis meta pantōn hymōn ('grace with all of you'). After thirteen chapters of complex theological argument, the letter ends with the single word that summarizes everything the new covenant provides: grace (charis). Some manuscripts add 'Amen,' but the SBLGNT omits it.

James

1

Summary: *James 1 opens with a greeting to 'the twelve tribes in the Dispersion' and immediately addresses the paradox of joy in trials: testing produces endurance, and endurance leads to maturity. The chapter then introduces several key themes that the letter will develop: asking God for wisdom without doubting, the reversal of rich and poor, the nature of temptation (which comes from one's own desires, not from God), God as the giver of every good gift, and the call to be 'doers of the word and not hearers only.' The chapter closes with a definition of true religion: caring for orphans and widows and keeping oneself unstained by the world.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *James's letter is the most practically oriented writing in the New Testament. The opening greeting to 'the twelve tribes in the Dispersion' is the broadest address in the NT epistles and may be literal (Jewish Christians abroad) or metaphorical (the church as renewed Israel). The theology of temptation in verses 13-15 is psychologically sophisticated, tracing sin from desire through conception to death using a birth metaphor. The 'perfect law of liberty' (v. 25) is a striking paradox that unites freedom and law — anticipating the letter's argument that genuine faith expresses itself in obedient action.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between James and Paul on faith and works has been debated since the Reformation. James's emphasis on works as evidence of faith is not a contradiction of Paul's emphasis on justification by faith but addresses a different problem: people who claim faith without any corresponding action. The phrase 'twelve tribes in the Dispersion' (v. 1) may indicate the letter was written to Jewish Christians, but the Greek is too polished for a simple pastoral letter to a single community.*

Connections: *The testing-produces-endurance theme connects to Romans 5:3-5. The wisdom request echoes Proverbs 2:1-6 and the wisdom tradition broadly. The reversal of rich and poor echoes the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) and the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:20-26). The mirror metaphor (v. 23) anticipates Paul's mirror image in 1 Corinthians 13:12. The 'pure and undefiled religion' definition (v. 27) echoes Isaiah 1:17 and Micah 6:8.*

¹James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: greetings. ²Count it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you fall into various trials, ³Being aware this, that the trying of your faith works patience. ⁴And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶But let him ask in faith, with no

doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸Such a person is divided in loyalty and unreliable in everything they do. ⁹Let the lowly brother boast in his exaltation, ¹⁰However, the rich, in that he is made low — because as the flower of the grass he will pass away. ¹¹For the sun rises with its scorching heat and dries up the grass; its flower falls and its beauty perishes. So also will the rich person fade away in the midst of his pursuits. ¹²Blessed is the man who endures trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. ¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted by evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death. ¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers and sisters. ¹⁷Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creation. ¹⁹Know this, my beloved brothers and sisters: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, ²⁰Because the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. ²¹Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. ²²Deceiving your own selves, but be you doers of the word, and not hearers only. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴For he looks at himself and goes away and immediately forgets what he was like. ²⁵But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, being not a forgetful hearer but a doer who acts — this person will be blessed in his doing. ²⁶If anyone considers himself religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek Iakobos is the same name as the Hebrew Ya'akov (Jacob). The author identifies himself simply as doulos ('servant, slave') — not as an apostle or brother of the Lord, though tradition identifies him as the brother of Jesus who led the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13). The address to the 'twelve tribes in the Dispersion' (diaspora) uses Israel's covenant identity language for the Christian community scattered across the Roman world.
2. The Greek pasan charan ('all joy, complete joy') is emphatic — not partial or reluctant joy but total joy. The word peirasmois can mean 'trials' (external hardships) or 'temptations' (internal enticements); here the context of 'falling into' (peripesete) suggests external trials. The adjective poikilois ('various, diverse, many-colored') indicates the trials come in multiple forms. James wastes no time on pleasantries — the very first command after the greeting is to rejoice in suffering.
3. The Greek dokimion ('testing, proving, means of testing') is related to the assaying of metals — faith is refined through trials like gold through fire (cf. 1 Peter 1:7). The verb katergazetai ('produces, works out, accomplishes') indicates an active process, not passive experience. The result is hypomone ('endurance, steadfastness, patient perseverance') — a quality that can only be forged through difficulty.
4. The Greek teleion ('perfect, complete, mature') and holokleroi ('complete, whole, entire') are near-synonyms reinforcing the idea of full spiritual development. James's use of teleios is not moral perfection but maturity — the fully developed character that results from endurance under trial. The phrase 'lacking in nothing' (en meedeni leipomenoi) is the positive flip side of the trials — what begins as loss ends as fullness.
5. The link to verse 4 is the word 'lacks' (leipetai) — if you lack nothing through endurance, but find you lack wisdom, simply ask. The Greek haplos ('generously, simply, without reserve') describes God's giving nature. The phrase me oneidizontos ('not reproaching, not finding fault') assures the asker that God does not shame those who come in need. This is one of the NT's most direct promises regarding prayer.
6. The Greek diakrinomenos ('doubting, wavering, being divided') literally means 'judging between two options' — the doubter is pulled in two directions. The sea-wave image (klydoni thalasses) captures the instability of a mind that trusts God one moment and fears the next. The verbs anemizomeno ('driven by wind') and rhipizomeno ('tossed, blown about') pile up to emphasize the chaotic motion of doubt.
7. The demonstrative 'that person' (ho anthropos ekeinos) creates distance — the doubter is held at arm's length as a cautionary example. The Greek leempsetai ('will receive') is emphatic in its negation: there is no expectation of receiving when the asking is halfhearted.
8. The Greek dipsychos ('double-souled, double-minded') may be a coinage of James — it does not appear in earlier Greek literature. It describes someone with two competing allegiances or belief systems. The instability (akatastatos, 'unsettled, disordered') is not limited to prayer but pervades 'all his ways' — the doubting mind produces an unstable life.
9. The Greek tapeinos ('lowly, humble, of low social standing') describes economic and social position, not merely a spiritual attitude. The verb kauchasthoo ('let him boast, let him glory') is surprising — the poor person is told to boast because in God's kingdom, their status is reversed. This is the first of James's strong statements about wealth and poverty.

10. The rich person is told to boast in being brought low (tapeinosei, 'humiliation') — a bitter irony. The flower-grass image comes from Isaiah 40:6-8, which James will develop in the next verse. Whether the 'rich brother' is a believer who should see wealth correctly or an unbeliever who will be judged is debated; the text is deliberately ambiguous.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 40:6-8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. James expands Isaiah 40:6-7, adding vivid agricultural detail: the kausoni ('scorching wind' or 'burning heat') is the sirocco, the hot desert wind that withers vegetation in hours. The rich person will 'fade' (marantheesetai, 'wither, decay') in the very midst of their business activities (poreiais, 'journeys, pursuits, enterprises'). The point is not that wealth is inherently evil but that it provides no lasting security.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 40:6-8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The beatitude form (makarios, 'blessed, happy, fortunate') echoes Jesus's beatitudes. The 'crown of life' (stephanon tees zoos) is the victor's wreath — the stephanos of the athletic games, not the royal diadema. The promise is to those who 'love him' (agaposin auton), connecting endurance under trial to love for God. The SBLGNT does not specify 'the Lord' as the subject of the promise; the context implies God.
13. The word peirazomenos shifts from 'trial' (v. 12) to 'temptation' — the same Greek root covers both external hardship and internal enticement to sin. James categorically rejects the idea that God is the source of temptation. The Greek apeirastos ('untestable, unable to be tempted') means God has no vulnerability to evil and therefore cannot be its source.
14. The Greek exelkomenos ('being dragged out, being lured') and delezomenos ('being baited, being enticed') use fishing or hunting imagery — desire is the bait that hooks the person. The emphasis on 'his own' (idias) desire places responsibility squarely on the individual, not on external circumstances or divine testing.
15. James traces a genealogy of death using a birth metaphor: desire conceives (syllabousa), gives birth (tiktei) to sin, and sin when fully mature (apotelestheisa, 'brought to completion') produces (apokuei, 'gives birth to') death. The metaphor is darkly ironic — what appears to be life-giving (conception, birth) leads inexorably to death. This is one of the most psychologically penetrating analyses of sin in the NT.
16. The imperative me planasthe ('do not be led astray, do not be deceived') is a common NT warning formula (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9, 15:33, Galatians 6:7). It serves as a hinge between the analysis of temptation (vv. 13-15) and the declaration of God's goodness (vv. 17-18).
17. The Greek has a rhythmic, almost poetic quality: pasa dosis agathees kai pan doorema teleion. The title 'Father of lights' (patros toon phoootoon) identifies God as creator of the heavenly luminaries (Genesis 1:14-18). Unlike the sun, moon, and stars that cast shifting shadows, God has no parallagee ('variation, change') or tropes aposkiasma ('shadow cast by turning'). The astronomical metaphor declares God's absolute constancy — he does not shift like celestial bodies.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 1:14-18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The verb apekueesen ('brought forth, gave birth to') is the same used in verse 15 for sin producing death — but here God 'gives birth' to new life. The 'word of truth' (logo aleetheias) is the gospel. The 'firstfruits' (aparcheen) image comes from the OT offering of the first portion of the harvest (Leviticus 23:10), signifying that believers are the first installment of a larger redemption that will encompass all creation.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 23:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The triple command — quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger — has the form of a wisdom proverb (cf. Proverbs 10:19, 14:29, 17:27, Ecclesiastes 5:1-2). The Greek iste may be indicative ('you know this') or imperative ('know this!'); either way it introduces practical wisdom. This verse anticipates the extended discussion of the tongue in chapter 3.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Proverbs 10:19. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ecclesiastes 5:1-2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The statement is categorical: human anger (orgee andros) is incapable of producing (ouk ergazetai) God's righteousness (dikaiosyneen theou). The 'righteousness of God' here likely means the righteous conduct that God requires, not God's own attribute of righteousness. James does not deny that anger exists or even that it can be justified, but insists it cannot generate the godly life.
21. The Greek rhyparian ('filthiness, moral uncleanness') and perisseian kakias ('abundance of wickedness, overflow of evil') describe the moral debris that must be cleared away before the word can take root. The 'implanted word' (emphyton logon) is a horticultural metaphor — the word is like a seed planted in the soil of the heart. The verb dexasthe ('receive, welcome') is an active choice, not passive absorption.
22. This is the programmatic statement of the entire letter. The Greek poieetai logou ('doers of the word') is the antithesis of akroatai ('hearers, listeners') — a distinction drawn from the synagogue practice of hearing Scripture read aloud. The verb paralozizomenoi ('deceiving, deluding by false reasoning') suggests that hearing without doing creates a dangerous illusion of spiritual health.
23. The Greek esoptro ('mirror') in the ancient world was polished bronze or silver — the reflection was real but imperfect. The phrase 'the face of his birth' (to prosopon tees geneseos autou) means his natural, God-given face. The mirror reveals the person's true condition, but without action the

revelation is useless.

24. The sequence is pointed: he 'looked at himself' (katenoesen heauton), 'went away' (apeleelythen), and 'immediately forgot' (eutheos epelatheto). The problem is not the looking but the failure to act on what was seen. The speed of forgetting — 'immediately' — satirizes the superficiality of hearing without doing.
25. The Greek parakupsas ('having stooped to look, having peered intently') describes a deliberate, focused examination — far more attentive than the casual glance of the mirror-gazer. The 'perfect law of freedom' (nomon teleion ton tees eleutherias) is a remarkable phrase that unites what many thought contradictory: law and liberty. For James, God's instruction (nomos) leads to freedom, not bondage. The promise of blessing is conditional on doing, not merely on looking.
26. The Greek threeskos ('religious, pious, devout') and threeskeia ('religion, worship, religious practice') refer to outward religious observance. The horse-bridling metaphor (chalinagagoon, 'putting a bridle on') anticipates the tongue imagery of chapter 3. James's point is devastating: uncontrolled speech invalidates all religious practice.
27. James defines true religion with two components: active mercy (visiting orphans and widows) and personal holiness (remaining unstained by the world). The Greek episkeptesthai ('to visit, to look after, to care for') means more than a social call — it implies providing practical help. Orphans and widows were the most vulnerable members of ancient society, and their care was a covenant obligation (Deuteronomy 14:29, 24:17-21, Isaiah 1:17). The word aspilon ('unstained, spotless') is a purity term — the believer is to remain uncontaminated by the world's values.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Deuteronomy 14:29. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 1:17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

2

Summary: *James 2 develops two interconnected arguments. The first (vv. 1-13) condemns partiality in the assembly: when believers honor the rich and dishonor the poor, they violate the 'royal law' of neighbor-love and stand condemned by the law of liberty. The second (vv. 14-26) is the letter's theological climax — the argument that faith without works is dead. James uses Abraham's offering of Isaac and Rahab's sheltering of the spies to demonstrate that genuine faith always produces corresponding action. The chapter's final verdict is stark: 'As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter contains the most direct engagement with Pauline theology in the New Testament. James and Paul both cite Genesis 15:6 ('Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness') but draw different conclusions — Paul to demonstrate justification apart from law-works, James to demonstrate that the faith credited to Abraham was a living, acting faith. The two are addressing different errors: Paul confronts legalism, James confronts antinomianism. The pairing of Abraham and Rahab is striking — the patriarch of the covenant and a Gentile prostitute stand together as models of living faith.*

Translation Friction: *The apparent tension between James 2:24 ('a person is justified by works and not by faith alone') and Romans 3:28 ('a person is justified by faith apart from works of the law') has generated centuries of debate. We render both texts straightforwardly from the Greek without harmonizing. The word 'justify' (dikaioō) may carry different nuances in each context: Paul uses it for God's initial declaration of righteousness, while James uses it for the visible vindication of faith before others. The phrase 'faith alone' (pistis monon, v. 24) is the only place in the New Testament where these words appear together — and James denies it.*

Connections: *The partiality prohibition echoes Leviticus 19:15 and Deuteronomy 1:17. The 'royal law' (v. 8) quotes Leviticus 19:18, the same text Jesus identified as the second greatest commandment (Matthew 22:39). Genesis 15:6 (v. 23) is cited also in Romans 4:3 and Galatians 3:6. The Abraham-and-Isaac narrative (v. 21) draws on Genesis 22. Rahab's story (v. 25) comes from Joshua 2. The faith-and-works argument anticipates the pastoral concern of 1 John 3:17-18.*

1My brothers and sisters, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. 2For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, 3Indeed,

you have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say to him, Sit you here in a good location. And say to the poor, Stand you there, or sit here under my footstool: 4Are you not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of wickedness thoughts? 5Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters: has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he promised to those who love him? 6But you have dishonored the poor. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and are they not the ones who drag you into court? 7Are they not the ones who blaspheme the noble name by which you were called? 8If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing well. 9But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10For whoever keeps the whole law but stumbles at one point has become guilty of all of it. 11For the one who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder.' If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. 13For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. 14What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15If a brother or sister is without clothing and lacking daily food, 16One of you say to them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled. Even so you give them not those things which are needful to the body. What does it profit? 17So also faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself. 18But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19You believe that God is one. You do well — even the demons believe that, and shudder. 20Do you want to be shown, you empty person, that faith apart from works is useless? 21Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? 22You see that faith was working together with his works, and faith was completed by works. 23Indeed, the scripture came to fulfillment which says, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness — then he was called the Friend of God. 24You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25And in the same way, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another route? 26For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *prosōpolēmpsiais* ('acts of partiality, favoritism') is a compound word literally meaning 'face-receiving' — judging by outward appearance. The genitive *tēs doxēs* ('of glory') is in apposition to Jesus Christ: he is 'the Lord of glory,' an exalted title that makes human status distinctions absurd. The plural 'acts of partiality' suggests a pattern of behavior, not an isolated incident.
2. The word *synagōgēn* ('assembly, synagogue') is used here for a Christian gathering — suggesting either a very early date for the letter or a Jewish-Christian audience that still used synagogue terminology. The compound *chrysodaktylios* ('gold-ringed') appears only here in the New Testament and describes someone conspicuously displaying wealth. The contrast between *lamptra* ('bright, splendid') and *rhypara* ('dirty, shabby') clothing is vivid and immediate.
3. The directive seating — 'sit here in a good place' versus 'stand over there or sit at my feet' — reflects actual social stratification in ancient assemblies. The Greek *hypo to hypopodion mou* ('under my footstool') is a position of extreme social inferiority. James paints the scene with sharp specificity to expose the absurdity.
4. The verb *diekrithēte* ('made distinctions, were divided') carries a double meaning: they have both discriminated between people and become internally divided. The phrase *kritai dialogismōn ponērōn* ('judges of evil reasonings') means they have become judges whose criteria are corrupt — wealth rather than character.
5. The imperative *akousate* ('listen!') signals a major theological point. God's election reverses worldly valuations: those poor 'in the world' (*tō kosmō*, dative of reference) are rich 'in faith.' The phrase 'heirs of the kingdom' echoes Jesus's beatitude in Matthew 5:3 and Luke 6:20. The kingdom is promised specifically to 'those who love him' — a covenantal condition.
6. The verb *ētimasate* ('dishonored, treated with contempt') is the opposite of the honor God bestows. The irony is biting: the rich whom believers fawn over are the very ones who *katadynasteuousin* ('exercise power against, oppress') them and physically *hēlkousin* ('drag') them to legal proceedings. James exposes the absurdity of honoring one's own oppressors.
7. The 'noble name' (to *kalon onoma*) is the name of Christ, invoked over believers at baptism. The phrase to *epiklēthen eph' hymas* ('that was called upon you') echoes the Old Testament formula for God's name being placed upon his people (cf. 2 Chronicles 7:14, Amos 9:12 LXX). To dishonor the poor while honoring those who blaspheme Christ's name is a profound contradiction.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Chronicles 7:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Amos 9:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The 'royal law' (nomon basilikon) may be called royal because it comes from the King (God), governs the kingdom, or is the supreme law that rules over all others. The quotation is from Leviticus 19:18, which Jesus identified as the second greatest commandment (Mark 12:31). The adverb mentoi ('really, indeed') adds a conditional edge — 'if you truly do this.'
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 19:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The verb prosōpolēmpteite ('show partiality') is the verbal form of the noun in verse 1. Showing favoritism is not a minor social error — it is hamartian ('sin') and makes one a parabatēs ('transgressor, lawbreaker'). The law that convicts is not merely the Mosaic code but the 'royal law' of love.
10. The logic is not that every sin is equally severe but that the law is a unified whole — violating any part ruptures the entire relationship of obedience. The verb ptaisē ('stumbles') is gentler than 'transgresses,' suggesting that even a misstep brings full liability. This principle was recognized in rabbinic teaching as well.
11. James grounds the unity of the law in the unity of the lawgiver — 'the one who said' (ho eipōn) both commandments is the same God. The examples come from the Decalogue (Exodus 20:13-14). Selective obedience is no obedience at all.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 20:13-14. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The 'law of liberty' (nomou eleutherias) reprises 1:25 — the paradoxical idea that true freedom comes through obedience to God's law. Believers should live in awareness that their future judgment will be measured by this standard. Both speech (laleite) and action (poieite) are included — anticipating chapter 3's focus on the tongue.
13. The first clause warns: those who show no mercy (eleos) will face merciless judgment. The second clause is one of the great one-line summaries in the New Testament — katakauchatai eleos kriseōs, 'mercy boasts against / triumphs over judgment.' The verb katakauchaomai means to boast triumphantly over a defeated opponent. Mercy does not ignore judgment but overcomes it.
14. The pivotal section begins with a rhetorical question expecting a negative answer. Note carefully: James does not say 'if someone has faith' but 'if someone says he has faith' (legē tis echein) — the issue is claimed faith without evidence. The article hē pistis ('that faith,' 'the faith in question') is crucial: James asks not whether faith in general saves but whether this particular kind of faith — faith that produces no works — can save. The expected answer is no.
15. The illustration is deliberately simple and urgent — not a hypothetical but a scenario the audience would recognize. The phrase tēs ephēmerou trophēs ('of daily food') echoes the Lord's Prayer's petition for daily bread (Matthew 6:11). The need is not exotic but elemental: clothing and food.
16. The dismissal 'go in peace' (hypagete en eirēnē) uses pious language — the standard Hebrew farewell blessing — while withholding practical help. The passive imperatives 'be warmed and filled' (thermainesthē kai chortazesthē) are either middle ('warm and feed yourselves') or divine passives ('may God warm and fill you'). Either way, the speaker passes responsibility to someone else. James exposes religious language used as a substitute for action.
17. The first occurrence of the chapter's verdict: faith without works is nekra ('dead'). The phrase kath' heautēn ('by itself, on its own') clarifies that such faith is not merely incomplete but lifeless — it has no animating principle. This is not an attack on faith itself but on a counterfeit version of faith that exists only as verbal claim.
18. This is one of the most debated verses in James due to the difficulty of identifying the objector's position. The most natural reading is that James is addressing a hypothetical person who tries to separate faith and works as independent spiritual gifts. James's response is a challenge: demonstrate faith without works — it cannot be done. Faith is invisible apart from its expression in action. The verb deixon ('show') demands visible, demonstrable evidence.
19. James quotes the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4), the most fundamental confession of Jewish faith: 'God is one' (heis estin ho theos). The devastating comparison follows: demons possess orthodox theology — they believe the correct proposition — yet their belief produces not obedience but phrissoousin ('shudder, tremble with horror'). Mere intellectual assent to truth, even the highest truth, is not saving faith.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 6:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The address ō anthrōpe kene ('O empty person') is sharp — kenos means hollow, lacking substance, like the faith being described. Some manuscripts read nekra ('dead') instead of argē ('useless, idle, barren'), but argē is the better-attested reading in critical editions and creates a wordplay: a-rgē means 'without work,' matching the 'without works' (chōris tōn ergōn) that James condemns.
21. James appeals to the Aqedah, the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22). The verb edikaiōthē ('was justified, was shown righteous') in James's usage means 'was demonstrated to be righteous' — Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac was the visible proof that his faith (confessed in Genesis 15:6) was genuine. Paul cites Genesis 15:6 for the moment of faith; James cites Genesis 22 for the demonstration of that same faith in action.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 22. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 15:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The verb *synērgei* ('was working together with, cooperated with') presents faith and works as collaborative, not competitive. The verb *eteleiōthē* ('was completed, was brought to its goal, was perfected') means that Abraham's faith reached its intended maturity through action. Faith without works is not merely deficient — it is unfinished, like a seed that never germinates.
23. The quotation is Genesis 15:6 (LXX), the same text Paul cites in Romans 4:3 and Galatians 3:6. James's argument is that Genesis 22 (the offering of Isaac) 'fulfilled' (*eplērōthē*) what Genesis 15 declared — Abraham's faith was genuine and was proven so by his obedience decades later. The title 'friend of God' (*philos theou*) is not found in Genesis but appears in Isaiah 41:8, 2 Chronicles 20:7, and Jewish tradition. It represents the highest intimacy between a human and God.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 15:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 22 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 41:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 2 Chronicles 20:7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. This is the only verse in the New Testament that contains the phrase 'faith alone' (*pisteōs monon*) — and it denies its sufficiency. The statement must be read in context: James is not contradicting Paul but addressing a different problem. Paul argues against those who add law-observance as a requirement for initial acceptance by God; James argues against those who claim saving faith while producing no evidence of transformed life. The word *dikaïoutai* here means 'is shown to be righteous' in the visible, evidentiary sense.
25. The pairing of Abraham and Rahab is extraordinary: the father of the nation and a Canaanite prostitute. If Abraham represents the highest pedigree of faith, Rahab represents the most unlikely. Her 'work' was sheltering the Israelite spies (Joshua 2) and sending them away safely — an act of faith expressed in concrete, risky action. She appears in Matthew's genealogy (1:5) and Hebrews 11:31. The word *pornē* ('prostitute') is not softened; James retains it to emphasize that works-producing faith is available to anyone.
25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joshua 2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The chapter's closing analogy is devastating in its clarity. The Greek *pneumatōs* ('spirit, breath') refers to the animating life-force — without it, a body is a corpse. Works are to faith what breath is to the body: not an addition but the evidence of life. A faith that produces no works is not weak faith or immature faith — it is dead faith, a spiritual corpse. This is the third and final declaration of faith's death in the chapter (cf. vv. 17, 20), forming the definitive verdict.

3

Summary: James 3 addresses two related themes: the destructive power of the tongue (vv. 1-12) and the nature of true versus false wisdom (vv. 13-18). The tongue section uses a cascade of vivid metaphors — a horse's bit, a ship's rudder, a small fire, a restless evil, a spring, a fig tree — to demonstrate that the tongue, though small, wields disproportionate power for both blessing and destruction. James declares that no human being can tame the tongue and that using it to both praise God and curse people made in God's image is a fundamental contradiction. The wisdom section contrasts earthly wisdom (characterized by jealousy and selfish ambition) with wisdom from above (characterized by purity, peaceableness, gentleness, and mercy).

*What Makes This Remarkable: The density of metaphor in verses 3-8 is unmatched in the New Testament epistles. James piles image upon image — bit, rudder, fire, world of unrighteousness, animal kingdom, poison, spring, fig tree, vine — creating an overwhelming sense of the tongue's danger. The theological grounding in verse 9 is striking: cursing people is wrong not merely because it is unkind but because humans are made 'in the likeness of God' (*kath' homoiōsin theou*) — an appeal to Genesis 1:26-27. The wisdom passage (vv. 13-18) anticipates modern psychology's recognition that speech reveals character.*

Translation Friction: James's statement that 'no human being can tame the tongue' (v. 8) raises the question of whether he is describing an impossibility or an extreme difficulty. The context suggests that while human effort alone cannot master the tongue, the wisdom 'from above' (v. 17) provides the transformation needed. The relationship between this chapter's practical ethics and Paul's theology of Spirit-empowered transformation (Galatians 5:22-23) is complementary rather than contradictory.

Connections: The tongue's fire connects to Proverbs 16:27 and 26:20-21. The image of God in verse 9 echoes Genesis 1:26-27 and 9:6. The wisdom from above parallels the wisdom tradition of Proverbs 8 and Sirach 24. The 'fruit of righteousness sown in peace' (v. 18) echoes Isaiah 32:17 and Hosea 10:12. The list of wisdom's qualities anticipates the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.

¹Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ²For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a mature person, able to bridle the whole body as well. ³If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole body as well. ⁴Look at ships too: though they are so large and driven by fierce winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! ⁶And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and itself set on fire by hell. ⁷For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, is tamed and has been tamed by humankind, ⁸However, the tongue can no man tame. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, these things ought not to be so. ¹¹Does a spring pour out from the same opening both fresh water and bitter? ¹²Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, produce olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt spring yield fresh water. ¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the gentleness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵This is not the wisdom that comes down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The warning targets the role of didaskaloi ('teachers'), not 'masters' as the KJV has it. In the early church, teachers held significant authority (cf. Acts 13:1, 1 Corinthians 12:28). James includes himself in the warning — 'we will receive' (lēmposometha) — acknowledging that greater responsibility brings greater accountability. The word krima here means 'judgment' or 'verdict,' not necessarily 'condemnation.'
2. The universal admission — 'we all stumble' (ptaiomen hapantes) — includes James himself. The logic is that speech is the hardest arena of self-control; mastering it means mastering everything. The metaphor chalinagōgēsai ('to bridle, to lead with a bridle') introduces the horse imagery that verse 3 will develop. The word teleios ('perfect, mature, complete') reprises its use in 1:4.
3. The first analogy: a small bit (chalinous) in a horse's mouth controls the entire animal. The parallel to the tongue is implicit — a small member directing the whole person. The verb metagomen ('we guide, we direct') emphasizes deliberate control over something much larger than the instrument.
4. The second analogy scales up: from a horse to a ship. The adjective tēlikauta ('so great, so large') emphasizes the disproportion between vessel and rudder (elachistou pēdaliou, 'smallest rudder'). Even fierce winds (anemōn sklērōn) cannot override the rudder's direction. The pilot's hormē ('impulse, will, intention') determines the ship's course — just as the intention behind speech determines its effect.
5. James now makes the application explicit: the tongue (glōssa) is mikron melos ('a small member') with disproportionate effect. The verb auchei ('boasts') can be positive or negative — the tongue claims great power, and the claim is true. The fire metaphor shifts to pure danger: hēlikon pyr hēlikēn hylēn anapteī — a tiny spark ignites a vast forest (hylē can mean 'forest' or 'wood/matter').
6. This is the most concentrated verse in the chapter. The tongue is identified flatly as pyr ('fire') and as ho kosmos tēs adikias ('the world of unrighteousness') — it is a microcosm of all that is wrong. The phrase ton trochon tēs geneseōs ('the wheel/course of birth/existence') is notoriously difficult; it likely means the entire cycle of human life from birth to death. The tongue is set on fire hypo tēs geennēs ('by Gehenna/hell') — its destructive power has a demonic origin. The progression moves from human body to the whole of life to hell itself.

7. The four categories — *thērion* ('beasts'), *peteinōn* ('birds'), *herpetōn* ('reptiles'), and *enaliōn* ('sea creatures') — echo the four domains of Genesis 1:26, where God gives humanity dominion over all living things. The double verb *damazetai kai dedamastai* ('is being tamed and has been tamed') covers both present and past — humanity has a comprehensive track record of subduing the animal kingdom.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 1:26. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The contrast is stark: humanity tames every creature but cannot tame its own tongue. The adjective *akatastaton* ('restless, unstable, uncontrollable') appeared in 1:8 to describe the double-minded person. The tongue is *mestos iou thanatēphorou* ('full of death-bearing poison') — the image shifts from fire to venom, suggesting the tongue kills like a serpent. The echoes of Genesis 3 (the serpent's lethal speech) may be intentional.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The theological core of the passage: cursing a human being is an assault on the divine image they bear. The phrase *kath' homoiōsin theou* ('according to the likeness of God') quotes Genesis 1:26 (LXX). The repetition of *en autē* ('with it... with it') hammers the contradiction: the same tongue performs worship and destruction. The verb *katarōmetha* ('we curse') is strong — it means to invoke harm or judgment on someone.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 1:26. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The verdict is simple and direct: *ou chrē* ('it is not fitting, it must not be'). Blessing (*eulogia*) and cursing (*katara*) from the same mouth is a moral impossibility that believers routinely commit. The understated 'ought not to be so' carries the weight of divine expectation, not mere social etiquette.
11. The rhetorical question expects the answer 'no.' A spring (*pēgē*) produces water according to its nature — it cannot produce both sweet (*glyky*) and bitter (*pikron*) water from the same source (*opēs*, 'opening'). The implication is that a person whose tongue produces both blessing and cursing has a divided nature that needs transformation at the source.
12. Three rapid-fire examples from nature — fig tree, grapevine, salt spring — all making the same point: nature is consistent; each thing produces according to its kind. The application to speech is unstated but clear: if your tongue consistently produces cursing, the problem is not the tongue but the heart that drives it. Jesus made the same argument with similar botanical imagery (Matthew 7:16-20, 12:33-37).
13. The transition to the wisdom section echoes the faith-works argument of chapter 2: true wisdom, like true faith, is demonstrated by visible evidence. The word *anastrophēs* ('conduct, manner of life') is far broader than 'conversation' (KJV). The phrase *en prāytēti sophias* ('in the gentleness/meekness of wisdom') defines what wise conduct looks like — not assertive self-promotion but humble, gentle action.
14. The opposite of gentle wisdom is *zēlon pikron* ('bitter jealousy') and *eritheian* ('selfish ambition, factious rivalry'). The word *eritheia* originally referred to a hired laborer and came to mean self-seeking partisanship. To claim wisdom while harboring these is to *pseudesthe kata tēs alētheias* ('lie against the truth') — not merely to be wrong but to actively oppose truth itself.
15. False wisdom receives a devastating three-word diagnosis: *epigeios* ('earthly, belonging to this world'), *psychikē* ('natural, unspiritual, of the soul rather than the Spirit'), and *daimoniōdēs* ('demonic, characteristic of demons'). The progression descends from merely human to actively evil. The term *psychikē* is the same word Paul uses in 1 Corinthians 2:14 for the 'natural person' who cannot receive the things of the Spirit.
16. Jealousy and selfish ambition produce *akatastasia* ('disorder, instability, chaos') — the same word family as the 'restless' (*akatastaton*) tongue in verse 8 and the 'unstable' (*akatastatos*) double-minded person in 1:8. James uses this word group as a signature marker of uncontrolled human nature. The result is *pan phaulon pragma* ('every worthless/vile deed').
17. The seven qualities of heavenly wisdom form one of the most beautiful ethical lists in the New Testament. The order is significant: purity (*hagnē*) comes first because it is foundational. Then follow: *eirēnikē* ('peaceable'), *epieikēs* ('gentle, fair, yielding'), *eupēthēs* ('open to reason, willing to yield, compliant'), *mestē eleous kai karpōn agathōn* ('full of mercy and good fruits'), *adiakritos* ('impartial, without favoritism' — connecting back to chapter 2), and *anypokritos* ('sincere, without pretense, unhypocritical'). This is James's portrait of the transformed life.
18. The chapter closes with an agricultural metaphor: the 'fruit of righteousness' (*karpos dikaiosynēs*) is both the seed and the harvest — peacemakers sow peace and reap righteousness. The echo of Jesus's beatitude is unmistakable: 'Blessed are the peacemakers' (Matthew 5:9). The phrase also echoes Isaiah 32:17: 'The fruit of righteousness will be peace.' Peace is both the method and the result.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 32:17: — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

4

Summary: *James 4 diagnoses the root cause of conflict among believers: disordered desires that produce wars, quarrels, and unanswered prayer. The solution is radical humility before God. The chapter builds to its central command — 'Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you' (v. 8) — and frames the choice between God and the world as one of spiritual adultery. James then warns against speaking evil of one another (placing oneself as judge over the law) and against presumptuous planning that ignores the sovereignty of God. Life is a vapor, and all human plans should be held under the phrase 'If the Lord wills.'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The metaphor of spiritual adultery (v. 4) draws on the prophetic tradition of Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, where Israel's unfaithfulness to God is portrayed as marital infidelity. The ten imperatives in verses 7-10 (submit, resist, draw near, cleanse, purify, lament, mourn, weep, let laughter be turned, humble yourselves) form the most concentrated call to repentance in the New Testament epistles. The quotation in verse 5 ('the spirit that he made to dwell in us yearns jealously') has no exact Old Testament source, making it one of the most debated citations in James.*

Translation Friction: *The quotation in verse 5 does not match any known Old Testament text exactly. It may be a free paraphrase of passages like Exodus 20:5 or a reference to a text now lost. We render the Greek as given without attempting to identify a specific source. The address 'adulteresses' (moichalides, v. 4) in some manuscripts reads 'adulterers and adulteresses' — the SBLGNT follows the shorter reading, understanding the feminine as a metaphorical address to the unfaithful community.*

Connections: *The 'wars and fights' language (v. 1) connects to the disorder of 3:16. The friendship-with-the-world theme echoes 1 John 2:15-17. 'Draw near to God' recalls Psalm 73:28 and Hebrews 10:22. 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble' (v. 6) quotes Proverbs 3:34 (LXX). The 'vapor' metaphor for life (v. 14) echoes Ecclesiastes and Psalm 39:5-6. The presumptuous planning warning parallels Proverbs 27:1 and Luke 12:16-21.*

¹What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this — your passions that are at war within your members? ²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend it on your passions. ⁴You adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, 'He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us'? ⁶But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.' ⁷So place yourselves under God's authority. Stand firm against the devil, and he will run from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. ¹¹Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters. The one who speaks against a brother or judges his brother speaks evil against the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. ¹²There is only one lawgiver and judge, the one who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor? ¹³Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit' — ¹⁴Whereas you know not what will be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is indeed a vapour, that appeareth for a little occasion, and then vanisheth away. ¹⁵Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.' ¹⁶As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. ¹⁷So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek polemoi ('wars') and machai ('battles, fights') may refer to literal conflicts within the community or to fierce interpersonal disputes. The cause is identified as hēdonōn ('pleasures, desires') — the English word 'hedonism' comes from this root. These desires are strateuomenōn ('warring, campaigning like soldiers') inside the person — an internal civil war that spills over into communal conflict.

2. The escalation is shocking: desire leads to murder (phoneuete). Some commentators take this metaphorically (cf. Matthew 5:21-22, 1 John 3:15), but James may intend the full force of the word. The cycle is: desire frustration violence more frustration. The solution shifts abruptly: 'you do not have because you do not ask' — the failure is not merely moral but prayerful. They grasp instead of asking.
3. Even when they do pray, the problem is motive: kakōs aiteisthe ('you ask badly, wrongly'). Prayer driven by hēdonais ('pleasures') — the same word as verse 1 — is prayer that treats God as a supplier for self-indulgence. The verb dapanēsēte ('spend, squander') suggests wasteful consumption, the same verb used for the prodigal son's squandering (Luke 15:14).
4. The address moichalides ('adulteresses') uses the prophetic metaphor of Israel as God's unfaithful spouse (Hosea 1-3, Jeremiah 3, Ezekiel 16). The SBLGNT reads only the feminine form, treating the community corporately as God's betrothed who has gone after other lovers. The stark binary — friendship with the world (philia tou kosmou) equals hostility toward God (echthra tou theou) — allows no middle ground. The verb kathistatai ('is established as, constitutes himself') indicates a deliberate stance, not an accidental drift.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Hosea 1-3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ezekiel 16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. This is one of the most debated verses in James. No Old Testament text matches the quotation exactly. The grammar is ambiguous: the subject could be 'the spirit' (our human spirit yearns enviously) or God (who yearns jealously for the spirit he placed in us). The rendering follows the interpretation that God is the subject — he jealously desires the complete loyalty of the spirit he gave to humanity. This reading fits the context of spiritual adultery and connects to the jealous God of Exodus 20:5 and 34:14.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 20:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The quotation is from Proverbs 3:34 (LXX). The verb antitassetai ('opposes, sets himself in battle array against') is a military term — God actively resists the proud. By contrast, he 'gives grace' (didōsin charin) to the humble. The opening phrase 'he gives more grace' (meizona didōsin charin) assures that God's grace is sufficient to overcome the jealous yearning described in verse 5. Grace exceeds the pull of worldly desire.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 3:34. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The first two of ten rapid-fire imperatives. The structure is chiasmic: submit to God (positive), resist the devil (negative). The verb hypotagēte ('submit, place yourself under') is the same word used for military subordination. The promise that the devil will 'flee' (pheuxetai) from those who resist is a remarkable assurance — the enemy's power is real but breakable. The KJV rendering is retained here as it accurately captures the Greek.
8. The chapter's central verse contains the letter's most famous promise: eggisate tō theō, kai engiei hymin — 'draw near to God and he will draw near to you.' The promise is conditional but certain: the initiative is human, but God's response is guaranteed. The following commands use temple purification language: 'cleanse your hands' (katharisate cheiras) echoes the priestly handwashing of Exodus 30:19-21, while 'purify your hearts' (hagnisate kardias) goes deeper than ritual to moral transformation. The terms 'sinners' (hamartōloi) and 'double-minded' (dipsychoi) are not insults but pastoral diagnoses — the hands represent external conduct, the heart represents internal loyalty.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 30:19-21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. Three imperatives of grief: talaipōrēsate ('be miserable, feel your wretchedness'), penthēsate ('mourn'), klausate ('weep'). These are not calls to perpetual sadness but to genuine repentance — feeling the weight of the spiritual adultery just described. The reversal of laughter to mourning and joy to gloom (katēpheian, 'downcast eyes, dejection') echoes the prophetic call of Joel 2:12-13 and Jesus's 'woe to you who laugh now' (Luke 6:25).
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joel 2:12-13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The final imperative and the climax of the ten commands: tapeinōthēte ('humble yourselves, make yourselves low'). The promise mirrors the Proverbs 3:34 quotation in verse 6 — God gives grace to the humble. The verb hypsōsei ('will lift up, will exalt') is the same word used for Christ's exaltation (Acts 2:33, Philippians 2:9). The pattern is consistently biblical: the way up is down.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Proverbs 3:34 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The verb katalaleite ('speak against, slander, badmouth') connects to the tongue teaching of chapter 3. James's logic: the law commands love of neighbor (2:8); speaking against a brother violates that law; but instead of submitting to the law as a doer (poiētēs, cf. 1:22), the slanderer sets himself above it as its judge (kritēs). Only God is qualified for that role (v. 12).
12. The argument reaches its conclusion: God alone is nomothetēs ('lawgiver') and kritēs ('judge'), and he alone has the power to sōsai ('save') and apolesai ('destroy'). The rhetorical question su de tis ei ('but who are you?') is deliberately deflating — it reduces the self-appointed judge to insignificance before the one true Judge.
13. The phrase age nyn ('come now') is a sharp attention-getter, introducing a new audience: traveling merchants who plan their itineraries with confident self-sufficiency. The specificity of the plan — city, duration (a year), activity (trade), result (profit) — makes the presumption vivid. There is nothing wrong with planning; the problem is planning without acknowledging God's sovereignty over the outcome.

14. The metaphor *atmis* ('mist, vapor, steam') captures life's brevity and fragility with devastating economy. The verb *phainomenē* ('appearing') and *aphanizomenē* ('disappearing, vanishing') describe a vapor's entire existence — briefly visible, then gone. The echo of Ecclesiastes and Psalm 39:5 ('my days are a few handbreadths') is unmistakable. James does not sentimentalize this but states it as fact.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 39:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The corrective is not to stop planning but to hold all plans under divine sovereignty: *ean ho kyrios thelēō* ('if the Lord wills'). This phrase (Latin: *Deo volente*, abbreviated D.V.) became a standard Christian expression of dependence on God. Note the order: 'we will live' comes before 'and do this or that' — even continued existence is subject to God's will, not just the success of business ventures.
16. The word *alazoneia* ('arrogance, pretension, braggadocio') describes the false confidence of those who plan without God. It appears also in 1 John 2:16 ('the pride of life'). Such boasting (*kauchēsis*) is not merely foolish but *ponēra* ('evil, wicked') — it usurps God's place as sovereign over the future.
17. The chapter's closing sentence is a principle of universal application: sins of omission are real sins. The participle *eidoti* ('knowing') establishes that knowledge creates moral obligation. This is not a new category of sin but a summary of the entire letter's argument — faith that knows but does not act is dead (2:17), planning that knows God's sovereignty but ignores it is arrogant (4:13-16), and knowing the good but not doing it is *hamartia* ('sin'). James's ethics consistently demand action, not merely assent.

5

Summary: *James 5 opens with a thundering prophetic denunciation of the rich who have hoarded wealth, defrauded workers, and lived in self-indulgent luxury (vv. 1-6). The tone then shifts to pastoral encouragement: believers are called to patience until the Lord's coming, following the example of the prophets and Job (vv. 7-11). The chapter addresses oath-taking (v. 12), prayer in suffering, singing in cheerfulness, and the anointing of the sick by elders (vv. 13-15). It closes with the confession of sins, the power of Elijah-like prayer, and the restoration of wandering believers (vv. 16-20).*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The denunciation of the rich (vv. 1-6) is among the most ferocious social criticism in the New Testament, rivaling the prophetic oracles of Amos and Isaiah. The rust on hoarded gold and silver will 'testify against you' and 'eat your flesh like fire' — wealth itself becomes the instrument of judgment. The prayer-and-anointing passage (vv. 14-15) has shaped Christian practice for two millennia, from Catholic last rites to Protestant healing ministries. The closing verses (19-20) contain no formal farewell — the letter simply ends with the urgency of rescuing the wanderer, as if James cannot be bothered with epistolary conventions when souls are at stake.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between James's denunciation of the rich (vv. 1-6) and his audience is debated — are these rich people within the church or outsiders? The shift to 'brothers and sisters' in verse 7 suggests the rich of verses 1-6 may be outside the community, but the warning still functions for believers. The anointing with oil (v. 14) may be medicinal (olive oil was used therapeutically), sacramental, or both — the text does not separate the physical from the spiritual. The phrase 'the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick' (v. 15) must be read alongside the letter's emphasis on God's sovereignty (4:15).*

Connections: *The condemnation of the rich echoes Amos 2:6-7, 5:11-12, and Isaiah 5:8-9. 'The Lord of hosts' (v. 4) is a rare NT use of the title *Kyrios Sabaōth*, drawn from Isaiah 5:9 (LXX). The farmer's patience (v. 7) echoes Deuteronomy 11:14. Job's endurance (v. 11) connects to the book of Job and the 'compassion of the Lord' echoes Exodus 34:6. The Elijah prayer passage (vv. 17-18) draws on 1 Kings 17-18. The restoration of wanderers (vv. 19-20) echoes Ezekiel 34 and Jesus's parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7).*

¹Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. ²Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. ³Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days. ⁴Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. ⁵You have lived on the earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶You have condemned and murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you. ⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Do not grumble against one

another, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be judged. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹Behold, we consider blessed those who remained steadfast. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. ¹²But above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your 'yes' be yes and your 'no' be no, so that you may not fall under judgment. ¹³Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. ¹⁴Is any sick in the midst of you? let him call for the elders of the church. And let them pray over him, anointing him with oil by the authority of the Lord:. ¹⁵And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. ¹⁷Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit. ¹⁹My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, ²⁰I indeed, let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death, and will hide a crowd of sins.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The opening age nyn ('come now') echoes 4:13 but now addresses the rich directly. The verb *ololyzontes* ('howling, wailing') is an onomatopoeic word used in the prophets for the shrieking of those under divine judgment (Isaiah 13:6, 14:31 LXX). The *miserias* (*talaipōriais*) are not present but *eperchomenais* ('coming, approaching') — eschatological judgment is on the way.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 13:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The perfect tenses *sesēpen* ('have rotted') and *gegonen* ('have become') present the decay as already accomplished — from God's perspective, the judgment is already underway. Hoarded wealth is not merely useless but actively decomposing. Garments were a primary form of stored wealth in the ancient world (cf. Acts 20:33), making moth damage a vivid image of wealth's impermanence.
3. Gold and silver do not literally rust, but James uses *katiōtai* ('has corroded') to make a theological point: hoarded wealth self-destructs. The corrosion (*ios*) serves double duty — it testifies against the hoarders at judgment (*martyrion*) and consumes their flesh like fire (*phageai tas sarkas*). The final phrase is devastating: *ethēsaurisate en eschatais hēmerais* — 'you have treasured up in the last days.' With judgment imminent, hoarding is not merely foolish but insane.
4. The personification is extraordinary: the withheld wages themselves *krazei* ('cry out') — echoing the blood of Abel crying from the ground (Genesis 4:10). Wage theft violates Leviticus 19:13 and Deuteronomy 24:14-15. The title *Kyrios Sabaōth* ('Lord of hosts/armies') appears only here and in Romans 9:29 in the New Testament (both quoting Isaiah). It emphasizes God's power to act on behalf of the oppressed. The defrauded workers have an advocate who commands armies.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 4:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 19:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 24:14-15. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The verbs *etryphēsate* ('lived in luxury') and *espatalēsate* ('lived self-indulgently, lived wantonly') describe extravagant consumption. The image shifts to cattle: *ethrepsate tas kardias hymōn* ('you fattened your hearts') pictures the rich as livestock being fattened for *hēmera sphagēs* ('a day of slaughter'). The day of slaughter is the day of judgment — and the rich have been preparing themselves for it through their own indulgence. The irony is brutal: they think they are feasting; they are actually being fattened for the kill.
6. The climax of the indictment: the rich have used the legal system (*katedikasate*, 'condemned in court') to destroy (*ephoneusate*, 'murdered') the righteous person (*ton dikaion*). The singular 'the righteous one' may refer to a specific person (possibly Jesus, or James the Just himself), or to a type — the vulnerable righteous person who cannot fight back. The final clause *ouk antitassetai hymin* ('he does not resist you') underscores the victim's helplessness and, by implication, the gravity of the crime. The same verb (*antitassetai*) was used in verse 4:6 of God opposing the proud — the righteous does not resist, but God will.
7. The tone shifts dramatically from judgment oracle to pastoral encouragement. The verb *makrothymēsate* ('be patient, be long-tempered') is the chapter's keyword, appearing four times (vv. 7, 8, 10). The *parousia* ('coming, arrival, presence') of the Lord is the hoped-for event that makes present suffering endurable. The farmer analogy is drawn from Palestinian agriculture: the 'early rain' (*proimon*) comes in October-November to soften the ground for plowing, and the 'late rain' (*opsimon*) comes in March-April to mature the grain before harvest.

8. The command *stērixate tas kardias hymōn* ('strengthen, establish, make firm your hearts') calls for inner resolve. The assurance that the *parousia ēggiken* ('has drawn near, is at hand') uses the same verb Jesus used in Mark 1:15: 'The kingdom of God has drawn near.' The nearness of the Lord's coming provides both urgency and comfort.
9. The verb *stenazete* ('grumble, groan, sigh') refers to complaining against fellow believers under the pressure of suffering — blaming each other rather than enduring together. The image of the Judge standing *pro tōn thyrōn* ('before the doors') is vivid and immediate: Christ the judge is not distant but at the threshold, about to enter. The urgency makes petty mutual grievances absurd.
10. The prophets serve as a *hypodeigma* ('example, model, pattern') of both *kakopatheia* ('suffering, enduring hardship') and *makrothymia* ('patience, long-suffering'). The prophets suffered not despite speaking God's word but because of it — their faithfulness to the divine message brought them persecution. The audience is to see their own suffering in this prophetic lineage.
11. Job is the supreme Old Testament example of endurance (*hypomonē*) under suffering whose cause is hidden. The phrase *to telos kyriou* ('the end/purpose of the Lord') means the outcome that God brought about — Job's restoration (Job 42:10-17). The final description of God as *polysplanchnos* ('deeply compassionate,' literally 'of many intestines/feelings') is found only here in the New Testament. The companion word *oiktirmōn* ('merciful, pitying') echoes the great self-description of God in Exodus 34:6.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Job 42:10-17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 34:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The phrase *pro pantōn* ('above all, before everything') marks this as a matter of supreme importance. The prohibition against oath-taking closely parallels Jesus's teaching in Matthew 5:33-37. The point is not that oaths are inherently evil but that a community of truth-tellers should need no oaths — their simple word should be sufficient. The warning *hypo krisin pesēte* ('fall under judgment') connects oath-breaking to the eschatological judgment theme that runs through the chapter.
13. Two terse instructions covering the full range of human experience: suffering (*kakopathei*) calls for prayer (*proseuchesthō*), and cheerfulness (*euthymei*) calls for praise-singing (*psalletō*). The verb *psalletō* ('sing praise, make music') originally meant to pluck a stringed instrument and came to mean singing psalms or hymns. Every emotional state has an appropriate spiritual response.
14. The instruction is specific and communal: the sick person (*asthenei*, 'is weak/ill') initiates by calling (*proskalesasthō*) the elders (*presbyterous*), who pray and anoint with olive oil (*elaion*). The anointing is done *en tō onomati tou kyriou* ('in the name of the Lord'), indicating that the oil is not merely medicinal but functions as a sign of the Lord's healing power. Olive oil was widely used medicinally in antiquity (cf. Luke 10:34), so the action may be both therapeutic and sacramental.
15. The 'prayer of faith' (*euchē tēs pisteōs*) — not the oil — is the operative element. The verb *sōsei* ('will save') can mean physical healing or spiritual salvation; both may be intended. The Lord (not the elders) is the one who *egerei* ('will raise up') the sick person. The conditional clause about sin (*kan hamartias ē pepoiēkōs*, 'even if he has committed sins') acknowledges a possible connection between sickness and sin without making it automatic — 'if' (*kan*) leaves the connection open, not assumed.
16. The instruction is mutual — *allēlois* ('to one another') — not hierarchical. Confession is to fellow believers, not exclusively to clergy. The purpose is healing (*iathēte*), which may be physical, spiritual, or both. The final sentence is often quoted in isolation: *deēsis dikaïou energoumenē poly ischyei*. The participle *energoumenē* can be middle ('effective, at work') or passive ('energized by God'). Either way, the point is that righteous prayer is not passive wishing but a powerful force.
17. James emphasizes that Elijah was *homoioopathēs hēmin* ('of like nature/feelings with us') — not a superhuman figure but an ordinary person whose prayer had extraordinary power. The phrase *proseuchē prosēuxato* ('he prayed with prayer') is a Hebraism (cognate dative) meaning 'he prayed earnestly/fervently.' The three-and-a-half-year drought is drawn from 1 Kings 17-18, though the Old Testament does not specify the exact duration. Luke 4:25 gives the same timeframe.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 1 Kings 17-18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The simplicity is the point: Elijah prayed, and heaven responded. The sequence — rain from heaven, fruit from earth — echoes the farmer analogy of verse 7 and completes the chapter's agricultural imagery. Prayer is the means by which heaven's resources reach earth's needs.
19. The letter closes without a formal farewell, turning instead to the urgent matter of reclaiming the straying. The verb *planēthē* ('wanders, goes astray, is deceived') is the root of the English 'planet' (wandering star). The 'truth' (*alētheias*) here encompasses both correct doctrine and faithful living — James makes no separation between the two.
20. The letter's final sentence is not about personal salvation but about the rescue of others. The one who turns a sinner back *sōsei psychēn autou ek thanatou* ('will save his soul from death') — the 'his' most naturally refers to the sinner being rescued, though some take it as the rescuer's own soul. The phrase *kalypsei plēthos hamartiōn* ('will cover a multitude of sins') echoes Proverbs 10:12 and 1 Peter 4:8. To 'cover' sins is to secure their forgiveness. The letter ends as it began — with practical, community-oriented faith that acts.

- 20.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Proverbs 10:12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

1 Peter

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Summary: *First Peter opens with a greeting from Peter to scattered believers across Asia Minor (modern Turkey), identifying them as chosen exiles. Peter blesses God for a living hope through Christ's resurrection, describes an inheritance kept in heaven, and encourages believers enduring trials that their tested faith is more precious than gold. He speaks of prophets who searched out the salvation now revealed, urges holiness in conduct, and reminds them they were ransomed not with perishable things but with the precious blood of Christ — the lamb foreknown before the foundation of the world.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Peter's opening is dense with Old Testament imagery recast around Christ. The 'sprinkling of blood' (v. 2) echoes the covenant ratification at Sinai (Exodus 24:8). The 'imperishable seed' (v. 23) and the Isaiah 40 quotation (vv. 24-25) ground the new birth in the enduring word of God. The letter addresses Gentile converts using Israel's identity language — exile, diaspora, election — a radical theological move that extends covenant identity to non-Jews.*

Translation Friction: *The addressees are described with the Greek *parepidēmois* diasporac ('exiles of the dispersion'), language traditionally reserved for Jews living outside Palestine. Peter applies this to predominantly Gentile churches, redefining 'exile' as a spiritual rather than ethnic category. The Trinitarian structure of verse 2 (foreknowledge of the Father, sanctification of the Spirit, sprinkling of Christ's blood) is theologically loaded but rendered as the Greek presents it without imposing later creedal formulations.*

Connections: *The 'living hope through resurrection' (v. 3) connects to the early kerygma of Acts 2. The lamb 'without defect or blemish' (v. 19) echoes Exodus 12 (Passover lamb) and Isaiah 53:7. The quotation from Isaiah 40:6-8 in verses 24-25 ties the permanence of God's word to the gospel proclaimed to these believers. The 'foreknown before the foundation of the world' language (v. 20) resonates with Ephesians 1:4 and Revelation 13:8.*

¹Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ^{2c}hosen according to God the Father's foreknowledge, set apart by the Spirit for obedience and for the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you. ³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade — kept safe in heaven for you. ⁵Who are kept by the authority of God by way of faith to salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you rejoice greatly, even though now for a little

while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷That the trial of your faith, being greatly more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be discovered to praise and honour and splendor at the appearing of Jesus Christ: ⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him; and though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the goal of your faith: the salvation of your souls. ¹⁰Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace destined for you searched and investigated carefully, ¹¹They searched to find out the time and circumstances that the Spirit of Christ within them was pointing to when it predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹²It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who proclaimed the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things into which angels long to look. ¹³Therefore, prepare your minds for action, be self-controlled, and set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹⁴As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires you formerly had in your ignorance, ¹⁵However, as he which has called you is holy, so be you holy in all manner of conversation; ¹⁶Indeed, because it is written, Be you holy. For I am holy. ¹⁷And if you call on him as Father — the one who judges impartially according to each person's work — conduct yourselves with reverent fear during the time of your exile, ¹⁸Since as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible matters, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers. ¹⁹However, with the costly blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. ²⁰He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was revealed in these last times for your sake, ²¹Who by him do trust in God, that raised him up from the dead, and offered him glory. That your faith and hope might be in God. ²²Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the message of God, which liveth and remains for ever. ²⁴For "all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, ²⁵But the message of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the message which by the gospel is preached to you.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *eklektōis parepidēmois diasporac* combines three theologically charged terms: 'chosen' (*eklektōis*), 'exiles/sojourners' (*parepidēmois*), and 'dispersion' (*diasporas*). The KJV's 'strangers scattered' flattens the covenantal weight. 'Dispersion' (*diaspora*) was a technical term for Jews living outside the land of Israel; Peter applies it to Gentile Christians, redefining covenant belonging.
1. The five provinces listed cover most of Roman Asia Minor (modern Turkey), suggesting a circular letter carried through these regions in order.
2. The verse has a Trinitarian structure: the Father's foreknowledge, the Spirit's sanctification, and Christ's blood. This is not a later theological imposition — the Greek naturally groups the three divine agents.
2. The Greek *rhantismōn* ('sprinkling') directly echoes the Septuagint of Exodus 24:8, where Moses sprinkled blood on the people at Sinai to ratify the covenant. Peter's audience would recognize this as covenant-ratification language.
2. The optative *plēthyntheî* ('may it be multiplied') is a prayer-wish, not a statement — grace and peace are not merely declared but invoked.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 24:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The Greek *anagennēsas* ('having begotten again, having given new birth') is a distinctively Petrine word — it appears only here and in verse 23 in the entire New Testament. The KJV's 'begotten us again' is literal but unclear in modern English; 'given us new birth' captures the regeneration concept.
3. The phrase *elpida zōsan* ('living hope') is striking — hope itself is described as alive, animated by the resurrection. This is not wishful thinking but a hope that has the quality of life because it is grounded in a resurrection that actually happened.
4. Peter uses three alpha-privative adjectives in succession — *aphtharton* ('imperishable'), *amianton* ('undefiled'), *amaranton* ('unfading') — creating a rhetorical triplet that emphasizes what this inheritance is not: it will not decay, it will not be polluted, it will not wither. The alliteration in Greek (all three begin with alpha-privative) is partly preserved by using 'im-/un-/un-' prefixes in English.
4. The concept of 'inheritance' (*klēronomia*) for these predominantly Gentile believers draws on Israel's land-inheritance language — what Israel had in the promised land, these believers have in heaven.
5. The Greek *phrouroumenous* ('being guarded') is a military term — a garrison protecting a city. God's power stands guard over believers like a military garrison. The present participle indicates ongoing, continuous protection.

5. The phrase *en kairō eschatō* ('in the last time') reflects early Christian expectation of an imminent consummation. The salvation is described as 'ready' (*hetoimēn*) — prepared and waiting to be unveiled.
6. The Greek *poikilois peirasmōis* ('various trials') uses *poikilos* ('many-colored, diverse, varied') — the trials come in many forms. The word *peirasmōs* can mean both 'trial' and 'temptation'; here the context of suffering favors 'trials.' The KJV's 'temptations' may mislead modern readers into thinking of moral temptation rather than external persecution and hardship.
7. The Greek *dokimion* ('tested quality, proven character') refers not to the trial itself but to the result of testing — the proven genuineness that emerges. Gold is tested by fire to prove its purity; faith is tested by suffering to prove its genuineness. The irony is that gold, which survives fire, still perishes — but proven faith endures forever.
7. The triad 'praise and glory and honor' (*epainon kai doxan kai timēn*) may refer to praise directed toward the believers at Christ's return, or to the glory that accrues to God through their faithfulness. The Greek is ambiguous and we preserve that ambiguity.
8. The Greek *aneklalētō* ('inexpressible, unspeakable') appears only here in the New Testament. It describes a joy that exceeds the capacity of language. The participle *dedoxasmenē* ('glorified, full of glory') suggests this joy already participates in the coming glory — it is not merely earthly happiness but a foretaste of eschatological glory.
8. Peter draws a contrast between sight and faith that resonates with John 20:29 ('blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe'). These believers never met Jesus in the flesh, yet their love and joy are real.
9. The Greek *telos* here means 'outcome, result, goal' rather than 'end/termination.' The KJV's 'end' is ambiguous in modern English. The 'salvation of souls' (*sōtērian psychōn*) uses *psychē* in its full biblical sense — not the disembodied 'soul' of Greek philosophy but the whole person, the living self. Peter is speaking of the complete deliverance of the whole person.
10. The compound verbs *exezētēsan* ('searched out') and *exēraunēsan* ('investigated thoroughly') convey intense, diligent inquiry — the prophets were not casual observers but passionate seekers trying to understand their own oracles. The prefix *ex-* intensifies both verbs.
11. The phrase to *pneuma Christou* ('the Spirit of Christ') identifies the spirit that inspired the Old Testament prophets as Christ's own Spirit — a remarkable christological claim. The prophets spoke of 'sufferings' (*pathēmata*, plural) and 'glories' (*doxas*, plural) — not a single event but a pattern of suffering followed by glorification.
11. The Greek *promarturomenon* ('testifying beforehand') is a compound found only here in the New Testament, emphasizing that the prophetic witness pointed forward to events the prophets themselves could not fully comprehend.
12. The final clause — *eis ha epithymousin angeloι parakypsaί* ('into which angels long to look') — is vivid. The verb *parakypsaί* means 'to bend over and peer into,' suggesting angels straining to see and understand the mystery of salvation. If even angels are fascinated by what God has done for believers, how much more should the recipients value it.
12. The prophets' ministry is reframed as service to a future generation — they spoke not for their own benefit but for these Gentile believers in Asia Minor, centuries later.
13. The Greek *anazōsamenoι tas osphyas tēs dianoias hymōn* is literally 'having girded up the loins of your mind' — a metaphor drawn from tucking robes into a belt for vigorous activity. The KJV preserves the metaphor literally; we render the meaning ('prepare your minds for action') since 'girding loins' is not a living metaphor in modern English.
13. The adverb *teleiōs* ('fully, completely, to the end') modifies the imperative 'hope' — this is not tentative hope but wholehearted, unreserved expectation.
14. The Greek *tekna hypakoēs* ('children of obedience') is a Semitic idiom meaning 'people characterized by obedience' — not biological children but those whose defining trait is obedience. The verb *sychēmatizomenoι* ('being conformed, being shaped') implies an external molding pressure; Paul uses the same word in Romans 12:2.
15. The Greek *anastrophē* means 'conduct, way of life, behavior' — not 'conversation' in the modern sense (the KJV's 'conversation' meant 'manner of living' in 17th-century English). The command to holiness is grounded in God's own character: 'as he is holy, you must be holy' — a direct echo of Leviticus 11:44-45 that Peter will quote in the next verse.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 11:44-45 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. Peter quotes Leviticus 11:44-45 (also 19:2 and 20:7). The command was originally given to Israel at Sinai as part of the covenant obligations; Peter applies it directly to Gentile believers, further confirming their inclusion in the covenant people. The Greek *hagios* ('holy, set apart') corresponds to the Hebrew *qadosh*.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 19:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 11:44-45. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

- 17.** The Greek *aprosōpolēmtōs* ('without respect of persons, impartially') is a compound word found only here in the New Testament. It means God shows no favoritism based on external status — a theme running through the New Testament (Acts 10:34, Romans 2:11, James 2:1).
- 17.** The word *paroikias* ('sojourning, exile, temporary residence') reinforces the 'exile' language of verse 1. Believers are temporary residents in this world, and their conduct during this time of exile matters because the Father judges impartially.
- 18.** The Greek *elytrōthēte* ('you were ransomed, redeemed') uses the language of slave-redemption and the Old Testament *go'el* (kinsman-redeemer). The price of ransom is stated negatively first — not silver or gold — before the positive is revealed in verse 19.
- 18.** The phrase *mataias anastophēs patroparadotou* ('futile way of life inherited from ancestors') likely refers to the Gentile pagan practices these converts left behind. The word *patroparadotou* ('handed down from fathers') appears only here in the New Testament.
- 19.** The sacrificial imagery draws on both the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:5, which required a lamb 'without blemish') and the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53:7 ('like a lamb led to slaughter'). The adjectives *amōmou* ('without defect') and *aspilou* ('without spot') echo the Levitical requirements for sacrificial animals — the offering had to be physically perfect.
- 19.** Peter places 'precious blood' (*timiō haimati*) in emphatic contrast with the 'perishable things' of verse 18. The ransom price is not material wealth but something infinitely more valuable.
- 19.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 12:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 19.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 53:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 20.** The Greek *proegnōsmenou* ('foreknown') is stronger than mere awareness — it implies divine foreordination and purposeful choice. The contrast between 'before the foundation of the world' (*pro katabolēs kosmou*) and 'in these last times' (*ep' eschatou tōn chronōn*) spans the entire arc of history: Christ's redemptive work was planned before creation and executed at the end of the ages.
- 20.** The phrase *di' hymas* ('for your sake, on account of you') is remarkable — the cosmic plan was revealed specifically for these particular believers in Asia Minor.
- 21.** The verse ties faith and hope together as directed toward God — not as abstract virtues but as relational trust in the God who demonstrated his power and faithfulness by raising Christ and glorifying him. The resurrection is the ground of both faith and hope.
- 22.** The Greek *philadelphian anypokriton* ('sincere brotherly love') combines the family metaphor (*philadelphia*, 'love of brothers/siblings') with the negation of hypocrisy (*anypokriton*, 'without a mask' — from the theatrical term for an actor's mask). The love commanded here must be genuine, not performed.
- 22.** The adverb *ektenōs* ('earnestly, fervently, intensely') describes a love that is stretched out, strained to its limit — not casual affection but deliberate, costly commitment to fellow believers.
- 23.** The Greek *anagegnēmēnoi* repeats the regeneration language of verse 3 but shifts the metaphor from birth to seed (*spora*, 'seed'). The new birth is not from a seed that decays (like biological reproduction) but from an imperishable seed — the word of God. The adjectives 'living' (*zōntos*) and 'enduring' (*menontos*) may modify either 'word' or 'God'; the Greek is ambiguous. Most interpreters take them with 'word,' which prepares for the Isaiah quotation in the next verses.
- 24.** Peter quotes Isaiah 40:6-8 from the Septuagint. The Hebrew original uses a different metaphor for transience — the 'breath of the LORD' that dries the grass — which the Septuagint omits. Peter follows the Septuagint text. The imagery contrasts human frailty and transience (flesh = grass) with the permanence of God's word (verse 25).
- 24.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 40:6-8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 25.** Peter's interpretive move is decisive: the 'word of the Lord' that Isaiah said endures forever is identified with the gospel message proclaimed to these believers. The eternal, imperishable word of God (Isaiah 40:8) is now equated with the Christian gospel. The Greek *rhēma* ('word, utterance, message') and the participle *euangelisthen* ('proclaimed as good news') make the connection explicit.
- 25.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 40:6-8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

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Summary: *Peter urges believers to crave spiritual nourishment like newborn infants, then develops the metaphor of a living temple built of living stones with Christ as the cornerstone. He applies a constellation of Old Testament identity texts to these Gentile believers — they are now a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own possession. Peter then addresses their conduct as exiles among unbelievers, gives instructions for submission to governing authorities, and concludes with a profound portrait of Christ's suffering as the model for enduring unjust treatment, drawing heavily on Isaiah 53.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verse 9 is the theological climax: Peter takes exodus language from Exodus 19:5-6 and applies it to Gentile Christians — 'a royal priesthood, a holy nation.' This is not metaphorical softening; Peter is claiming that these scattered Gentile believers now hold the identity that was promised to Israel at Sinai. The Isaiah 53 passage (vv. 22-25) is the longest sustained quotation of the Suffering Servant in the New Testament epistles, applied directly to Christ's atoning death.*

Translation Friction: *The household code instructions (vv. 13-20), particularly regarding slaves submitting to masters, reflect first-century social structures. We render the Greek as written without editorial softening. The word oiketai (v. 18) refers specifically to household slaves, not servants in a modern employment sense. The stone imagery (vv. 4-8) weaves together Isaiah 28:16, Psalm 118:22, and Isaiah 8:14 — three distinct Old Testament texts unified by the 'stone' metaphor.*

Connections: *The 'living stone' imagery (vv. 4-5) connects to Jesus's own use of Psalm 118:22 (Matthew 21:42). The 'royal priesthood' language (v. 9) draws on Exodus 19:5-6 and is echoed in Revelation 1:6 and 5:10. The Isaiah 53 quotation (vv. 22-25) parallels the use of that passage in Acts 8:32-35 and Romans 4:25. The 'shepherd and overseer of your souls' (v. 25) anticipates the pastoral imagery of chapter 5.*

¹So put away all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. ²Like newborn infants, crave the pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up into salvation, ³Indeed, if so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. ⁴As you come to him, a living stone rejected by people but chosen and honored by God, ⁵You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house and a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For it stands in Scripture: "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone, chosen and honored, and whoever believes in him will never be put to shame." ⁷So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone," ⁸A rock of stumbling, and a rock of offence, not even to them which stumble at the message, while disobedient — whereunto as well they were appointed. ⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹Dear friends, I urge you as foreigners and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹²Maintain honorable conduct among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they may observe your good works and glorify God on the day of visitation. ¹³Submit yourselves to every human institution for the Lord's sake, whether to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴Indeed, or to governors, as to them that are dispatched by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. ¹⁵For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover for evil. Live as servants of God. ¹⁷Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. ¹⁸Household slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle but also to those who are harsh. ¹⁹For this is a grace — if, because of your awareness of God, someone endures suffering unjustly. ²⁰For what credit is there if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if you suffer for doing good and endure it, this is a grace before God. ²¹For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²²"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." ²³When he was insulted, he did not insult in return; when he suffered, he made no threats, but entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so

that having died to sins, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The participle apothemenoi ('having put off, laid aside') uses the imagery of removing clothing — strip off these vices like a dirty garment. The list moves from internal disposition (malice) through deceptive behavior (deceit, hypocrisy) to interpersonal sins (envy, slander). The 'all...all...all' repetition (pasan...panta...pasas) emphasizes totality — no partial removal.
2. The Greek logikon adolon gala ('pure rational/spiritual milk') is debated. Logikon can mean 'rational' (pertaining to logos/reason) or 'spiritual' (pertaining to the word/logos). The KJV's 'milk of the word' is interpretive. Given the context of verse 1:25 (the word proclaimed to them), the connection to logos is likely intentional, but we render 'spiritual' as the broader term that captures the metaphor without over-specifying.
2. The verb epipothēsate ('crave, long for intensely') describes the desperate hunger of a newborn — not casual interest but survival-level need.
3. Peter quotes Psalm 34:8 (33:9 LXX), 'Taste and see that the LORD is good.' The Greek chrēstos ('good, kind, gracious') may contain a wordplay with Christos ('Christ') — in Greek pronunciation they would sound similar. The conditional 'if' (ei) is not expressing doubt but rather 'since you have tasted' — it assumes the experience is real.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 34:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The metaphor shifts from milk (v. 2) to stone (v. 4) — Christ is the 'living stone' (lithon zōnta), an apparent paradox since stones are the epitome of lifelessness. The double contrast — rejected by humans but chosen by God — sets up the extended stone theology of verses 6-8. The participial phrase proserchomenoi ('coming to, approaching') echoes the language of approaching God in worship at the temple.
5. The believers are not merely compared to stones — they are living stones being assembled into a spiritual temple. The Greek oikodomisthe can be read as indicative ('you are being built') or imperative ('let yourselves be built'). The passive voice suggests God is the builder. The 'holy priesthood' (hierateuma hagian) draws directly on Exodus 19:6 (LXX), anticipating the full quotation in verse 9.
5. The 'spiritual sacrifices' (pneumatikas thysias) replace the animal sacrifices of the Jerusalem temple — the entire sacrificial system is reimagined around this new community.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 19:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Peter quotes Isaiah 28:16 from the Septuagint. The original context is God establishing a foundation in Zion amid national crisis. Peter identifies this cornerstone with Christ. The Greek akrogōniaion ('cornerstone') could refer to either a foundation stone at the corner of a building or a capstone at the top — the architectural metaphor works either way, placing Christ as the defining structural element.
6. The strong negation ou mē ('never, by no means') with the subjunctive kataischynthē guarantees that trust in this stone will not result in shame — a double negative for emphatic assurance.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 28:16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Peter now quotes Psalm 118:22 (117:22 LXX), the stone rejected by builders that becomes the head of the corner. Jesus himself applied this psalm to his own rejection (Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10, Luke 20:17). The Greek apistousin can mean either 'disbelieve' or 'disobey' — in biblical thought, unbelief and disobedience are inseparable.
7. The phrase kephalēn gōnias ('head of the corner') means the most important stone in the structure — the one that determines the alignment of everything else.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 118:22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The third stone text is Isaiah 8:14, where God himself becomes a stone of stumbling for both houses of Israel. Peter completes the stone trilogy: Isaiah 28:16 (cornerstone), Psalm 118:22 (rejected stone), Isaiah 8:14 (stumbling stone). The same Christ is cornerstone to believers and stumbling-block to unbelievers.
8. The phrase eis ho kai etethēsan ('to which they were also appointed/destined') is theologically charged. It states that their stumbling was within God's purpose, though it does not explain the mechanism of that appointment. We render it plainly and let the tension stand.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 8:14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 28:16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 118:22 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

9. This verse weaves together Exodus 19:5-6 ('a kingdom of priests and a holy nation'), Isaiah 43:20-21 ('my chosen people...the people I formed for myself that they might proclaim my praise'), and possibly Hosea 1-2 (the not-my-people who become my-people, developed in verse 10). The Greek *basileion hierateuma* ('royal priesthood') follows the Septuagint of Exodus 19:6 exactly.
9. The Greek *aretas* ('excellencies, virtues, mighty deeds') is broader than 'praises' (KJV) — it refers to God's praiseworthy acts and character, which the priestly people are called to announce to the world.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 19:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 43:20-21. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Hosea 1-2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. Peter echoes Hosea 2:23 and 1:6, 9 — the prophet's children named Lo-Ammi ('not my people') and Lo-Ruhamah ('not shown mercy') who were later renamed Ammi ('my people') and Ruhamah ('shown mercy'). Paul applies Hosea to Gentile inclusion in Romans 9:25-26. The 'once...now' structure emphasizes the radical transformation of status: those who had no covenant identity now possess the fullest covenant identity.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Hosea 2:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The Greek *paroikous kai parepidēmous* ('resident aliens and exiles') echoes the language of Genesis 23:4 (LXX), where Abraham describes himself as a 'sojourner and foreigner' in the land. Believers share Abraham's status — present in a place but not belonging to it.
11. The military metaphor *strateuntai* ('wage war, campaign against') portrays fleshly desires as an invading army besieging the soul. This is not abstract moral philosophy but vivid warfare imagery.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 23:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The Greek *en hēmera episkopēs* ('on the day of visitation') echoes Isaiah 10:3 (LXX) and Luke 19:44. 'Visitation' (*episkopē*) can be either judgment or mercy — the day when God comes to inspect and act. Peter may mean that the pagans' observation of Christian conduct will lead them to glorify God when he comes — whether at their own conversion or at the final judgment.
12. The word *kakopoion* ('evildoers') suggests that Christians in Asia Minor were being accused of criminal behavior — a pattern attested in Roman sources (cf. Pliny's correspondence with Trajan about Christians in Bithynia, c. 112 AD).
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 10:3. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The Greek *pasē anthrōpinē ktisei* is literally 'every human creation/institution' — not merely laws (as the KJV's 'ordinance' implies) but the structures and authorities that humans establish. The submission is motivated 'for the Lord's sake' (*dia ton kyrion*) — it is not intrinsic obedience to human power but obedience rendered to God through human structures.
13. The word *basilei* ('king') in context refers to the Roman emperor — likely Nero at the time of writing.
14. The 'him' who sends governors could refer to the emperor (the immediate antecedent) or to God (the ultimate authority behind the human institution). Peter's phrasing allows both readings. The dual function of government — punishing evil and commending good — parallels Paul's discussion in Romans 13:1-7.
15. The Greek *phimoun* ('to muzzle, to silence') is vivid — good conduct literally shuts the mouth of ignorant accusers. The same verb is used of muzzling an ox (1 Timothy 5:18) and of Jesus silencing the Sadducees (Matthew 22:34). The 'foolish people' (*aphronōn anthrōpōn*) are not malicious but ignorant — their slander stems from misunderstanding, which exemplary behavior can correct.
16. The paradox is sharp: believers are simultaneously free (*eleutheroi*) and slaves of God (*theou douloi*). True freedom is not autonomy but willing service to God. The Greek *epikalymma* ('covering, cloak, pretext') warns against using Christian freedom as a disguise for malice — freedom is not license.
17. Four terse imperatives in ascending relational intensity: general respect for all people, special love for fellow believers, reverent fear toward God, and appropriate honor toward the emperor. The structure is notable — God receives 'fear' (*phobeisthe*) while the emperor receives only 'honor' (*timate*). The distinction in verbs is deliberate: the emperor gets respect but not the reverence owed to God alone.
18. The Greek *oiketai* refers specifically to household slaves — domestic workers who were the property of their masters — not employees or servants in a modern sense. The word *despotais* ('masters') is the root of English 'despot' and refers to the absolute authority of the slaveholder. Peter does not endorse the institution but addresses the reality his audience lives in.
18. The Greek *skoliois* ('crooked, perverse, harsh') is the KJV's 'froward' — an archaic term. We render it 'harsh' to capture the unjust, abusive nature of such masters.
19. The Greek *charis* here means not 'thankworthy' (KJV) but 'grace, a thing of grace, commendable before God.' Enduring unjust suffering with an awareness of God is itself an act of grace — a participation in the grace of God. The phrase *syneidēsin theou* ('consciousness/awareness of God') means the sufferer endures not out of passivity but out of a God-directed conscience.

- 20.** The Greek kolaphizomenoi ('being struck with a fist, beaten') is graphic — this is physical abuse, not metaphorical hardship. Peter distinguishes between deserved punishment (suffering for wrongdoing) and undeserved suffering (suffering for doing right). Only the latter is *charis* ('grace') before God.
- 20.** The word *kleos* ('credit, fame, glory') appears only here in the New Testament. It asks what reputation or honor one gains by enduring punishment that was deserved.
- 21.** The Greek hypogrammon ('example, pattern, model') originally referred to a writing template that students would trace — a master copy of letters that beginners followed stroke by stroke. Christ's suffering is the template for believers' response to unjust treatment. The phrase *tois ichnesin autou* ('in his footsteps') extends the tracing metaphor — believers walk in the exact tracks Christ laid down.
- 22.** Peter begins quoting Isaiah 53:9 (LXX), applying the Suffering Servant passage directly to Christ. The quotation extends through verse 25, making this the longest sustained use of Isaiah 53 in the New Testament epistles. The sinlessness of Christ is the foundation of his exemplary suffering — he suffered entirely without cause.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 53:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** The Greek *antiloidorei* ('reviled in return') has the prefix *anti-* ('against, in return'), emphasizing the refusal to retaliate in kind. The pattern is: provocation no retaliation entrusting to God. This is the specific example believers are to follow (v. 21). The phrase *tō krinonti dikaiōs* ('the one who judges justly') is God — Christ committed his case to the divine court rather than taking justice into his own hands.
- 24.** The Greek *xylon* ('tree, wood') rather than *stauros* ('cross') echoes Deuteronomy 21:23 ('cursed is anyone who hangs on a tree') and connects to Acts 5:30 and 10:39 where the same word is used for the cross. The word carries the overtone of the Deuteronomic curse.
- 24.** The final clause quotes Isaiah 53:5 — 'by his wounds (*mōlōpi*, singular in Greek — one stripe, one wound) you were healed.' The shift from 'our sins' to 'you were healed' moves from the universal scope of Christ's atonement to the personal application to these specific believers.
- 24.** The verb *anēnenken* ('bore, carried up') is sacrificial language — the same word used for offering a sacrifice on an altar. Christ carried sins up onto the cross as a priest carries an offering up onto the altar.
- 24.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 53:4-5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 24.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 21:23. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
- 25.** Peter concludes with Isaiah 53:6 ('all we like sheep have gone astray') but adds the positive resolution: the straying sheep have now returned to their shepherd. The dual title 'Shepherd and Overseer' (*poimena kai episkopon*) applies to Christ terms that Peter will later use for church leaders (5:2-4). The word *episkopon* ('overseer, guardian, bishop') carries the sense of watchful care — Christ keeps watch over their souls as a shepherd watches a flock.
- 25.** The KJV's 'Bishop' reflects later ecclesiastical usage. We render *episkopon* as 'Overseer' to preserve the original pastoral meaning without importing institutional connotations.
- 25.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 53:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

3

Summary: *Peter continues the household code with instructions for wives and husbands, then turns to the entire community with exhortations toward unity, compassion, and blessing. The famous 'reason for hope' passage (v. 15) calls believers to be always ready to give a defense of their hope with gentleness and respect. The chapter concludes with one of the most debated passages in the New Testament — Christ's proclamation to the 'spirits in prison' from the days of Noah — connecting baptism to salvation through Christ's resurrection and exaltation.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Verse 15 ('always be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is in you') has become the foundational text for Christian apologetics. The 'spirits in prison' passage (vv. 18-20) is among the most disputed texts in the New Testament, with at least four major interpretive traditions. Peter's reference to Noah and the flood as a 'type' of baptism (vv. 20-21) is one of the clearest examples of typological interpretation in the epistles.*

Translation Friction: *The instructions to wives (vv. 1-6) reflect first-century household structures and include Sarah's obedience to Abraham as a model. We render the Greek faithfully without modernizing the social context. The 'spirits in prison' passage (vv. 18-20) is genuinely ambiguous in Greek and we preserve that ambiguity. The baptism typology (v. 21) is carefully worded in the Greek to avoid implying that water itself saves — Peter adds the clarifying parenthesis about conscience.*

Connections: The Sarah reference (v. 6) connects to Genesis 18:12. The 'reason for hope' echoes the 'living hope' of 1:3. The Noah typology connects to Genesis 6-8 and Jesus's use of the flood narrative (Matthew 24:37-39). Christ's exaltation at God's right hand (v. 22) echoes Psalm 110:1 and the early Christian confession of Acts 2:33-34.

¹Likewise, wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, so that even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word through the conduct of their wives, ²While they take notice your chaste conversation coupled with fear. ³Your adornment should not be external — the braiding of hair, the wearing of gold jewelry, or the putting on of fine clothing. ⁴Rather, let your adornment be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. ⁵For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, ⁶just as Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters when you do what is right and refuse to give way to fear. ⁷Husbands, likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are also heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. ⁸Finally, all of you be like-minded, sympathetic, loving as brothers and sisters, compassionate, and humble, ⁹Not rendering wickedness for wickedness, or railing for railing — but contrariwise blessing. Knowing that you are thereunto called, that you should inherit a blessing. ¹⁰For "whoever desires to love life and see good days must keep the tongue from evil and the lips from speaking deceit. ¹¹Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. ¹²And his ears are open to their prayers — but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, and because the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous. ¹³Now who will harm you if you are devoted to what is good? ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be disturbed, ¹⁵However, sanctify the Lord God in your hearts — and be ready at all times to provide an answer to every person that asketh you a reason of the confident expectation that is in you with meekness and fear. ¹⁶Having a upright conscience. That, whereas they speak wickedness of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your upright conversation in Christ. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil. ¹⁸For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹By which also he traveled and preached to the spirits in prison; ²⁰Which sometime were rebellious, when once the patience of God waited in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which only a few, that is, eight people, were brought safely through the water. ²¹Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you — not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience — through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²Indeed, who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God. Angels and authorities and powers being made under the control of him.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *homoiōs* ('likewise') connects this instruction to the submission pattern begun in 2:13 (to government) and 2:18 (slaves to masters). The scenario Peter envisions is a believing wife married to an unbelieving husband — a common situation in the early church where women often converted independently.
2. The Greek *epoptesantes* ('having observed, having witnessed') is the same word used in 2:12 for pagans observing Christian behavior. The combination of *hagnēn* ('pure, chaste') and *en phobō* ('in reverence, with respect') describes conduct that is both morally clean and directed toward God — not fearful subservience to the husband but reverence toward God that shapes all behavior.
3. The Greek *kosmos* ('adornment, decoration, order') — from which English 'cosmetic' derives — sets up a contrast between external display and internal character. Peter does not absolutely prohibit these things (the grammar is 'not the external... but the internal' — a comparative negation, emphasizing priority rather than absolute prohibition). The specific items mentioned (elaborate hairstyles, gold, fine clothing) were associated with wealth and social status in the Roman world.
4. The phrase *ho kryptos tēs kardias anthrōpos* ('the hidden person of the heart') is a remarkable expression — the true self, invisible to others but visible to God. The 'imperishable' (*aphthartō*) quality of this inner adornment contrasts with the perishable nature of external decoration, echoing the 'imperishable inheritance' of 1:4.
4. The Greek *prautēs kai hēsychiou pneumatōs* ('of a gentle and quiet spirit') does not describe weakness or passivity. *Prautēs* ('gentleness') in Greek denotes controlled strength — a horse under bridle, power that is restrained. *Hēsychios* ('quiet, tranquil') refers to an inner calm, not silence.

5. Peter appeals to the matriarchs as models — 'the holy women' (hai hagai gynaikes) refers to Old Testament women of faith. The verb *ekosmoun* ('adorned themselves') uses the same *kosmos* root from verse 3, completing the contrast: their true adornment was not external but relational and spiritual.
6. The reference is to Genesis 18:12 (LXX), where Sarah refers to Abraham as 'my lord' (*kyrios*) in the context of the promise of Isaac. Peter's point is that these Gentile women have become 'daughters of Sarah' — they are now part of the covenant lineage through faith and conduct, not ethnicity.
6. The final phrase *mē phoboumenai mēdemian ptoēsīn* ('not fearing any intimidation') suggests that some of these women faced real social pressure or threat for their faith — yet they are to stand firm without being intimidated.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 18:12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The Greek *kata gnōsin* ('according to knowledge, in an understanding way') calls husbands to informed, attentive care — not ignorant or careless treatment. The phrase *astheneserō skeuei tō gynaikeiō* ('the weaker vessel, the feminine one') uses 'weaker' (*asthenestera*) in a comparative sense — not 'weak' absolutely but 'weaker' relatively. The word *skeuos* ('vessel') refers to the body or the whole person (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:4).
7. The remarkable motivation is the final clause: mistreatment of one's wife hinders one's prayers. The marriage relationship has direct spiritual consequences — dishonor toward one's spouse creates a barrier between the husband and God. The phrase *synklēronomois charitos zōēs* ('co-heirs of the grace of life') establishes full spiritual equality between husband and wife.
8. Five adjectives describe the communal character Peter envisions: *homophrones* ('like-minded, united in purpose'), *sympatheis* ('sympathetic, sharing in feelings'), *philadelphoi* ('loving as siblings'), *eusplanchnoi* ('compassionate, tender-hearted' — literally 'good-gutted,' from the Greek understanding that emotions resided in the intestines), and *tapeinophrones* ('humble-minded'). The KJV's 'courteous' for *tapeinophrones* is too weak — this is genuine humility, not mere politeness.
9. The non-retaliation ethic echoes both Jesus's teaching (Matthew 5:38-48) and Paul's instruction (Romans 12:17). The paradox: believers are called to bless even those who insult them, and in doing so they themselves inherit blessing. The word *eulogountes* ('blessing') is the opposite of *loidoria* ('insult, verbal abuse') — where others curse, believers bless.
10. Peter quotes Psalm 34:12-16 (33:13-17 LXX), a wisdom psalm that connects ethical conduct with divine blessing. The quotation extends through verse 12. The opening question in the psalm ('Who is the one who desires life?') becomes a conditional statement: if you want to experience the good life, here is the path.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 34:12-16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The imperatives move from negative (turn away from evil) to positive (do good), from passive avoidance to active pursuit. The verb *diōxatō* ('pursue, chase') is a hunting metaphor — peace must be actively tracked down, not merely hoped for. The same verb (*diōkō*) is used elsewhere for pursuing or persecuting someone — here it is channeled toward peace.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalms 34:12-16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The psalm quotation concludes with a two-part assurance: God watches over the righteous and listens to their prayers, but his face is set against evildoers. The anthropomorphic language (eyes, ears, face) expresses God's attentive care and active opposition using body-part imagery common in Hebrew poetry.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 34:12-16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The Greek *zēlōtai* ('zealots, enthusiasts, devotees') is stronger than the KJV's 'followers' — it implies passionate, consuming dedication to goodness. The rhetorical question implies that those who pursue good are generally protected, though Peter immediately acknowledges the exception in verse 14.
14. The optative *paschoite* ('you should suffer') expresses a hypothetical but real possibility — not a certainty but not unlikely. The beatitude echoes Jesus's words in Matthew 5:10 ('blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake').
14. Peter quotes Isaiah 8:12-13 (LXX). The phrase *ton phobon autōn mē phobēthēte* can be read either as 'do not fear their terror' (what they threaten) or 'do not fear what they fear' (the things that terrify them). The Isaiah context supports the latter reading — God tells Isaiah not to share the people's panic.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 8:12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The Greek *hagiasate* ('sanctify, set apart as holy') applied to Christ means to give him the place of ultimate honor in one's inner life — to treat Christ as the holy Lord of one's heart. The phrase echoes Isaiah 8:13 ('the LORD of hosts, him you shall sanctify'), but Peter substitutes 'Christ' for 'the LORD of hosts,' a significant christological move.
15. The word *apologian* ('defense, reasoned account') is the origin of English 'apologetics.' It was a legal term for a defendant's speech in court. Peter envisions believers explaining their faith in a rational, articulate manner — not aggressive argument but calm, reasoned testimony. The 'hope that is

in you' (tēs en hymin elpidos) connects back to the 'living hope' of 1:3.

15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 8:13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The manner of the defense is as important as its content: meta prautētos kai phobou ('with gentleness and reverence'). Aggressive, combative apologetics would undermine the very message being defended. The 'clear conscience' (syneidēsīn agathēn) ensures that the verbal defense matches the lived reality — there is no gap between what believers say and how they live.
17. The optative theloi ('should will') expresses that suffering is within God's sovereign plan but not his arbitrary whim. The comparison is not between suffering and comfort but between two kinds of suffering — for good conduct versus for bad. Peter assumes suffering is inevitable; the question is what kind.
18. The Greek hapax ('once, once for all') emphasizes the unrepeatable sufficiency of Christ's suffering — unlike the repeated sacrifices of the old covenant, this one was definitive. The phrase dikaios hyper adikōn ('righteous on behalf of unrighteous') is a compressed statement of substitutionary atonement.
18. The purpose clause hina hymas prosagagē tō theō ('that he might bring you to God') uses prosagō, a technical term for introducing someone into the presence of a king. Christ's death provides access to God's presence.
18. The contrast thanatōtheis sarki / zōopoiētheis pneumati ('put to death in flesh / made alive in spirit') is debated. 'Spirit' may refer to the Holy Spirit, Christ's own spirit, or the sphere of spiritual existence. We render the datives as instrumental/spherical ('in the flesh...in the spirit') to preserve the ambiguity.
19. This is one of the most debated verses in the New Testament. The key questions: (1) When did Christ go? After his death, after his resurrection, or through Noah before the flood? (2) Who are the 'spirits in prison'? Fallen angels (cf. 2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6), deceased humans, or the generation of Noah? (3) What did he proclaim? The gospel, or a declaration of victory? The Greek ekēryxen ('proclaimed, heralded') does not specify the content — it could be a proclamation of triumph over evil powers rather than an evangelistic message.
19. We render the text as the Greek presents it without resolving the ambiguity. The phrase en hō ('in which') most naturally refers back to 'spirit' (pneumati) from verse 18.
20. The 'spirits' are identified as those who disobeyed during the construction of Noah's ark. God's patience (makrothymia, 'long-suffering') extended through the construction period, giving opportunity for repentance. Only eight people (Noah, his wife, their three sons, and their wives) were saved.
20. The phrase diesōthēsan di' hydatos ('were saved through water') is ambiguous — were they saved 'by means of' water or 'through' water (i.e., passing safely through it)? The preposition dia with genitive can mean either. Peter will connect this to baptism in verse 21.
21. The Greek antitypon ('corresponding to, antitype') establishes a typological relationship: the flood waters that destroyed the old world and delivered Noah are a 'type' of baptism that delivers believers. Peter immediately qualifies: baptism saves not by its physical washing (ouch sarkos apothesis rhy pou, 'not the removal of bodily dirt') but as an appeal or pledge of a good conscience toward God (syneidēseōs agathēs eperōtēma eis theon).
21. The word eperōtēma is debated — it can mean 'appeal, request, inquiry' or 'pledge, commitment.' Either reading works: baptism is either an appeal to God for a clear conscience or a pledge of a clear conscience before God. The saving power comes 'through the resurrection of Jesus Christ' — not through the water itself.
22. The verse is a compressed christological confession: ascension ('gone into heaven'), session ('at the right hand of God,' echoing Psalm 110:1), and cosmic lordship ('angels, authorities, and powers subjected'). The triad angelōn kai exousiōn kai dunameōn encompasses all categories of spiritual beings — whether good or evil, all are under Christ's authority.
22. The genitive absolute hypotagentōn ('having been subjected') uses the same root (hypotassō, 'to submit, to subject') that structured the household code of 2:13-3:7 — the pattern of submission that governs human relationships finds its ultimate ground in the submission of all cosmic powers to Christ.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 110:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

4

Summary: *Peter exhorts believers to arm themselves with the same mindset as Christ who suffered in the flesh, to live for God's will rather than human desires, and to recognize that the pagan lifestyle they have left behind now provokes hostility from former associates. He emphasizes that judgment begins with the household of God, encourages the faithful use of spiritual gifts for mutual service, and calls believers to rejoice in sharing Christ's sufferings so that they may also rejoice at his revelation.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The phrase 'judgment begins with the household of God' (v. 17) has shaped Christian self-understanding for centuries — accountability starts with God's own people, not with outsiders. The passage on suffering 'as a Christian' (v. 16) contains one of only three uses of the word *Christianos* in the New Testament (also Acts 11:26 and 26:28), suggesting it was originally an outsider's label that believers were learning to wear without shame.*

Translation Friction: *The statement 'the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead' (v. 6) is nearly as debated as 3:19. We render the Greek as written. The eschatological urgency ('the end of all things is near,' v. 7) reflects the early church's expectation of an imminent return. The vice list in verse 3 is blunt and specific — we do not soften it.*

Connections: *The 'arm yourselves with the same mindset' (v. 1) echoes Philippians 2:5. The gift language (vv. 10-11) parallels Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12. The 'fiery trial' (v. 12) resonates with the tested-by-fire imagery of 1:7. The 'judgment begins with us' principle echoes Ezekiel 9:6 and Malachi 3:1-5.*

¹Since Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same resolve, because whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, ²That he no longer should dwell the remainder of his moment in the physical nature to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. ³For the time already past is sufficient for doing what the Gentiles desire — living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. ⁴They are surprised that you no longer plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they malign you. ⁵They will give account to the one who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶For this is why the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, so that though they were judged in the flesh as people are, they might live in the spirit as God does. ⁷The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled for the sake of your prayers. ⁸Above all, maintain an earnest love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. ¹¹If anyone speaks, let it be as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, let it be with the strength that God supplies, so that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. ¹²Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery trial that has come upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice with great joy. ¹⁴If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a meddler in others' affairs. ¹⁶But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let that person not be ashamed but glorify God by bearing that name. ¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God. And if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And "if the righteous person is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" ¹⁹Therefore, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *hoplisasthe* ('arm yourselves') is a military metaphor — take up the mindset of Christ as a weapon. The word *ennoian* ('resolve, mindset, intention') refers to an inner disposition, not just intellectual agreement. Believers are to adopt Christ's willingness to suffer as their own combat readiness.
1. The clause *ho pathōn sarki pepautai hamartias* ('whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin') is theologically dense. It likely means that the person who has embraced suffering for Christ's sake has broken decisively with the sinful life — suffering marks the turning point away from sin's dominion.

2. The contrast is stark: anthrōpōn epithymiais ('human desires') versus thelēmati theou ('God's will'). The 'remaining time in the flesh' (ton epiloipon en sarki chronon) treats earthly life as a finite, limited period with a definite end — every day that remains should be oriented toward God's purposes rather than human passions.
3. The vice list is specific to the Greco-Roman social world: aselgeiais ('sensuality, debauchery'), epithymiais ('passions, lusts'), oinophylgiais ('drunkenness' — literally 'wine-bubbling'), kōmois ('orgies, revelries' — nocturnal processions associated with Dionysus worship), potois ('drinking bouts'), and athemitois eidōlatriais ('lawless idolatries'). These were not fringe activities but normal features of pagan social life in Asia Minor.
3. The word athemitois ('lawless, forbidden') applied to idolatry reflects a Jewish perspective — idol worship violated divine law even though it was legal in the Roman system.
4. The Greek xenizontai ('they are surprised, they find it strange') captures the social shock when someone withdraws from the expected communal activities. The vivid metaphor anachysin ('flood, outpouring, overflow') pictures dissipation as a raging torrent — former companions are being swept along in this flood and are bewildered that believers have climbed out. The word asōtias ('dissipation, debauchery') is literally 'unsavingness' — a life that wastes and destroys.
5. The phrase hetoimōs echonti krinai zōntas kai nekrous ('the one ready to judge the living and the dead') echoes an early creedal formula (cf. Acts 10:42, 2 Timothy 4:1). The judgment is comprehensive — it covers those alive at Christ's return and those already dead. The slanderers of verse 4 will face this judge.
6. This verse is among the most difficult in the New Testament. 'The dead' (nekrois) may refer to: (1) people who heard the gospel while alive and have since died, (2) the spiritually dead, or (3) the literally dead to whom Christ preached (connecting to 3:19). The most natural reading is that the gospel was proclaimed to people who are now dead — they heard it during their lifetime, were condemned by human judgment (perhaps through persecution and death), but live on in the spirit before God.
6. The contrast kata anthrōpous sarki ('according to humans in the flesh') versus kata theon pneumatī ('according to God in the spirit') places human and divine perspectives in opposition: human judgment ends at physical death, but God's purposes extend beyond it.
7. The Greek ēngiken ('has drawn near, is at hand') is the same verb used in Mark 1:15 for the kingdom of God. Peter shares the early Christian conviction that the consummation is imminent. The two imperatives — sōphronēsate ('be clear-minded, be sensible') and nēpsate ('be sober, be watchful') — are not redundant: the first addresses mental clarity, the second self-control. Both serve prayer.
8. The Greek ektenē ('earnest, stretched out, intense') describes love at full extension — love strained to its limit, as in 1:22. The proverb 'love covers a multitude of sins' echoes Proverbs 10:12 ('love covers all offenses'). The meaning is not that love hides sin or ignores it, but that love creates a relational environment where forgiveness flows freely and offenses do not fester.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Proverbs 10:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The Greek philoxenoi ('hospitable,' literally 'lover of strangers') was a crucial virtue in the ancient world where inns were often dangerous or immoral. Christian hospitality — opening one's home to traveling believers — was essential for the spread of the gospel and the functioning of house churches. The qualifier aneu gongysmou ('without grumbling') acknowledges the cost of hospitality and insists it be given cheerfully.
10. The Greek charisma ('gift, grace-gift') is from the same root as charis ('grace') — every gift is a concrete expression of God's grace. The stewardship metaphor (oikonomoi, 'household managers') means these gifts are not personal possessions but resources entrusted for the benefit of others. The adjective poikilēs ('varied, many-colored, diverse') describes God's grace as multifaceted — it manifests differently in each person.
11. Peter divides gifts into two broad categories: speaking (lalei) and serving (diakonei). Both must be exercised in dependence on God — the speaker delivers God's words (logia theou, 'oracles of God'), not personal opinions; the servant operates from God's supplied strength (ischyos hēs chorēgei ho theos), not personal capacity.
11. The doxology ('to him belong the glory and the power') could refer to God the Father or to Jesus Christ. The nearest antecedent is 'Jesus Christ,' which would be a significant attribution of divine glory to Christ. The formula eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn ('to the ages of the ages') is the strongest temporal expression available in Greek — without end.
12. The Greek pyrōsei ('burning, fiery ordeal') echoes the gold-tested-by-fire imagery of 1:7. The verb xenizesthe ('be surprised, find strange') is the same word used in verse 4 for pagans being surprised at Christian behavior — now Peter tells believers not to be similarly surprised by persecution. Suffering is not an anomaly in the Christian life but an expected feature.
13. The Greek koinōneite ('you share, you participate') expresses real participation in Christ's sufferings — not mere imitation but genuine sharing. The logic is: present suffering with Christ guarantees future joy at his revelation. The verb agalliōmenoi ('rejoicing exceedingly') is the same word used in 1:6, creating a literary bracket — the joy that bookends suffering.
14. This beatitude echoes Matthew 5:11 ('Blessed are you when people insult you...on my account'). The phrase to tēs doxēs kai to tou theou pneuma ('the Spirit of glory and of God') is an unusual construction that identifies the Holy Spirit as both 'the Spirit of glory' and 'the Spirit of God.' The verb anapaueitai ('rests') echoes Isaiah 11:2 (the Spirit of the LORD resting on the Messiah) — what rested on Christ now rests on his persecuted followers.
14. The SBLGNT does not include the longer reading found in some manuscripts ('on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified'), which the KJV includes. We follow the critical text.

14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 11:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The Greek allotrioepiskopos ('meddler, one who oversees others' business') is a rare word — found only here in the New Testament. It may refer to interfering in others' matters, or it could have a more specific social meaning: a Christian who provokes unnecessary conflict by inserting themselves into pagan affairs. Peter's point is that suffering must be for Christ's sake, not as a consequence of criminal or meddlesome behavior.
16. The word Christianos ('Christian') appears only three times in the New Testament (here, Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28). It was likely a label coined by outsiders — the Latin suffix -ianus indicates a partisan or follower. Peter takes what may have been a slur and transforms it into a badge of honor: do not be ashamed of this name; instead, glorify God through it.
16. The phrase en tō onomati toutō ('in this name, by this name') can mean either 'by bearing this name' or 'in this matter.' We follow the reading that connects to the name 'Christian,' which fits the context of identity-based suffering.
17. The principle echoes Ezekiel 9:6, where judgment begins at God's sanctuary. The 'household of God' (oikos tou theou) refers to the church — God's temple community (cf. 2:5). The argument from lesser to greater: if God's own people undergo purifying judgment through suffering, how much more severe will the judgment be for those who reject the gospel entirely.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 9:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. Peter quotes Proverbs 11:31 from the Septuagint (which differs significantly from the Hebrew Masoretic Text here). The Greek molis ('scarcely, with difficulty') does not imply uncertainty of salvation but its costliness — the righteous are saved, but the path involves suffering and testing. The rhetorical question about the ungodly expects an answer of devastating judgment.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Proverbs 11:31 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The chapter concludes with the only New Testament use of the title pistō ktistē ('faithful Creator'). In the context of suffering, Peter points believers back to the one who made them — the Creator is faithful and can be trusted with their souls. The verb paratithesthōsan ('let them entrust, deposit') is a banking term — depositing something valuable with a trustworthy guardian. The word echoes Jesus's final words in Luke 23:46, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.'

5

Summary: *Peter addresses the elders as a fellow elder and witness of Christ's sufferings, urging them to shepherd God's flock willingly, not under compulsion or for dishonest gain, and not by domineering over those in their charge but by being examples. He promises the unfading crown of glory when the Chief Shepherd appears. Younger members are told to submit to elders, and all are called to clothe themselves with humility. The letter closes with the famous image of the devil prowling like a roaring lion, an exhortation to resist him firm in faith, and a benediction of the God of all grace who will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish the suffering believers.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Peter identifies himself as a 'fellow elder' (sympresbyteros) and 'witness of Christ's sufferings' (v. 1) — extraordinary humility from the apostle, placing himself alongside local church leaders rather than above them. The 'crown of glory that does not fade' (v. 4) uses amarantinos, found only here in the New Testament, echoing the 'unfading' inheritance of 1:4. The lion metaphor (v. 8) would carry special resonance for Christians who knew of martyrdom in Roman arenas.*

Translation Friction: *The reference to 'Babylon' (v. 13) is almost certainly a code name for Rome, as in Revelation 14:8, 17:5, and 18:2. Some argue it refers to literal Babylon in Mesopotamia, but the letter's Roman context and the widespread early Christian use of 'Babylon' for Rome make this reading more probable. The mention of 'Mark, my son' (v. 13) is taken by tradition as John Mark, the author of the Second Gospel.*

Connections: *The shepherd imagery (vv. 1-4) connects to John 21:15-17 (Jesus's charge to Peter: 'Feed my sheep'). The humility command (v. 5) quotes Proverbs 3:34 (LXX). The lion metaphor recalls Psalm 22:13 and the language of the Psalms about enemies. The benediction (vv. 10-11) echoes Paul's doxological closings. Silvanus (v. 12) is likely the Silas of Acts 15:22-40 and Paul's companion.*

¹So I appeal to the elders among you as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is about to be revealed: ²Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have it — not for shameful gain but eagerly, ³Do not lord it over the people entrusted to your care; instead, be examples to the flock. ⁴And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

⁵Likewise, you who are younger, submit yourselves to the elders. And all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. ⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷Casting all your care upon him. Since he careth for you. ⁸Be self-controlled and alert. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will himself, after you have suffered for a little while, restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the power forever and ever. Amen. ¹²Through Silvanus, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it. ¹³She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, my son. ¹⁴Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Peter identifies himself with three titles: sympresbyteros ('fellow elder' — placing himself alongside the local leaders, not above them), martys tōn tou Christou pathēmātōn ('witness of Christ's sufferings' — an eyewitness claim rooted in his presence at the crucifixion), and koinōnos tēs mellousēs apokalypsesthai doxēs ('sharer in the coming glory' — linking present witness to future hope).
1. The word martys here means 'witness' in the sense of eyewitness testimony, not yet the technical sense of 'martyr' (one who dies for faith), though Peter's own tradition held that he was martyred under Nero.
2. The imperative poimane ('shepherd') echoes Jesus's charge to Peter in John 21:16 — the very apostle who was told 'shepherd my sheep' now passes that charge to other leaders. The three contrasts define proper pastoral motivation: not by compulsion but willingly (hekousiōs), not for financial gain (aischrokerdōs, 'in a shamefully greedy way') but eagerly (prothymōs), and (in verse 3) not by domineering but by example.
2. The phrase kata theon ('as God would have it, according to God') is present in some manuscripts and absent in others. The SBLGNT includes it, indicating that willing oversight must align with God's own character and purposes.
3. The Greek katakyreuontes ('lording it over, domineering') uses the same verb Jesus used in Mark 10:42 when he contrasted worldly rulers who 'lord it over' people with the servant leadership he modeled. The word klērōn ('those allotted, those assigned') literally means 'lots' or 'portions' — each group of believers has been assigned to its elders as a trust, not as a possession.
3. The word typoi ('models, examples, patterns') means the elders' lives should be templates that others can follow — leadership by lived example rather than by imposed authority.
4. The title archipoimen ('Chief Shepherd') appears only here in the New Testament. It establishes a hierarchy of shepherding: the elders shepherd under the authority of the Chief Shepherd, Christ. When he appears (phanerōthentos — the same word used for Christ's first appearing in 1:20), the faithful under-shepherds receive their reward.
4. The adjective amarantinon ('unfading, unwithering') is built from the same root as amaranton in 1:4 ('unfading inheritance'). Greek victory wreaths were made of leaves that quickly withered; this crown never will. The word is found only here in the entire New Testament.
5. The Greek enkombōsasthe ('clothe yourselves, tie on like a garment') is a rare word — possibly referring to a slave's work apron (encombōma) tied over other clothing for service. If so, Peter is saying: put on the servant's apron of humility. The image is especially powerful coming from the apostle who watched Jesus tie on a towel and wash the disciples' feet (John 13).
5. The quotation 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble' is from Proverbs 3:34 (LXX), also quoted by James (4:6). The Greek antitassetai ('opposes, sets himself in battle array against') is a military term — God actively resists the proud as an army opposes an enemy.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Proverbs 3:34 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The 'mighty hand of God' (krataian cheira tou theou) is exodus language — God's hand delivered Israel from Egypt (Exodus 3:19, Deuteronomy 5:15). The same hand that once rescued Israel now governs the circumstances of these suffering believers. The promise of exaltation (hypsōsē, 'may lift up') is conditioned on humility and timing — 'at the proper time' (en kairō), not immediately.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 3:19. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 5:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The Greek epirhpsantes ('having cast, thrown upon') is a decisive, once-for-all action — hurl your entire burden of worry onto God. The word merimnan ('anxiety, care, worry') is the same word Jesus used in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:25-34). The reason for casting anxiety is personal and intimate: autō melei peri hymōn ('it matters to him concerning you') — God is personally invested in their well-being. Peter echoes Psalm 55:22 ('Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you').

7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 55:22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The twin imperatives *nēpsate* ('be sober, self-controlled') and *grēgorēsate* ('be watchful, stay alert') form a sentinel's posture — the soldier who falls asleep on guard duty is vulnerable. The Greek *antidikos* ('adversary, legal opponent') is a courtroom term, portraying the devil as a prosecutor seeking to bring charges.
8. The lion simile *ōs leōn ōryomenos* ('like a roaring lion') draws on the psalmist's imagery of enemies as predatory animals (Psalm 22:13). For believers in Asia Minor who knew of martyrdoms in Roman arenas where lions were used, this was not merely figurative. The participle *peripatei* ('walks about, prowls') suggests constant, restless hunting.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 22:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The imperative *antistēte* ('resist, stand against') is the same verb used in James 4:7 ('Resist the devil, and he will flee from you'). The resistance is not passive endurance but active opposition. The phrase *stereoi tē pistei* ('firm in the faith, solid in faith') uses an adjective meaning 'hard, solid, firm' — like a foundation that will not budge.
9. The final clause provides solidarity: these believers are not alone in their suffering. The same *pathēmatōn* ('sufferings') are being endured by the *adelphotēti* ('brotherhood, community of siblings') across the entire Roman world. Isolation amplifies suffering; shared experience provides strength.
10. Four future-tense verbs form a crescendo of divine action: *katartisei* ('restore, mend, make complete' — the same word used for mending nets in Mark 1:19), *stērixei* ('confirm, make firm'), *sthenōsei* ('strengthen'), and *themeliōsei* ('establish, lay a foundation'). God does not merely permit suffering — he personally completes the restoration afterward.
10. The title 'God of all grace' (*theos pasēs charitos*) is the letter's theological summary: every form of grace needed for every form of suffering flows from this God. The phrase *oligon pathontas* ('having suffered for a little while') puts suffering in eschatological perspective — it is real but brief compared to 'eternal glory' (*aiōnion doxan*).
11. The doxology is brief and emphatic: *to kratos* ('the power, the dominion') belongs to God *eis tous aiōnas* ('forever, to the ages'). The SBLGNT reads only *kratos* ('power') without 'glory' (*doxan*), which some manuscripts add. We follow the critical text. The doxology provides theological closure: the God who has the power forever is the same God who promises restoration in verse 10.
12. Silvanus (*Silouanos*) is most likely the Silas of Acts 15:22-40 who traveled with Paul. The phrase *dia Silouanou* ('through Silvanus') may mean Silvanus was the letter carrier, the secretary (*amanuensis*) who wrote at Peter's dictation, or both.
12. The phrase *tautēn einai alethē charin tou theou* ('this is the true grace of God') summarizes the letter's message: everything Peter has described — the living hope, the tested faith, the identity as God's people, the purpose in suffering — all of this is genuine grace. The imperative *stēte* ('stand firm') is the letter's final command: remain in this grace.
13. The feminine *hē syneklektē* ('she who is co-chosen') most likely refers to the church in 'Babylon' — the feminine article matching the implied *ekklēsia* ('church, assembly'). 'Babylon' is almost certainly a code name for Rome, a usage attested in Jewish apocalyptic literature and in Revelation (14:8, 17:5, 18:2). Literal Babylon in Mesopotamia was largely depopulated by this period.
13. Mark (Markos) is traditionally identified as John Mark of Acts 12:12, 25, the author of the Second Gospel. Peter calls him 'my son' (*ho huios mou*), indicating a spiritual father-son relationship. The early church tradition (via Papias, Eusebius) held that Mark recorded Peter's testimony in his Gospel.
14. The 'kiss of love' (*philēmāti agapēs*) is a variation of Paul's 'holy kiss' (*philēma hagion*, Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20). This was a liturgical greeting in early Christian worship — a physical expression of the family bond among believers.
14. The letter closes as it opened — with peace (*eirēnē*, cf. 1:2). The final phrase *tois en Christō* ('to those in Christ') defines the recipients by their fundamental identity: they are people who exist 'in Christ,' and within that sphere, peace is their possession. The SBLGNT does not include the final 'Amen' found in some manuscripts and in the KJV.

2 Peter

1

Summary: *Second Peter opens with a greeting from Simeon Peter, then immediately declares that God's divine power has granted everything needed for life and godliness through the knowledge of the one who called us. Through precious promises, believers may become partakers of the divine nature. Peter lists a chain of virtues to be cultivated — faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, mutual affection, and love — and warns that neglecting these means forgetting one's cleansing from sin. He affirms the reliability of apostolic testimony as eyewitness, not cleverly devised myth, recounting the Transfiguration, and closes by affirming prophetic Scripture as divinely inspired.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The 'divine power' passage (v. 3) and 'partakers of the divine nature' (v. 4) are among the most theologically distinctive statements in the New Testament, providing the biblical basis for the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of theosis (deification/divinization). The virtue chain (vv. 5-7) is a Greco-Roman literary form (sorites) adapted for Christian ethics. The Transfiguration account (vv. 16-18) is one of only two direct apostolic eyewitness claims to a specific event in Jesus's life found in the epistles.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between 2 Peter and Jude is debated — significant material in chapter 2 parallels Jude closely. The Greek style of 2 Peter differs markedly from 1 Peter, which some attribute to a different amanuensis or to pseudonymous authorship. We render the text as presented without adjudicating the authorship question. The phrase 'partakers of the divine nature' (v. 4) uses language at home in Hellenistic philosophy (particularly Stoicism) but repurposed for a distinctly Christian and covenantal meaning.*

Connections: *The 'divine power' language (v. 3) connects to the power language throughout the New Testament (Romans 1:16, 1 Corinthians 1:18). The Transfiguration account (vv. 16-18) parallels Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36. The prophetic inspiration statement (vv. 20-21) provides one of the New Testament's clearest declarations about the origin of Scripture, alongside 2 Timothy 3:16.*

¹Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith equal in value to ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: ²May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. ³His divine power has granted to us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of the one who called us by his own glory and excellence, ⁴Through these he has granted to us his precious and magnificent

promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶to knowledge add self-control; to self-control add endurance; to endurance add godliness; ⁷to godliness add mutual affection; and to mutual affection add love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For whoever lacks these qualities is blind — nearsighted, in fact — having forgotten the cleansing from former sins. ¹⁰Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election certain, for if you practice these qualities you will never stumble. ¹¹For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided to you. ¹²Therefore I intend always to remind you of these things, even though you know them and are established in the truth that you now have. ¹³I consider it right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by way of reminder, ¹⁴Being aware that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, indeed as our Lord Jesus Christ has shewed me. ¹⁵And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. ¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷For he received honor and glory from God the Father when a voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" — ¹⁸This voice which arrived from heaven we listened to, when we were with him in the holy mount. ¹⁹And we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰Being aware this foremost, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by human will, but people spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek Symeōn is the Semitic form of the name (cf. Acts 15:14), lending an archaic, Hebraic flavor to the greeting. The phrase isotomon hēmīn lachousin pistin ('having obtained a faith of equal value with ours') uses isotimos ('of equal honor/value') — the faith of these recipients is not second-class compared to apostolic faith.
1. The phrase tou theou hēmōn kai sōtēros Iēsou Christou ('of our God and Savior Jesus Christ') is grammatically most naturally read as applying both titles — 'God' and 'Savior' — to Jesus Christ (the Granville Sharp rule in Greek). This would be one of the clearest New Testament identifications of Jesus as God.
2. The greeting echoes 1 Peter 1:2 but adds the distinctive phrase en epignōsei ('in the knowledge'). The word epignōsis ('full knowledge, deep knowledge') is a key term in 2 Peter, appearing four times (1:2, 3, 8; 2:20). It is more than intellectual awareness — it is relational, experiential knowledge of God. Grace and peace grow as knowledge of God deepens.
3. The Greek theias dynamēōs ('divine power') uses theios ('divine'), a word common in Hellenistic religious philosophy but rare in the New Testament (only here, v. 4, and Acts 17:29). Peter bridges Jewish-Christian theology and Greco-Roman vocabulary — communicating to a Hellenistic audience in their own conceptual language.
3. The phrase ta pros zōēn kai eusebeian ('the things pertaining to life and godliness') is comprehensive — 'life' (zōē) covers all of existence, and 'godliness' (eusebeia) covers all of religious practice. Together they leave nothing out.
4. The phrase theias koinōnoi physeōs ('sharers/partakers of the divine nature') is unique in the New Testament and has generated enormous theological discussion. In its Hellenistic context, 'divine nature' (theia physis) was philosophical language for the essence of deity. Peter claims that believers participate in this — not becoming divine in essence (as in pagan apotheosis) but sharing in God's moral character and eternal life.
4. The Eastern Orthodox tradition built its theology of theosis (deification) significantly on this verse. The Western tradition has generally interpreted it as moral transformation. The text itself supports both emphases without collapsing into either exclusively.
5. The Greek epichorēgēsate ('supply, furnish, provide generously') is from the theater — a chorēgos was a wealthy patron who funded a chorus. The word implies lavish, generous investment, not minimal addition. The sorites (chain-link) argument that follows (vv. 5-7) builds each virtue upon the previous one, creating an ascending staircase of character development.
5. The word aretē ('virtue, moral excellence') was the central concept in Greek ethics. Peter integrates it into the Christian framework, beginning with faith (pistis) and culminating in love (agapē).
6. The chain continues: gnōsis ('knowledge') leads to egkrateia ('self-control' — mastery over desires and impulses, a key virtue in Stoic ethics), which produces hypomonē ('endurance, steadfast perseverance under pressure'), which deepens into eusebeia ('godliness, piety, reverent devotion to God'). Each virtue both builds on and produces the next.

7. The chain culminates in agapē ('love') — the highest Christian virtue (1 Corinthians 13). Before agapē comes philadelphia ('mutual affection, brotherly/sisterly love'), which is love within the community. Agapē transcends philadelphia — it is the self-giving love that extends even beyond the boundaries of the Christian family. The progression from faith to love mirrors Paul's triad in 1 Corinthians 13:13, with the intervening virtues filling out the developmental path.
8. The Greek argous ('idle, useless, ineffective') literally means 'not-working' (a-ergos). Combined with akarpous ('unfruitful'), Peter warns against a faith that produces nothing. The knowledge (epignōsis) of Christ is not static information but a living relationship that bears fruit through the cultivation of these virtues.
9. The Greek myōpazōn ('being shortsighted, squinting') is found only here in the New Testament. The irony is deliberate: the person is not actually blind but has such narrow vision that they might as well be. They can see only what is immediately before them and have lost sight of the larger picture — specifically, the cleansing (katharismos) from sin that launched their Christian life. Forgetting their own salvation leads to moral stagnation.
10. The Greek bebaian ('firm, certain, reliable') applied to 'calling and election' (klēsīn kai eklogēn) does not mean that God's choice is uncertain and needs human help — rather, the cultivation of virtues provides subjective assurance and objective evidence that one's calling is genuine. The strong negation ou mē ptaisēte pote ('you will never, ever stumble') guarantees stability to those who pursue these virtues.
11. The verb epichorēgēthēsetai ('will be richly supplied, lavishly furnished') echoes the same root from verse 5 — believers who generously supply the virtues (epichorēgēsate) will receive a generous entry (epichorēgēthēsetai) into the eternal kingdom. The word plousiōs ('richly, abundantly') pictures not a bare-minimum entry but a triumphal welcome.
12. Peter acknowledges that his readers already know these truths and are established (estērigmenous, 'firmly planted') in them — yet he considers repeated reminders essential. The phrase tē parousē alētheia ('the truth that is present/that you have') may mean 'the truth now present among you' or 'the truth that has come to you.' Knowledge and stability do not eliminate the need for reinforcement.
13. The Greek skēnōmati ('tent, tabernacle, temporary dwelling') refers to Peter's body — a metaphor for the temporary nature of physical life. The image echoes Paul's tent metaphor in 2 Corinthians 5:1-4. Peter sees his earthly existence as a temporary encampment, not a permanent home, and uses the remaining time to reinforce essential teaching.
14. The Greek tachinē ('swift, soon, imminent') indicates Peter expects death in the near future. The phrase kathos kai ho kyrios hēmōn Iēsous Christos edēlōsen moi ('as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me') likely refers to Jesus's prediction of Peter's death in John 21:18-19, where Jesus told Peter that in old age he would be led where he did not wish to go — traditionally understood as a prediction of crucifixion.
15. The Greek exodon ('departure, exodus') for death is the same word used in Luke 9:31 for Jesus's 'departure' (death) that he discussed with Moses and Elijah at the Transfiguration — a connection Peter would have witnessed firsthand. The word carries overtones of the great Exodus from Egypt — death as a liberation journey. Peter's concern is for the church's ongoing memory after he is gone, which may explain the writing of this letter itself.
16. The Greek sesophismenois mythois ('cleverly devised myths, fabricated stories') uses sophizō ('to make clever, to contrive') — the apostolic message is not a skilled human invention. The word epoptai ('eyewitnesses') is a technical term — in the Greek mystery religions, an epoptēs was one who had seen the sacred rites at the highest level of initiation. Peter co-opts the term: the apostles are the true 'initiates' who witnessed Christ's glory firsthand.
16. The word parousian ('coming, presence, arrival') refers to Christ's second coming — a topic that will dominate chapter 3. Peter grounds the future hope in past eyewitness experience.
17. Peter recounts the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36). The title megaloprepous doxēs ('the Majestic Glory') is a circumlocution for God — a reverent avoidance of the divine name, referring to God's visible, overwhelming presence. The divine voice repeats the baptismal declaration (Matthew 3:17) with the demonstrative houtos ('this one') — pointing to Jesus as the unique, beloved Son.
17. Peter's version of the heavenly voice matches Matthew's account more closely than Mark's or Luke's, which may reflect Peter's own memory since Matthew's Gospel draws on Petrine tradition.
18. The emphatic hēmeis ('we ourselves') stresses the eyewitness character of the testimony. The 'holy mountain' (hagiō orei) is not named — tradition identifies it as Mount Tabor or Mount Hermon — but Peter's point is not the geography but the experience. The mountain is 'holy' because God's presence sanctified it, as Sinai was holy when God descended upon it (Exodus 19:23).
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 19:23 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The phrase bebaieron ton prophētikon logon ('the prophetic word made more sure') can be read two ways: (1) the Transfiguration experience confirms the reliability of Old Testament prophecy, or (2) prophetic Scripture is even more reliable than eyewitness experience. Either reading elevates the authority of Scripture.
19. The metaphor of a lamp (lychnō) in a dark (auchēmō, 'murky, squalid, dry') place portrays the present age as dark and Scripture as the light that guides through it. The 'morning star' (phōsphoros, literally 'light-bearer') is Christ himself (cf. Revelation 22:16), whose full appearing will make the lamp of prophecy no longer necessary — the sunrise replaces the lamp.

- 20.** The Greek *epilyseōs* ('one's own interpretation/explanation') is debated. The KJV takes it as a statement about how prophecy should be interpreted (not privately but communally/ecclesially). However, the context of verse 21 suggests it is about the origin of prophecy — no prophetic Scripture arose from the prophet's own devising or interpretation of events. The prophet did not generate the message; it came from God. We render it in the origination sense, which fits the flow into verse 21.
- 21.** The Greek *pheromenoi* ('being carried, being borne along') is a nautical metaphor — like a ship driven by the wind. The prophets were not passive instruments (they spoke, using their own faculties and personalities) but neither were they autonomous authors. The Holy Spirit was the driving force; the prophets were the vessels carried along by that force.
- 21.** The phrase *apo theou* ('from God') identifies the origin of the prophetic message — it came from God, through the Spirit, and was spoken by human beings. This verse, alongside 2 Timothy 3:16, forms the New Testament's clearest statement about the divine inspiration of Scripture.

2

Summary: *Peter warns that false teachers will arise among the believers, just as false prophets arose in Israel. He draws on three Old Testament examples of divine judgment — the fallen angels, the flood, and Sodom and Gomorrah — to assure that God knows how to rescue the godly and punish the unrighteous. The chapter provides a vivid portrait of the false teachers: they exploit with fabricated words, follow the way of Balaam, are like waterless springs and mists driven by a storm, promise freedom while being slaves of corruption, and are ultimately worse off than before they knew Christ.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter shares extensive material with Jude (compare 2 Peter 2:1-18 with Jude 4-16). The literary relationship is debated — whether Peter drew on Jude, Jude drew on Peter, or both used a common source. Peter's version notably omits Jude's references to the Assumption of Moses and 1 Enoch, possibly adapting the material for a more Hellenistic audience. The Balaam tradition (vv. 15-16) includes the talking donkey episode, one of the most memorable stories from Numbers 22.*

Translation Friction: *The reference to angels who sinned being cast into Tartarus (v. 4) uses *tartarōsas*, a word drawn from Greek mythology (Tartarus was the deepest abyss of Hades) found nowhere else in the Bible. Peter adapts pagan cosmological vocabulary for theological purposes. The strong language describing the false teachers is some of the harshest in the New Testament. We render it faithfully without softening.*

Connections: *The three judgment examples (angels, flood, Sodom) parallel Jude 5-7. The Balaam material connects to Numbers 22-24 and is also referenced in Jude 11 and Revelation 2:14. The 'dog returns to its vomit' proverb (v. 22) quotes Proverbs 26:11. The 'waterless springs' imagery echoes Jude 12-13.*

¹But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who privily will bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ²Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be maligned. ³In their greed they will exploit you with fabricated words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction does not slumber. ⁴For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into Tartarus and committed them to chains of deepest darkness, to be held for judgment; ⁵Spared not the old present age, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the present age of the ungodly; ⁶He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, making them an example of what will happen to the ungodly. ⁷Handed down just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked. ⁸Indeed, (For that righteous man dwelling in the midst of them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;). ⁹The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from their trials and how to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment. ¹⁰However, chiefly them that conduct your lives following the physical nature in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. ¹¹Whereas angels, which are greater in authority and might, bring not railing accusation opposed to them prior to the Lord. ¹²But these people, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct born to be caught and destroyed — blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant — will also be destroyed in their destruction, ¹³Will accept the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves

with their own deceivings while they feast with you;. ¹⁴They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unstable souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! ¹⁵Forsaking the straight path, they have gone astray, following the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, ¹⁶However, was rebuked for his iniquity — the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet of old. ¹⁷These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm. For them the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved. ¹⁸For by speaking bombastic, empty words, they entice through fleshly desires and sensuality those who are barely escaping from people who live in error. ¹⁹They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. ²⁰For if, after escaping the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. ²¹For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than, having known it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. ²²What the true proverb says has happened to them: "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A washed sow returns to wallowing in the mud."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek pseudodidaskaloi ('false teachers') parallels the pseudoprophētai ('false prophets') of Israel's history — the problem is not new. The verb pareisaxousin ('will secretly introduce, smuggle in') implies stealth — these teachings are not openly presented but infiltrated into the community.
1. The phrase ton agorasanta autous despotēn arnoumenoi ('denying the Master who bought them') uses commercial language: agorazō ('to buy in the marketplace') applied to Christ's redemptive work. The word despotēn ('Master, absolute Lord') emphasizes Christ's ownership claim over those he purchased.
2. The Greek aselgeiais ('sensuality, licentiousness, debauchery') indicates the false teachers' moral character, not just their doctrinal errors — the two are inseparable. 'The way of truth' (hē hodos tēs alētheias) is an early designation for the Christian movement (cf. Acts 9:2, 'the Way'). The public behavior of these teachers will cause outsiders to slander the entire Christian faith.
3. The Greek emporeuontai ('they will trade in, make merchandise of') portrays the false teachers as merchants who view believers as commodities to be exploited for profit. The word plastoīs ('fabricated, molded, invented') — from which English 'plastic' derives — describes their teaching as artificially shaped to serve their purposes.
3. The personification of judgment and destruction as active agents ('not idle,' 'does not slumber') is vivid — divine judgment is not sleeping or inactive but wakefully approaching.
4. The Greek tartarōsas ('having cast into Tartarus') is a hapax legomenon — it appears only here in the entire Bible. In Greek mythology, Tartarus was the lowest region of the underworld where the Titans were imprisoned. Peter uses this Greek cosmological term to describe the imprisonment of fallen angels, adapting pagan vocabulary for a Jewish-Christian narrative that draws on the tradition of Genesis 6:1-4 and the Book of 1 Enoch (cf. Jude 6).
4. The 'chains of deepest darkness' (seirais zophou) — some manuscripts read seirois ('pits') instead of seirais ('chains'). The SBLGNT reads seirais. Either way, the imagery is of imprisonment in complete darkness awaiting final judgment.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 6:1-4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The Greek ogdoon Nōe ('Noah the eighth') means Noah and seven others — his wife, three sons, and their wives (Genesis 7:13, 1 Peter 3:20). Peter calls Noah kēruka dikaiosynēs ('a herald/preacher of righteousness'), a characterization not found in Genesis but present in Jewish tradition. The word kēryx ('herald, public announcer') portrays Noah as actively proclaiming righteousness during the ark's construction, not merely building in silence.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 7:13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The Greek tephrosās ('having reduced to ashes') is found only here in the New Testament. The word katastrophē ('overthrow, destruction') — source of English 'catastrophe' — describes total demolition. Peter presents Sodom and Gomorrah as a visible, permanent warning (hypodeigma, 'example, pattern') of divine judgment — what happened to those cities illustrates what awaits all who practice ungodliness.
7. Peter calls Lot dikaion ('righteous'), a characterization that might surprise readers of Genesis 19, where Lot's behavior is morally ambiguous at best. Peter focuses on Lot's inner distress at the surrounding wickedness rather than his compromised choices. The word kataponoumenon ('being oppressed, worn down, distressed') suggests chronic psychological suffering from living among the immoral — Lot was ground down by constant exposure to depravity.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 19. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

8. The Greek *ebasanizen* ('was tormented, tortured') is a strong word — the same verb used for physical torture (Matthew 8:6, Revelation 9:5). Lot's exposure to lawless behavior was not mere discomfort but soul-level anguish. The phrase *hēmeran ex hēmeras* ('day after day, day from day') emphasizes the relentless, cumulative nature of this torment — it never stopped.
9. This verse provides the resolution to the extended conditional that began in verse 4. The three examples (angels, flood, Sodom) all demonstrate the same dual principle: God rescues the righteous (Noah, Lot) and punishes the wicked. The word *kolazomenous* ('being punished') is a present participle — the unrighteous are already under punishment while awaiting the final judgment, not merely stored in neutral waiting.
10. Peter now turns from the historical examples to the present false teachers. They are characterized by two traits: indulging corrupt desires (*opisō sarkos en epithymia mias mou*, 'pursuing flesh in defiling desire') and rejecting authority (*kyriotētos kataphronountas*, 'despising lordship'). The 'glorious ones' (*doxas*) likely refers to angelic beings — the false teachers show contempt for the spiritual hierarchy.
10. The adjectives *tolmētai* ('bold, daring, presumptuous') and *authentai* ('self-willed, arrogant, stubborn') describe people who recognize no authority beyond their own will.
11. The argument is from greater to lesser: if angels — who are vastly more powerful than any human — do not presume to slander spiritual beings before God's tribunal, how much more outrageous that these human false teachers do so. Compare Jude 9, which provides the specific example of Michael the archangel refusing to pronounce a slanderous judgment against the devil regarding Moses's body.
12. The comparison to *aloga zōa* ('irrational animals, brute beasts') is harsh — these teachers operate on instinct (*physika*, 'natural, by nature') rather than reason or revelation. The wordplay on *phthora/phtharēsontai* ('corruption/they will be corrupted') creates a grim symmetry: they will be destroyed by the very corruption they promote. Ignorance and arrogance combine to produce destruction.
13. The Greek *misthon adikias* ('wages of unrighteousness') is ironic — they pursued profit through unrighteousness and receive unrighteousness as their payment. Carousing *en hēmera* ('in daytime') was considered especially shameful in the ancient world, where respectable people reserved evening hours for banqueting.
13. The words *spiloi* ('blots, stains') and *mōmoi* ('blemishes') contrast sharply with the 'without spot or blemish' language applied to Christ in 1 Peter 1:19 — these teachers are the opposite of Christ. The phrase *syneūchoumenoi hymin* ('feasting together with you') indicates they are still participating in the community's shared meals, probably including the Lord's Supper.
14. The Greek *ophthalmous mestous moichalidos* ('eyes full of an adulteress') is literally 'eyes full of an adulteress' — every woman they see is seen as a potential partner in adultery. The participle *deleazontes* ('enticing, luring with bait') is a fishing metaphor — they bait and hook vulnerable believers. The phrase *kardian gegymnasmenen pleonexias* ('a heart trained/exercised in greed') uses the athletic training metaphor (*gymnazō*, from which 'gymnasium' derives) — they have disciplined themselves in the art of greed as an athlete trains for competition.
15. Balaam (Numbers 22-24) is the paradigmatic example of a prophet motivated by money. Despite being hired by Balak to curse Israel, God forced him to bless them instead. Yet Jewish tradition (and the New Testament: Jude 11, Revelation 2:14) consistently portrays Balaam as a negative example — a man with genuine prophetic gifts corrupted by greed. The false teachers follow his 'way' (*hodon*) — the path of using spiritual authority for financial gain.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 22-24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The story is from Numbers 22:28-30 — Balaam's donkey saw the angel of the LORD blocking the path when Balaam could not, and God opened the donkey's mouth to speak. The Greek *paraphronian* ('madness, insanity') is a strong word — a prophet so blinded by greed that a donkey had better spiritual perception. The irony is devastating: the wordless animal speaks while the speaking prophet is senseless.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 22:28-30. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. Two nature metaphors: *waterless springs* (*pēgai anydroi*) — promising refreshment but delivering nothing — and *storm-driven mists* (*homichlai hypo lailapos elaunomenai*) — appearing to promise rain but blown away before delivering. Both images describe people who promise much and deliver nothing. The false teachers' promised 'freedom' (v. 19) is as empty as a dry well.
17. Compare Jude 12-13, which has 'waterless clouds' and 'wandering stars' — the imagery is parallel but not identical.
18. The Greek *hyperonka mataiotētos* ('swelling things of emptiness, bombastic vanities') describes speech that sounds impressive but is empty — inflated rhetoric with no substance. The targets are people *oligōs apopheugontas* ('barely escaping, just recently escaping') — new converts still vulnerable, who have only just begun to separate from their former way of life. The false teachers target the weakest members of the community.
19. The irony is pointed: the false teachers promise *eleutherian* ('freedom, liberty') while being themselves *douloi* ('slaves') of corruption. The principle *hō gar tis hēttētai, toutō dedoulōtai* ('by whatever someone is defeated, to that person they are enslaved') expresses a universal truth — the conqueror becomes the master. Those who are defeated by corruption become its permanent slaves. The promise of freedom through moral license actually produces deeper bondage.
20. The language echoes Jesus's parable of the unclean spirit that returns with seven others (Matthew 12:43-45, 'the last state of that person is worse than the first'). The word *emplagkentes* ('entangled') pictures someone caught in a net or snare — the defilements they once escaped have recaptured them. The knowledge (*epignōsis*) of Christ provided real escape, making the return to corruption inexcusable and the final condition

worse than the original state of ignorance.

- 21.** The 'way of righteousness' (tēn hodon tēs dikaioynēs) and 'the holy commandment' (tēs hagian entolēs) both describe the Christian life as a path with clear moral direction. To know this path and then deliberately abandon it is worse than never having found it at all. The word hypostrepsai ('to turn back, to return') implies a conscious reversal — not gradual drift but deliberate retreat.
- 22.** The first proverb quotes Proverbs 26:11 ('As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly'). The second about the washed sow is not from the Old Testament but from a wider proverbial tradition (possibly from the Story of Ahikar or common Hellenistic wisdom). Both images are deliberately revolting — the animal's nature reasserts itself despite temporary cleaning. Peter's point is severe: the false teachers' return to corruption reveals that their nature was never truly transformed.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Proverbs 26:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

3

Summary: *Peter addresses scoffers who mock the promise of Christ's return, arguing that the delay demonstrates God's patience, not his unfaithfulness. He reminds them that God's sense of time differs from humanity's — a thousand years is like a day. The day of the Lord will come unexpectedly like a thief, and the heavens and earth will be dissolved by fire. Yet Peter's hope looks beyond destruction to the promise of new heavens and a new earth where righteousness dwells. He closes by referencing Paul's letters and urging steadfastness.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The 'new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells' (v. 13) is one of the great eschatological hopes of the New Testament, drawing on Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22 and anticipating Revelation 21:1. The reference to Paul's letters as Scripture (vv. 15-16) is one of the earliest witnesses to the collection of Paul's correspondence and its elevation to scriptural authority. The 'day equals a thousand years' passage (v. 8) draws on Psalm 90:4 and has profoundly shaped Christian thinking about time, eternity, and divine patience.*

Translation Friction: *The cosmological language of dissolution by fire (vv. 10-12) has been interpreted literally (cosmic conflagration), figuratively (radical transformation), and ecologically. We render the Greek without imposing any particular scientific or theological framework. The reference to Paul writing things 'hard to understand' (v. 16) is remarkably candid and has been treasured by exegetes who find Paul difficult.*

Connections: *The 'new heavens and new earth' draws on Isaiah 65:17, 66:22, and anticipates Revelation 21:1. The 'day of the Lord as a thief' echoes Jesus's teaching (Matthew 24:43, Luke 12:39) and Paul (1 Thessalonians 5:2). The Psalm 90:4 quotation (v. 8) connects to the Mosaic prayer tradition. The fire cosmology may connect to Stoic ekpyrosis (cosmic conflagration) concepts familiar to Peter's Hellenistic audience.*

¹This is now, dear friends, the second letter I am writing to you. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ²So you can become mindful of the words which were spoken prior to by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:. ³Knowing this first, that there will come in the last days scoffers, walking following their own lusts,. ⁴Declaring, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the start of creation. ⁵For they deliberately overlook this fact: that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶Whereby the age that then was, while overflowed with the waters, perished:. ⁷But by that same word the present heavens and earth are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly people. ⁸But do not overlook this one fact, dear friends: that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some consider slowness, but is patient toward you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be dissolved with intense heat, and the earth and the works done on it will be exposed. ¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²Indeed, looking for and hasting to the coming of the day of God, wherein the sky being on fire will be dissolved, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? ¹³But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. ¹⁴Therefore,

dear friends, since you are waiting for these things, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace. ¹⁵And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him, ¹⁶As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things. In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, to their own destruction. ¹⁷You therefore, dear friends, since you know this in advance, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. ¹⁸But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The reference to a 'second letter' (deuteran epistolēn) identifies 1 Peter as the first. The word eilikrinē ('sincere, pure, unmixed') literally means 'judged by sunlight' — tested and found genuine. Peter's purpose is not to introduce new teaching but to activate (diegeirō, 'stir up, rouse from sleep') what they already know.
2. Peter places two sources of authority side by side: the Old Testament prophets and the apostolic witness. The phrase tēs tōn apostolōn hymōn entolēs tou kyriou kai sōtēros ('the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles') establishes a chain of authority: the Lord commands, the apostles transmit, the churches receive. This two-testament consciousness (prophets + apostles) anticipates the later canonical structure of the Christian Bible.
3. The Greek en empaigmonē empaiktai ('with mocking, mockers') is a cognate construction — the mockers mock. Their behavior is driven by desire (kata tas idias epithymias, 'according to their own desires') rather than by truth — the mocking of Christ's return is not intellectual doubt but moral convenience. If there is no coming judgment, there is no moral accountability.
4. The scoffers' argument is what modern philosophy would call uniformitarianism — the assumption that natural processes continue unchanging, therefore no divine intervention (parousia) should be expected. 'The fathers fell asleep' (hoi pateres ekoimēthēsan) refers to the first generation of Christians who died without seeing the return — their death seems to disprove the promise.
4. The rhetorical question 'Where is the promise?' (Pou estin hē epangelia) echoes the Old Testament taunt pattern: 'Where is your God?' (Psalm 42:3, 10; Joel 2:17; Malachi 2:17).
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 42:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joel 2:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Malachi 2:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The Greek lanthanei autous touto thelontas ('it escapes them, this being willing' — i.e., 'they willingly ignore') marks their ignorance as deliberate, not innocent. Peter's counter-argument begins with creation: the world was not always as it is. It was formed by God's word (tō tou theou logō) out of and through water — referencing Genesis 1:2-9, where the primordial waters are separated and dry land appears at God's command.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 1:2-9 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The Greek di' hōn ('through which things') refers back to both the water and the word — the same elements that formed the world were used to destroy it in the flood. The uniformitarian argument ('everything continues unchanged') is refuted by history: there was a cataclysmic interruption. The word kataklustheis ('deluged, flooded') is the root of English 'cataclysm.'
7. The parallel is precise: as the ancient world was destroyed by water, the present world is reserved (tēroumenoi, 'being kept, guarded') for destruction by fire. The word tethēsaismenoi ('stored up, treasured') is ironic — the heavens and earth are 'treasured' for fire as one stores up valuables. The concept of cosmic conflagration by fire was also present in Stoic philosophy (ekpyrosis), which may have made Peter's argument accessible to Hellenistic readers.
8. Peter quotes Psalm 90:4 ('A thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by'), but adds the reverse — not only does a millennium seem brief to God, but a single day can contain what seems like a millennium's worth of divine activity. The point is that God operates on a fundamentally different time scale. What seems like a 'delay' from a human perspective may be an instant in divine reckoning.
8. The verb lanthanetō ('let it escape, let it be hidden') echoes verse 5 where the same root described the scoffers' willful ignorance. Peter tells believers: do not make the same mistake of ignoring crucial facts.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalms 90:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. This verse reframes the 'delay' of the parousia: what appears to be divine procrastination is actually divine patience (makrothymēi, 'is long-tempered, is patient'). The purpose of the delay is soteriological — God extends the time before judgment so that more people have opportunity for repentance (metanoian, 'change of mind, turning of life direction').

9. The phrase *mē boulomenos tinas apolesthai* ('not wanting anyone to perish') expresses God's desire for universal salvation, while the history of judgment in chapter 2 shows that this desire does not override human choice. The tension between divine patience and divine justice runs throughout the letter.
10. The thief simile comes from Jesus himself (Matthew 24:43, Luke 12:39) and is used by Paul (1 Thessalonians 5:2). The Greek *rhoizēdon* ('with a rushing sound, with a roar, with a loud noise') appears only here in the New Testament — it describes the sound of an arrow in flight, the hiss of a serpent, or the rush of a flame.
10. The Greek *stoicheia* ('elements, elemental substances, heavenly bodies') could refer to the four classical elements (earth, water, air, fire), the celestial bodies (sun, moon, stars), or the spiritual 'elemental forces' (cf. Galatians 4:3, 9). Given the cosmological context, 'heavenly bodies' is most likely.
10. A major textual variant exists in the final clause: some manuscripts read *katakaesetai* ('will be burned up'), others *heurethēsetai* ('will be found/exposed'). The SBLGNT reads *heurethēsetai*, which is the more difficult reading and likely original — the earth and its works will be 'found out,' 'laid bare,' 'exposed' before God's judgment.
11. Peter draws ethical implications from eschatology: if everything material will be dissolved (*lyomenōn*, 'being loosened, being destroyed'), then clinging to material things is foolish and investing in holy conduct is wise. The rhetorical question *potapous dei* ('what sort must you be') expects the answer: people of extraordinary holiness and devotion. The plural *hagiois anastrophais kai eusebeiais* ('holy conducts and godlinesses') emphasizes that holiness and godliness are expressed in multiple, varied ways.
12. The Greek *speudontas* ('hastening, speeding up') is striking — believers can actually hasten the day of God's coming. How? The traditional interpretation is through repentance, holy living, and proclamation of the gospel (cf. v. 9, where God waits for all to come to repentance). The rabbinical tradition also held that Israel's repentance could hasten the Messiah's coming.
12. The phrase *tēs tou theou hēmeras* ('the day of God') rather than 'the day of the Lord' (v. 10) shifts the focus from judgment to the full arrival of God's purposes.
13. Peter draws on Isaiah 65:17 ('I am about to create new heavens and a new earth') and 66:22. The adjective *kainous* ('new') denotes newness of quality rather than mere chronological succession — not 'another' world but a 'renewed, transformed' world. The verb *katoikei* ('dwells, inhabits permanently') is present tense, vividly placing the reader in the future reality where righteousness is not visiting but residing.
13. This verse is the theological climax of the letter — beyond the dissolution of the present order lies not annihilation but renewal. The fire of judgment is the means to the end of a world where righteousness is the permanent atmosphere.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 65:17 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The adjectives *aspiloi kai amōmētoi* ('without spot and without blame') echo 1 Peter 1:19, where Christ is described as a lamb 'without defect or blemish' (*amōmou kai aspilou*). Believers are to mirror the character of their redeemer. The phrase *en eirēnē* ('in peace, at peace') describes both internal serenity and relational harmony — the opposite of the agitation produced by false teachers.
15. Peter reframes the delay as salvation: God's patience (*makrothymian*, cf. v. 9) is not weakness but redemptive opportunity. The reference to Paul as 'our dear brother' (*ho agapētos hēmōn adelphos Paulos*) is warm and collegial, despite the confrontation between them recorded in Galatians 2:11. Peter acknowledges Paul's wisdom as divinely given (*kata tēn dotheisan autō sophian*, 'according to the wisdom given to him').
16. The phrase *en pasais epistolais* ('in all the letters') implies Peter knows of a collection of Paul's letters — an early stage of the Pauline corpus taking shape. The candid admission *dysnoēta tina* ('some things hard to understand') is remarkable — an apostle acknowledging that another apostle's writing is difficult. This honesty has comforted generations of readers who struggle with Paul.
16. The phrase *hōs kai tas loipas graphas* ('as they do the other Scriptures') is momentous: it places Paul's letters in the same category as *graphai* ('Scriptures') — one of the earliest attestations of Paul's correspondence being regarded as Scripture alongside the Old Testament.
16. The verb *streblousin* ('twist, distort, torture on the rack') is violent — these false interpreters put Scripture on the rack and twist it until it says what they want.
17. The warning is practical: foreknowledge of these dangers should produce watchfulness (*phylassesthe*, 'guard yourselves'). The Greek *synpachthentes* ('carried away together with, swept along') pictures being caught in a current — the error of the lawless has momentum and can pull the unsuspecting along with it. The word *stērigmou* ('stability, steadfastness, firm standing') connects to the stable foundation language throughout the letter (1:10, 12).
18. The letter closes where it began — with grace (*charis*) and knowledge (*gnōsis*) of Jesus Christ (cf. 1:2). The imperative *auxanete* ('grow, increase') is the final command: not merely maintain but advance. The phrase *eis hēmeran aiōnos* ('to the day of eternity') is unusual — it combines temporal ('day') and eternal ('of eternity') language, pointing to a moment that opens into endless duration.
18. The doxology attributes glory (*doxa*) to Jesus Christ — both now and for eternity — a strong affirmation of his divine status, consistent with the letter's opening identification of Jesus as 'our God and Savior' (1:1).

1 John

1

Summary: *First John opens without a standard epistolary greeting, plunging directly into proclamation: what was from the beginning, heard, seen, and touched — the word of life — is now declared so that the readers may share in fellowship with the Father and the Son. John then states the letter's foundational theological assertion: 'God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all.' The remainder of the chapter tests three claims against this reality: those who say they have fellowship with God but walk in darkness lie; those who walk in the light have fellowship and the blood of Jesus cleanses them; and those who claim to be without sin deceive themselves.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The prologue (vv. 1-4) deliberately echoes the prologue of John's Gospel ('In the beginning was the Word'), but shifts from cosmic theology to sensory testimony — what we have heard, seen, gazed upon, and touched. The declaration 'God is light' (v. 5) is one of the three 'God is' statements in John's writings (alongside 'God is spirit' in John 4:24 and 'God is love' in 1 John 4:8, 16). The interplay of light and darkness throughout the chapter establishes the moral dualism that structures the entire letter.*

Translation Friction: *First John has no named author, sender, recipient, or greeting — it reads more like a theological treatise or homily than a letter. Tradition attributes it to the apostle John, author of the Fourth Gospel. The Greek is notably simple — short sentences, limited vocabulary, repeated patterns — yet the theology is profound. We render the simplicity of the Greek honestly rather than adding complexity.*

Connections: *The prologue echoes John 1:1-14 (the Word who was from the beginning). The light/darkness motif connects to John 1:4-5, 3:19-21, and 8:12. The confession and cleansing language (vv. 7-9) resonates with Psalm 32, Psalm 51, and the Day of Atonement ritual. The 'advocate' (paraklētos) introduced in 2:1 connects to Jesus's promise of the Paraclete in John 14-16.*

¹What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have gazed upon and our hands have touched — concerning the word of life — ²This life appeared, and we have seen it. We testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us. ³That which we possess seen and listened to declare we to you, that you as well may possess fellowship with us — and truly our fellowship is with the Parent, and with his Descendant Jesus Christ. ⁴And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. ⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say we have fellowship with

him while walking in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷And the blood of jesus christ his son cleanseth us from all sin, but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. ⁸And the truth is not in us, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. ⁹And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. ¹⁰And his word is not in us, if we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The fourfold 'what' (ho) creates an accumulating sensory testimony: hearing, seeing, gazing, and touching. The progression moves from the most common sense (hearing) to the most intimate (touching). The word *etheasametha* ('gazed upon, beheld, contemplated') implies sustained, attentive looking — not a glance but prolonged observation. The verb *epsēlaphēsan* ('touched, handled, felt') is the same verb used in Luke 24:39 where the risen Jesus invites the disciples to touch him.
1. The phrase *peri tou logou tēs zōēs* ('concerning the word of life') identifies the subject: this sensory testimony is about the logos — the same 'Word' of John 1:1, now encountered through physical senses. This opening directly counters any docetic denial of Christ's physical reality.
2. The parenthetical structure mirrors John's habit of interrupting his thought to expand on a crucial point. The phrase *hētis ēn pros ton patera* ('which was with the Father') directly echoes John 1:1 ('the Word was with God'). The preposition *pros* ('with, toward') implies face-to-face relationship, not mere proximity.
2. Three verbs describe the apostolic response to seeing the life: *heōrakamen* ('we have seen' — perfect tense, the seeing has permanent effect), *martyroumen* ('we testify' — present tense, the testimony continues), and *apangellomen* ('we proclaim' — present tense, the announcement goes on). Sight produces testimony produces proclamation.
3. The purpose of the proclamation is *koinōnia* ('fellowship, participation, sharing, partnership'). This is not casual social interaction but deep communion — first horizontal (with us) and then vertical (with the Father and with his Son). The fellowship with the apostolic community is simultaneously fellowship with God. There is no private, individualistic spirituality here — relationship with God is mediated through and expressed in community.
3. The phrase *meta tou patros kai meta tou huiou autou Iēsou Christou* places the Father and the Son as equal partners in fellowship — a casual but profound affirmation of the Son's divine status.
4. Some manuscripts read 'your joy' (*hymōn*) rather than 'our joy' (*hēmōn*). The SBLGNT reads *hēmōn* ('our'). The choice matters: 'our joy' means John's joy is completed when the recipients enter into fellowship — the writer's joy depends on the readers' response. This echoes John 15:11 and 16:24, where Jesus speaks of his joy being made complete in his disciples.
5. The word *angelia* ('message, announcement') appears only here and in 3:11 in the New Testament. John claims this message came directly from Christ ('from him' — *ap' autou*). The declaration *ho theos phōs estin* ('God is light') is one of John's three great 'God is' statements (with 'God is spirit' in John 4:24 and 'God is love' in 4:8, 16).
5. The double negation *skotia en autō ouk estin oudemia* ('darkness in him is not — none') is emphatically redundant in Greek, using both *ouk* and *oudemia* to eliminate any possibility of darkness in God. This absolute claim sets up the ethical tests that follow.
6. The first of three conditional tests (vv. 6, 8, 10), each beginning with 'if we say' (*ean eipōmen*). The verb *peripatōmen* ('walk') is a Hebrew idiom (*halak*) for one's manner of life — how a person conducts themselves daily. John's test is simple: claimed fellowship with the God who is light is contradicted by a life characterized by darkness. The phrase *ou poioumen tēn alētheian* ('we do not do the truth') treats truth as something practiced, not merely believed — truth is lived.
7. Walking in the light produces two results: fellowship with one another (*koinōnian met' allēlōn* — note: not fellowship with God, which is assumed, but with each other) and ongoing cleansing from sin. The present tense *katharizei* ('cleanses, keeps cleansing') indicates continuous purification, not a one-time event. The blood of Jesus is not a past transaction only but an ongoing reality for those who walk in the light.
7. The scope is comprehensive: *apo pasēs hamartias* ('from all sin, from every sin') — no sin is beyond the cleansing power of Christ's blood for those who walk in the light.
8. The second 'if we say' test. The claim to sinlessness is not merely mistaken but self-deceptive (*heautous planōmen*, 'we lead ourselves astray'). The Greek *hamartian ouk echomen* ('we do not have sin') likely addresses a proto-Gnostic claim that the enlightened are beyond sin. John counters: to deny the reality of sin is to exile truth from oneself. Note the distinction between 'having sin' (the ongoing reality of sinfulness, v. 8) and 'committing sins' (specific acts, v. 9).
9. The Greek *homologōmen* ('confess, acknowledge openly') literally means 'to say the same thing' — to agree with God's assessment of our sin, to call it what it is. The basis for forgiveness is not human merit but God's character: *pistos* ('faithful' — he keeps his promises) and *dikaios* ('just, righteous' — his forgiveness is consistent with his justice, not a violation of it).
9. The dual result of confession is forgiveness (*aphē*, 'release, cancellation') of sins and cleansing (*katharisē*, 'purification') from all unrighteousness. Forgiveness addresses the guilt; cleansing addresses the stain.

10. The third 'if we say' test escalates the stakes: denying our sin does not merely deceive ourselves (v. 8) but makes God a liar (pseustēn poioumen auton). The perfect tense hēmartēkamen ('have not sinned') claims a sinless history, which contradicts God's own testimony that all have sinned. The consequence — 'his word is not in us' (ho logos autou ouk estin en hēmin) — means total alienation from God's truth. This is the most severe of the three tests.

2

Summary: *First John 2 develops the letter's central themes of fellowship with God, obedience, and love. John begins by describing Jesus as the advocate (parakletos) and atoning sacrifice for the world's sins, then establishes that knowing God is demonstrated by keeping his commandments — particularly the command to love. The chapter introduces the famous triad of worldly temptations (the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life) and warns that the world is passing away. John then addresses the appearance of 'antichrists' — those who have left the community and deny that Jesus is the Christ — and reassures believers that they possess an anointing (chrisma) from the Holy One that guards them in truth.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The term parakletos ('advocate, one called alongside') connects Jesus's ongoing heavenly ministry to the same word used for the Holy Spirit in John's Gospel (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). John's 'antichrist' language appears here for the first time in the New Testament — not as an apocalyptic beast figure but as a present theological reality: anyone who denies the Father and the Son. The concept of chrisma ('anointing') given to all believers democratizes what was once reserved for kings and priests, echoing the promise of Jeremiah 31:34 that all would know the LORD directly.*

Translation Friction: *The 'new commandment that is also old' (vv. 7-8) presents an apparent paradox that John resolves by locating the newness in its realization through Christ. The identity of the 'antichrists' likely refers to a specific secession from the Johannine community (v. 19: 'they went out from us'), not a future eschatological figure. The three-stage address to 'children,' 'fathers,' and 'young men' (vv. 12-14) may reflect age groups, spiritual maturity levels, or rhetorical variation — the text does not resolve this clearly.*

Connections: *The advocacy of Christ before the Father (v. 1) connects to the high-priestly intercession theme of Hebrews 7:25 and Romans 8:34. The 'new commandment' echoes John 13:34. The 'antichrist' concept draws on Daniel 7-8 and the Olivet Discourse (Mark 13:22). The warning about worldly desires parallels James 4:4 and the temptation narrative of Genesis 3 (the tree was good for food, a delight to the eyes, and desired to make one wise).*

1My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father — Jesus Christ, the righteous one. 2He himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 3And by this we know that we have come to know him: if we keep his commandments. 4Whoever says "I have come to know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. 5But whoever keeps his word, in that person the love of God has truly been made complete. By this we know that we are in him. 6Whoever claims to remain in him ought to walk in the same way that he walked. 7Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment that you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you heard. 8Yet I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. 9Whoever says he is in the light yet hates his brother is still in the darkness even now. 10Whoever loves his brother remains in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 11But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. 12I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. 13I am writing to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. 14I have written to you, children, because you have known the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God remains in you, and you have overcome the evil one. 15Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in that person. 16For everything in the world — the

desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the arrogance of life — is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God remains forever. ¹⁸Children, it is the last hour, and just as you heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared. From this we know that it is the last hour. ¹⁹They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us. But they went out so that it would be made clear that none of them were of us. ²⁰But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. ²¹I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie comes from the truth. ²²Who is the liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist — the one who denies the Father and the Son. ²³Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father either. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. ²⁴As for you, let what you heard from the beginning remain in you. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, then you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is the promise that he himself promised us: eternal life. ²⁶I have written these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. ²⁷As for you, the anointing that you received from him remains in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things — and is true and is not a lie — just as it has taught you, remain in him. ²⁸And now, little children, remain in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink back from him in shame at his coming. ²⁹If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *teknia* ('little children') is a term of intimate affection, not condescension, reflecting the elder's pastoral relationship with the community. The word *parakletos* ('advocate, helper, one called alongside') is the same term Jesus uses for the Holy Spirit in John 14:16. Here it describes Christ's ongoing intercessory role before the Father. The adjective *dikaion* ('righteous') qualifies Christ as the perfect advocate — his righteousness is the ground of his intercession.
2. The Greek *hilasmos* ('atoning sacrifice, propitiation, expiation') carries both the sense of turning away wrath (propitiation) and covering sin (expiation). The word echoes the Hebrew *kapporet* (mercy seat) and the Day of Atonement ritual of Leviticus 16. The scope — 'the whole world' (*holou tou kosmou*) — extends the atonement beyond the believing community, a remarkable universalizing statement.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Leviticus 16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. John uses two different tenses of *ginoskein* ('to know'): the present *ginoskomen* ('we know' — ongoing awareness) and the perfect *egnokamen* ('we have come to know' — completed action with present results). True knowledge of God is not abstract or mystical but is verified by obedience. This epistemological test recurs throughout the letter.
4. John's blunt designation — *pseustes* ('liar') — is characteristic of the letter's stark moral categories. The claim to know God while disobeying him is not merely mistaken but constitutes a lie. 'The truth is not in him' treats truth as an indwelling reality, not merely a correct proposition.
5. The phrase 'the love of God' (*he agape tou theou*) is ambiguous in Greek — it could mean God's love for us, our love for God, or the kind of love that comes from God. The context suggests all three dimensions. The verb *teteleiōtai* ('has been made complete, perfected') is a perfect passive, indicating a divine work brought to completion in the obedient believer.
6. The Greek *peripatein* ('to walk') is the standard metaphor for conducting one's life, corresponding to the Hebrew *halak*. 'As he walked' (*kathōs ekeinos periepatēsen*) refers to Jesus's earthly life as the model for Christian conduct. The verb *opheilei* ('ought, is obligated') expresses moral necessity, not mere suggestion.
7. The SBLGNT reads *agapetoi* ('beloved') rather than the KJV's 'brethren.' The 'old commandment from the beginning' likely refers to the love command that the community received when they first heard the gospel (cf. John 13:34). The paradox of old and new is resolved in the next verse.
8. The commandment is both old (rooted in the Torah's love command, Leviticus 19:18) and new (realized in Christ and the believing community). The present tense *paragetai* ('is passing away') and *phainei* ('is shining') indicate an eschatological transition already underway — the new age has begun but the old has not yet fully departed. This 'already but not yet' tension characterizes Johannine eschatology.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 19:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The test is relational: hatred of a fellow believer (*adelphos*, 'brother') invalidates any claim to spiritual enlightenment. The phrase *heōs arti* ('even now, until this moment') suggests someone who has never actually moved from darkness to light, despite their claim.

10. The Greek skandalon ('cause of stumbling, trap, offense') could mean either that the loving person does not stumble, or that the loving person does not cause others to stumble. Both senses may be intended — love both secures the believer and removes obstacles for others.
11. The threefold description — being in darkness, walking in darkness, not knowing one's direction — forms a devastating portrait of spiritual blindness. The verb etyflōsen ('has blinded') is aorist, suggesting a decisive event: hatred did not merely dim but extinguished sight. The imagery echoes John 12:35.
12. The address teknia ('little children') encompasses the whole community. The perfect passive apheōntai ('have been forgiven') indicates a completed and enduring reality. Forgiveness comes 'on account of his name' — that is, through the person and work of Christ, not through the community's merit.
13. The 'fathers' (pateres) are characterized by deep, mature knowledge of Christ, 'him who is from the beginning.' The 'young men' (neaniskoi) are characterized by victory over 'the evil one' (ton poneron) — likely Satan. The perfect tenses (egnōkate, nenikēkate) indicate accomplished realities that continue in force.
14. The shift from graphō ('I am writing') to egrapsa ('I have written') may indicate a second pass through the same groups, or an epistolary aorist referring to the letter itself. The SBLGNT reads paidia ('children') for the first address here, a slightly different word than teknia in v. 12 but with similar meaning. The young men's strength is grounded in two realities: the indwelling word of God and their victory over the evil one.
15. The Greek kosmos ('world') here does not mean the created order (which God loves, John 3:16) but the world-system organized in opposition to God — the values, priorities, and allegiances that compete with devotion to the Father. The prohibition is a present imperative with mē, forbidding an ongoing disposition.
16. The triad of worldly temptations has often been compared to the threefold temptation in Genesis 3:6 (good for food, a delight to the eyes, desired to make one wise) and the temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11). The Greek epithymia ('desire, craving') is morally neutral in itself but here denotes disordered desire directed at flesh-gratification and visual acquisitiveness. The word alazoneia ('arrogance, boastfulness, pretension') refers to the vain confidence that comes from material security (bios here meaning 'livelihood, possessions' rather than mere 'life').
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 3:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The present tense parageitai ('is passing away') conveys the world's transience as an ongoing reality, not merely a future event. The contrast between the passing world and the one who 'remains forever' (menei eis ton aiōna) echoes the Johannine theme of abiding. Doing the will of God is not legalistic compliance but alignment with God's eternal purposes.
18. The phrase eschatē hōra ('last hour') without the article suggests a qualitative description of the present era rather than a precise chronological claim. John's innovation is to pluralize 'antichrist' (antichristoi polloi) — the expected single eschatological opponent has multiplied into many present figures. The word antichristos appears only in the Johannine Epistles (here, 2:22, 4:3, and 2 John 7) in the entire New Testament.
19. This verse reveals the concrete historical situation behind the letter: a group has seceded from the community. John interprets their departure theologically — it was not a loss but a revealing. The contrary-to-fact conditional (ei ... ēsan ... memenekeisan an) asserts that genuine belonging would have produced perseverance. Their leaving exposed what was always true.
20. The Greek chrisma ('anointing') is etymologically related to Christos ('anointed one'). In the Old Testament, anointing was reserved for kings, priests, and occasionally prophets. John declares that all believers possess this anointing. The SBLGNT reading oidate pantes ('you all know') rather than oidate panta ('you know all things') emphasizes that every believer — not just leaders — has been given knowledge through the Spirit.
21. John writes not to inform but to confirm — the community already possesses the truth through their anointing. The final clause establishes an absolute separation between truth and falsehood that will undergird his identification of the secessionists' teaching as lies.
22. The definite article (ho pseustēs, 'the liar') elevates this beyond a general statement — this is the liar par excellence. The specific denial — that Jesus is the Christ — likely reflects a proto-Gnostic or Cerinthian position that separated the human Jesus from the divine Christ. John insists that denying the Son necessarily entails denying the Father, because the two are inseparable in the Johannine theological framework.
23. The verb homologeōn ('confessing, acknowledging') is the counterpart to arnoumenos ('denying'). The relationship with the Father is mediated entirely through the Son — there is no access to the Father apart from the Son. This echoes Jesus's words in John 14:6-9. Some manuscripts omit the second clause; the SBLGNT includes it.
24. The emphatic hymeis ('you') at the beginning contrasts the faithful community with the secessionists. 'From the beginning' (ap' archēs) refers to the original apostolic message they received. The logic is reciprocal: if the message remains in them, they remain in the Son and the Father. Abiding in the truth and abiding in God are inseparable.
25. The promise (epangelia) of eternal life (tēn zōēn tēn aiōnion) is the content of remaining in the Father and Son. In Johannine theology, eternal life is not merely future but a present reality that begins with knowing God (John 17:3). The emphatic autos ('he himself') likely refers to Christ.
26. The participle planōntōn ('those deceiving, leading astray') is present tense, indicating ongoing activity. The secessionists are not merely gone — they are actively attempting to draw the remaining community after them. The verb planein ('to lead astray, deceive') is the root of the English 'planet' (a wandering star) and captures the sense of being led off course.

27. The statement that believers 'have no need for anyone to teach you' does not reject all teaching (John's letter is itself teaching) but asserts that the community possesses an internal criterion — the Spirit's anointing — by which to evaluate external claims. This echoes Jeremiah 31:34 ('they shall all know me') and Jesus's promise of the Spirit of truth in John 16:13. The final *menete* ('remain') is an imperative: continue abiding in him.
27. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 31:34. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
28. The term *parrēsian* ('confidence, boldness, freedom of speech') was a civic virtue in Greek culture — the right to speak openly before authority. Here it describes the believer's posture before Christ at his return. The word *parousia* ('coming, presence, arrival') is the standard early Christian term for the second coming of Christ. John shifts to the first person plural ('we may have') — he includes himself among those who will face this moment.
29. The verb *gegennētai* ('has been born') is a perfect passive, indicating a divine act with enduring consequences — being born of God is not a human achievement but a divine begetting. The logic runs from God's character to the believer's conduct: because he is righteous, those born of him will practice righteousness. This sets up the major theme of chapter 3.

3

Summary: *First John 3 opens with an astonished declaration of God's love in calling believers his children, then develops the incompatibility of habitual sin with divine parentage. John draws a sharp line between the children of God and the children of the devil, using Cain as the paradigmatic example of hatred. The central ethical demand is love expressed in concrete action — not merely in words but in laying down one's life for others, as Christ did. The chapter closes with the assurance that God is greater than our self-condemning hearts, and that obedience and faith produce confidence before God and the indwelling of the Spirit.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The phrase 'what we will be has not yet appeared' (v. 2) is one of the New Testament's most striking admissions of eschatological incompleteness — the full transformation of believers awaits Christ's return. The definition of sin as *anomia* ('lawlessness,' v. 4) is theologically significant: sin is not merely moral failure but rebellion against God's ordering of reality. The Cain reference (v. 12) is the only New Testament use of Cain outside Hebrews 11:4 and Jude 11, and John uniquely attributes his murder to spiritual allegiance to the evil one.*

Translation Friction: *Verse 6 ('no one who remains in him keeps on sinning') and verse 9 ('no one born of God practices sin') have generated extensive debate. The present tenses in Greek indicate habitual, characteristic action — John is describing a pattern of life, not claiming sinless perfection (which would contradict 1:8-10 and 2:1). The tension between the ideal stated here and the realistic acknowledgment of sin earlier in the letter is deliberate, reflecting the 'already but not yet' of Christian existence.*

Connections: *The children-of-God theme connects to John 1:12-13 and Romans 8:14-17. The Cain narrative draws from Genesis 4. The command to love one another echoes John 13:34-35. The laying-down-of-life language directly mirrors John 10:11, 15 and 15:13. The confidence-before-God theme anticipates the boldness language of Hebrews 4:16 and 10:19-22.*

¹See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God — and so we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are now children of God, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when he appears, we will be like him, because we will see him as he is. ³And everyone who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself, just as he is pure. ⁴Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. ⁵And you know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶No one who remains in him keeps on sinning. No one who keeps on sinning has seen him or known him. ⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, just as he is righteous. ⁸Whoever practices sin is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose: to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹No one who has been born of God practices sin, because God's seed remains in that person, and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. ¹⁰By this it is evident who are the children of God and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. ¹¹That we should love one another, and for this was the message that you heard from the beginning. ¹²We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's were

righteous. ¹³Do not be surprised, brothers, if the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love remains in death. ¹⁵Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life remaining in him. ¹⁶By this we have come to know love: that he laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷But if anyone has the world's possessions and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does the love of God remain in that person? ¹⁸Little children, let us not love in word or in speech, but in action and in truth. ¹⁹By this we will know that we are of the truth, and we will reassure our hearts before him, ²⁰Because if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. ²¹Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God, ²²Whatsoever we ask, we accept of him, on account of the fact that we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. ²³And this is his commandment: that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he commanded us. ²⁴Whoever keeps his commandments remains in God, and God in that person. And by this we know that he remains in us: by the Spirit that he has given us.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek *potapēn* ('what kind of, what manner of') expresses astonishment — this is not merely great love but a foreign, unexpected quality of love. The phrase *kai esmen* ('and we are') is a parenthetical exclamation affirming that the title 'children of God' is not honorific but real. We render *tekna* ('children') rather than the KJV's 'sons' because the Greek *tekna* is gender-inclusive and emphasizes birth-relationship, while *huiioi* ('sons') would emphasize legal status.
2. The tension between 'now' (*nyn*) and 'not yet' (*oupō*) captures the eschatological position of believers — genuine identity now, full transformation later. The promise 'we will be like him' (*homoioi autō esometha*) is stunning in its scope and deliberately left undefined. The causal clause 'because we will see him as he is' suggests that the vision of Christ itself will be transformative — seeing and becoming are linked.
3. The verb *hagnizei* ('purifies') is the same word used for ceremonial purification in the Septuagint (e.g., Numbers 19). The eschatological hope of transformation produces present ethical effort. The standard is nothing less than Christ's own purity (*hagnos*).
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The Greek *anomia* ('lawlessness') is not merely 'breaking a rule' but rebellion against God's ordering of reality. The equation 'sin is lawlessness' (*hē hamartia estin hē anomia*) defines sin in its deepest sense — not as individual infractions but as a fundamental posture of defiance against divine authority. The present participle *poiōn* ('practicing, doing') indicates habitual action.
5. The verb *ephanerōthē* ('was manifested, appeared') refers to Christ's incarnation. The verb *arē* ('take away, remove, bear') echoes John the Baptist's declaration in John 1:29 ('the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world'). Christ's sinlessness is the ground of his ability to remove sin — only one without sin can bear and remove the sin of others.
6. The present tenses (*menōn*, *hamartanei*, *hamartanōn*) are crucial: John is describing habitual, ongoing action. 'No one who remains in him keeps on sinning' does not assert sinless perfection but rather that abiding in Christ and a settled pattern of sin are incompatible. This must be read alongside 1:8-2:2, where John acknowledges that believers do sin and need an advocate. The distinction is between occasional failure and characteristic lifestyle.
7. The warning against deception (*mēdeis planatō*) suggests the secessionists may have taught that conduct does not reflect spiritual status. John insists on the opposite: practice reveals identity. The standard of comparison is Christ's own righteousness (*kathōs ekeinos dikaios estin*).
8. The phrase *ek tou diabolou* ('of the devil, from the devil') indicates origin and allegiance, just as 'born of God' indicates divine origin. The devil's sinning 'from the beginning' (*ap' archēs*) echoes the serpent narrative of Genesis 3 and Jesus's words in John 8:44. The verb *lysē* ('destroy, undo, dissolve') means literally 'to loose' — Christ unties, dismantles, and dissolves the devil's works.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The word *sperma* ('seed') has been interpreted as God's word, the Holy Spirit, or the divine nature implanted in the believer. In context, it likely refers to the divine life-principle communicated through new birth. 'Cannot sin' (*ou dynatai hamartanein*) does not mean absolute impossibility but moral incompatibility — the new nature resists and is fundamentally opposed to habitual sin. The present infinitive *hamartanein* describes an ongoing pattern, not a single act.
10. John establishes two tests by which spiritual parentage is revealed: practicing righteousness and loving fellow believers. The phrase 'children of the devil' (*ta tekna tou diabolou*) is stark — just as there are children of God by divine birth, there are children of the devil by spiritual allegiance. This dualistic framework serves pastoral urgency, not philosophical speculation.
11. The word *angelia* ('message') appears only here and in 1:5 in the New Testament. In 1:5 the message was 'God is light'; here it is the command of mutual love. These two messages — God's nature and the resulting ethical obligation — frame the letter's argument. 'From the beginning' (*ap' archēs*)

again refers to the original proclamation of the gospel.

12. The verb *esphaxen* ('slaughtered, butchered') is a violent word often used for slaying sacrificial animals (it appears in Revelation for the slaughter of the Lamb, 5:6). John attributes Cain's act to his spiritual origin — he 'was of the evil one' (*ek tou ponērou ēn*). The rhetorical question and answer reveal that hatred of righteousness motivates murder. This interprets Genesis 4 through a spiritual-warfare lens.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The imperative *mē thaumazete* ('do not be surprised, stop marveling') echoes Jesus's words in John 15:18-19. The world's hatred of believers follows the same pattern as Cain's hatred of Abel — the righteous provoke hostility simply by being righteous. The conditional *ei* ('if') with the indicative *misei* suggests this is a real condition: the world does hate them.
14. The perfect *metabebēkamen* ('we have passed') describes a completed transition with enduring results — believers have already crossed from the realm of death into the realm of life. Love for fellow believers is not the cause of this transition but the evidence of it. The stark alternative — remaining in death — is the default human condition apart from divine intervention.
15. The Greek *anthrōpoktonos* ('murderer,' literally 'man-killer') is the same word used of the devil in John 8:44. John equates hatred with murder in its spiritual essence — the same move Jesus makes in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:21-22). The logic is relentless: hatred = murder, and no murderer possesses eternal life.
16. The phrase *tēn psychēn autou ethēken* ('he laid down his life') directly echoes Jesus's words in John 10:11, 15 and 15:13. The Greek *psychē* means 'life, soul, self.' Love is defined not by sentiment but by sacrifice. The obligation (*opheilomen*, 'we ought') extends the pattern of Christ's self-giving to all believers — this is the highest expression of the love command.
17. The Greek *splanchna* ('inner organs, bowels, heart') was the seat of compassion in ancient thought, corresponding roughly to the modern 'heart.' The verb *kleisē* ('shuts, closes') is vivid — it pictures someone deliberately closing off the natural response of compassion. John moves from the grand principle (laying down one's life) to the mundane test (sharing material resources), suggesting that daily generosity is the realistic measure of love.
18. The contrast between *logō* and *glōssē* ('word' and 'tongue/speech') on one side, and *ergō* and *alētheia* ('deed/action' and 'truth') on the other, establishes that genuine love is demonstrated through concrete acts. 'In truth' (*en alētheia*) adds the dimension of sincerity — the actions must be genuine, not performative.
19. The verb *peisomen* ('we will persuade, reassure, set at rest') indicates the active process of calming a troubled conscience. Loving in deed and truth provides the believer with objective evidence of genuine faith, which in turn produces inner assurance before God.
20. This is one of the most pastorally significant verses in the letter. The Greek *kataginōskē* ('condemns, accuses') describes the inner voice of self-accusation. The response is not to dismiss the heart's verdict but to appeal beyond it to God, who 'is greater' — his knowledge of our love and obedience is more comprehensive and more gracious than our own self-assessment. The verse offers comfort to the scrupulous, not license to the careless.
21. The word *parrēsian* ('confidence, boldness, freedom of speech') reappears from 2:28. A clear conscience — not from self-deception but from genuine love in action — produces bold access to God. This confidence is not self-reliance but the fruit of a life aligned with God's commands.
22. The connection between obedience and answered prayer echoes John 15:7 ('if you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish'). The logic is not transactional — obedience does not earn answers — but relational: the obedient life is aligned with God's will, so its requests are naturally in harmony with his purposes.
23. John distills all of God's commands into two inseparable requirements: faith in Christ and mutual love. The singular 'commandment' (*entolē*) encompasses both, suggesting they cannot be separated — faith without love, or love without faith, is incomplete. The aorist *pisteusōmen* ('believe') may point to the decisive act of faith, while the present *agapōmen* ('love') indicates ongoing practice.
24. The mutual indwelling formula — 'remains in God, and God in that person' — is the hallmark of Johannine theology (cf. John 15:4-5). The Spirit is introduced for the first time in the letter as the means by which believers know God's presence. This sets up the discussion of testing the spirits in chapter 4. The verb *edōken* ('has given') is aorist, pointing to the definitive gift of the Spirit.

4

Summary: *First John 4 contains the letter's theological and emotional climax. It opens with a call to test the spirits, providing a christological criterion: every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh is from God. John then develops the theme that God is love — not merely that God loves, but that love defines his very nature. God's love is demonstrated in sending his Son as an atoning sacrifice, and this love calls forth a response of mutual love among believers. The chapter reaches its apex in the declaration that perfect love drives out fear, and closes with the warning that anyone who claims to love God while hating a brother is a liar.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The twin declarations 'God is love' (vv. 8, 16) are among the most quoted sentences in the Bible and represent the deepest theological distillation in the Johannine writings. Notably, John does not say 'love is God' — the statement is not reversible. God defines love, not the reverse. The christological test (vv. 2-3) addresses what appears to be an early docetic heresy that denied the reality of Jesus's physical incarnation. The phrase 'perfect love drives out fear' (v. 18) is psychologically profound and theologically revolutionary, redefining the human relationship to divine judgment.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the false prophets and the 'spirit of the antichrist' (vv. 1-3) points to the same secession described in 2:19. The confession 'Jesus Christ has come in the flesh' (v. 2) targets a specific denial — likely a proto-docetic or Cerinthian teaching that the divine Christ merely appeared to be human. The phrase 'he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world' (v. 4) has often been decontextualized; in its original setting, it refers to discernment of true and false teaching, not a general promise of victory.*

Connections: *The testing of spirits connects to Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and 1 Corinthians 12:3. The incarnation confession echoes John 1:14 ('the Word became flesh'). The 'God is love' declarations connect to the broader biblical narrative of God's chesed (steadfast love) and its ultimate expression in the cross. The fear/love dynamic resonates with Romans 8:15 ('you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear'). The 'no one has ever seen God' statement (v. 12) echoes John 1:18.*

¹Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God — and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come. And even now already is it in the world. ⁴You are from God, little children, and have overcome them, because he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception. ⁷Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was revealed among us: that God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God loved us in this way, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God remains in us, and his love has been made complete in us. ¹³By this we know that we remain in him and he in us: because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in that person and that person in God. ¹⁶And we have come to know and have believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God, and God remains in that person. ¹⁷In this, love has been made complete among us, so that we may have confidence on the day of judgment, because as he is, so also are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears has not been made complete in love. ¹⁹Indeed, we love him, because he first loved us. ²⁰If anyone says, "I love God," and yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For the one who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. ²¹And this commandment we have from him: that whoever loves God must also love his brother.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The verb dokimazete ('test, examine, prove') was used for testing metals and coins for genuineness. John does not counsel gullibility or blanket suspicion but careful discernment. The connection between 'spirits' and 'false prophets' indicates that John views human teaching as inspired by spiritual powers — behind every prophet stands a spirit, and not all spirits are from God.
2. The confession Iēsoun Christon en sarki elēlythota ('Jesus Christ having come in the flesh') is the christological touchstone. The perfect participle elēlythota ('having come') indicates a completed action with ongoing results — Christ came in the flesh and remains incarnate. This targets any teaching that would deny the reality of the incarnation. The confession is not merely intellectual assent but a public declaration (homologeī).
3. The SBLGNT reads simply 'does not confess Jesus' (mē homologeī ton Iēsoun) rather than the fuller reading in some manuscripts. The brevity may be significant — any diminishment of Jesus, not merely the specific denial of his incarnation, fails the test. The 'spirit of the antichrist' is identified not as a future apocalyptic figure but as a present spiritual reality already operating through false teachers.
4. The perfect nenikēkate ('you have overcome') declares victory as an accomplished fact. The 'them' (autous) refers to the false prophets and the spirits behind them. The ground of victory is not the believers' own strength but the indwelling presence of God (through the Spirit, cf. 3:24). 'He who is in the world' refers to the devil (cf. 5:19).
5. The false teachers' popularity is not a mark of truth but of worldly origin. Their message resonates with the world because it comes from the world. John establishes a diagnostic principle: the audience a message attracts reveals its source. This is not anti-intellectualism but a theological observation about spiritual affinity.
6. The 'we' (hēmeis) likely refers to the apostolic circle — those who bear the original eyewitness testimony (cf. 1:1-3). Response to apostolic teaching becomes a second test of spiritual authenticity. The contrast between 'the Spirit of truth' (to pneuma tēs alētheias, cf. John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13) and 'the spirit of deception' (to pneuma tēs planēs) frames the situation in stark dualistic terms.
7. This verse begins the letter's theological crescendo. Love is traced to its source: it originates in God (ek tou theou). The one who loves demonstrates two realities — divine birth (gegennētai, perfect passive) and knowledge of God (ginōskei, present active). Love is both the evidence and the fruit of the divine relationship.
8. The declaration ho theos agapē estin ('God is love') is one of the most profound theological statements in Scripture. The predicate is without an article, making it qualitative — love characterizes God's very essence. Critically, the statement is not reversible: 'love is God' would be pantheistic. Rather, all genuine love has its source and definition in God's own nature. The aorist ouk egnō ('did not know') suggests the person never truly knew God, not that they lost knowledge.
9. The Greek monogenē ('only, unique, one-of-a-kind') is rendered 'only Son' rather than 'only begotten' because the word emphasizes uniqueness rather than the manner of origin. The perfect apostalken ('has sent') indicates a completed mission with enduring effects. The purpose — 'that we might live' (hina zēsōmen) — defines God's love as life-giving. The verse parallels John 3:16 in its structure and theology.
10. The priority of God's love is emphatic: love originates with God, not with humanity. Human love for God is always a response, never the initiative. The word hilasmon ('atoning sacrifice') reappears from 2:2, connecting God's love directly to the cross. The aorist ēgapēsen ('he loved') and aposteilen ('he sent') point to the historical acts of the incarnation and crucifixion as the definitive demonstration of divine love.
11. The conditional ei ('if') with the indicative is a first-class condition, assuming the reality of the premise: since God has loved us this way. The obligation (opheilomen, 'we ought') flows from the indicative of God's action — the imperative of love is grounded in the prior reality of having been loved. John does not say 'we ought to love God back' but 'we ought to love one another' — divine love redirects outward.
12. The opening statement — 'no one has ever seen God' (theon oudeis pōpote tetheatai) — echoes John 1:18. The invisible God becomes visible, as it were, through the mutual love of his people. The perfect participle teteleiōmenē ('made complete, perfected') indicates that God's love reaches its intended goal and full expression when it flows through believers to one another.
13. The phrase ek tou pneumatōs autou ('of his Spirit') uses the partitive ek, suggesting a share in the Spirit rather than the Spirit in totality — though the theological distinction should not be pressed too far. The Spirit is the inner witness to the mutual indwelling of God and believer, confirming what love makes visible.
14. The 'we' (hēmeis) is emphatic and likely refers to the apostolic eyewitness circle (cf. 1:1-3). The perfect tetheametha ('we have seen') and apostalken ('has sent') indicate enduring realities rooted in historical events. The title sōtēra tou kosmou ('Savior of the world') appears elsewhere only in John 4:42, spoken by the Samaritans — a universalizing title that extends salvation beyond Israel.
15. The confession 'Jesus is the Son of God' is the christological complement to v. 2's confession of the incarnation. Together they affirm both the divinity and the true humanity of Jesus. The result of confession is mutual indwelling — the same reciprocal abiding that characterizes the Father-Son relationship (John 14:10-11) is extended to believers.
16. The second declaration 'God is love' (ho theos agapē estin) now carries the full weight of the chapter's argument. Knowing and believing God's love are paired as twin aspects of a single response — experiential knowledge and volitional trust. The mutual indwelling formula reaches its fullest expression: to remain in love is to remain in God, and to remain in God is to have God remain in you.

17. Love's completion (teteleiōtai) produces confidence (parrēsian) before the final judgment. The remarkable claim 'as he is, so also are we in this world' (kathōs ekeinos estin kai hēmeis esmen) asserts that believers already share Christ's standing before the Father — not because of their own merit but because they abide in love. This is among the most daring statements in the letter.
18. The Greek exō ballei ('casts out, drives out') is forceful — love does not merely soothe fear but expels it entirely. The word kolasin ('punishment') connects fear to the expectation of divine judgment. Perfect love (teleia agapē) — love that has reached its intended goal — eliminates the dread of condemnation. John does not deny the reality of judgment but declares that those who abide in love need not fear it.
19. The SBLGNT omits the object ('him') found in some manuscripts, making the statement broader: we love — in general, in every direction — because God's prior love enables and motivates all of our loving. The adverb prōtos ('first') establishes the absolute priority of divine initiative. Human love is always derivative and responsive.
20. The argument moves from the lesser to the greater: if you cannot love a visible brother, you certainly cannot love the invisible God. The word pseustēs ('liar') reappears (cf. 1:10, 2:4, 2:22), maintaining John's unsparing moral vocabulary. The test is devastatingly practical — love for God is measured by love for the people around you.
21. The chapter closes by fusing love for God and love for one's brother into a single, indivisible commandment. The two cannot be separated — the vertical and horizontal dimensions of love are one. The source of the command (ap' autou, 'from him') could refer to God or to Christ; the ambiguity may be intentional, since both the Father and the Son have issued this command (cf. John 13:34, 15:12, 17).

5

Summary: *First John 5 brings the letter to its conclusion by weaving together its major themes: faith, love, obedience, and assurance. John declares that faith in Jesus as the Son of God overcomes the world, and identifies three witnesses — the Spirit, the water, and the blood — that testify to the truth of Christ. The chapter reaches its crescendo with the assurance of eternal life for those who believe in the Son. John addresses the topic of sin leading to death versus sin not leading to death, and closes with three affirmations introduced by 'we know,' providing the community with certainties to anchor their faith.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The threefold witness of Spirit, water, and blood (vv. 7-8) is one of the most debated passages in the Johannine writings. The water likely refers to Jesus's baptism, the blood to his crucifixion, and the Spirit to ongoing divine testimony — together affirming that Jesus was the Christ from baptism through death, not merely at one point. The Comma Johanneum (the Trinitarian expansion found in some late manuscripts at vv. 7-8) is not present in the earliest Greek manuscripts and is not part of the SBLGNT text. The distinction between sin 'leading to death' and sin 'not leading to death' (vv. 16-17) has generated extensive discussion throughout church history.*

Translation Friction: *The Comma Johanneum (a Trinitarian gloss reading 'the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one') found in later Latin manuscripts and some late Greek manuscripts is absent from all early Greek manuscripts, the earliest Latin manuscripts, and the earliest church fathers. It is not included in the SBLGNT and is accordingly not included in our rendering. The identity of the 'sin leading to death' (v. 16) remains disputed: possibilities include apostasy, the denial of Christ that characterizes the secessionists, blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, or mortal sin in a later Catholic sense. In context, the most natural referent is the christological denial of the secessionists.*

Connections: *The overcoming-the-world language (vv. 4-5) echoes Jesus's declaration in John 16:33. The witness of water and blood connects to John 19:34 (water and blood flowing from Jesus's pierced side). The assurance of eternal life (v. 13) parallels the purpose statement of John's Gospel (John 20:31). The prayer-confidence passage (vv. 14-15) develops the teaching of 3:21-22. The closing warning about idols (v. 21) echoes the Old Testament prophetic tradition.*

1Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves the one who has been born of him. 2By this we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and carry out his commandments. 3For this is the love of God: that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, 4For whatsoever is brought into the world of God overcometh the age — and this is the victory that overcometh the age, even our faith. 5Who is the one who overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? 6

This is the one who came through water and blood — Jesus Christ. He came not by water only, but by water and by blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸Three things testify on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood — and these three are in agreement. ⁹If we accept the testimony of humans, the testimony of God is greater, because this is the testimony of God: that he has testified concerning his Son. ¹⁰Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony within himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony: that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. ¹³I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. ¹⁴And this is the confidence that we have before him: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. ¹⁶If anyone sees his brother committing a sin that does not lead to death, he should ask, and God will give him life — to those who commit sins not leading to death. There is sin that leads to death; I am not saying he should pray about that. ¹⁷All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death. ¹⁸We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but the one who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. ¹⁹We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. ²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know the one who is true. And we are in the one who is true — in his Son Jesus Christ. This one is the true God and eternal life. ²¹Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The perfect gegennētai ('has been born') indicates that divine birth precedes and enables faith — belief is the evidence, not the cause, of being born of God. The logic of the second clause is familial: to love the parent is necessarily to love the parent's children. This links faith (believing Jesus is the Christ) with love (for God and for fellow believers) as inseparable marks of divine birth.
2. The logic here reverses the direction of 4:20–21. There, love for the brother was the test of love for God. Here, love for God and obedience to his commands verify that our love for fellow believers is genuine rather than merely sentimental. The two tests are mutually reinforcing — neither can stand alone.
3. Love for God is defined not by emotion but by obedience — keeping his commands. The declaration that his commands 'are not burdensome' (bareiai ouk eisin) echoes Jesus's words in Matthew 11:30 ('my yoke is easy and my burden is light') and stands in contrast to the Pharisaic burden-making that Jesus condemned. The divine birth described in vv. 1 and 4 is what makes obedience possible rather than oppressive.
4. The neuter pan to gegennēmenon ('everything/everyone born of God') generalizes the principle. The present nika ('overcomes') describes an ongoing reality, while the aorist nikēsasa ('having overcome') treats the victory as accomplished. Faith is identified as the instrument of victory — not military power, political strategy, or ascetic discipline, but trust in God. The noun nikē ('victory') appears only here in the New Testament.
5. The rhetorical question expects the answer 'no one else.' The present participle nikōn ('overcoming') and pisteuōn ('believing') indicate ongoing, characteristic activity. The confession 'Jesus is the Son of God' is the specific content of world-overcoming faith — it is christological, not vague spiritual optimism.
6. The 'water' most likely refers to Jesus's baptism and the 'blood' to his crucifixion. The emphatic insistence — 'not by water only, but by water and by blood' — suggests the false teachers accepted Jesus's baptism (the beginning of his ministry) but denied the saving significance of his death. The Spirit provides ongoing testimony to the full reality of Christ. Calling the Spirit 'the truth' (hē alētheia) echoes Jesus's description of the Spirit as 'the Spirit of truth' (John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13).
7. The SBLGNT text here is significantly shorter than the KJV. The KJV's expanded reading — 'in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth' — is known as the Comma Johanneum. This expansion is absent from all Greek manuscripts before the fourteenth century, absent from the earliest and best Latin manuscripts, and unknown to the Greek church fathers. It entered the Latin tradition through marginal glosses that were eventually incorporated into the text. It is not part of the original letter. The SBLGNT correctly omits it, and our rendering follows the critical Greek text.
8. The three witnesses — Spirit, water, and blood — converge in a single testimony about Jesus Christ. The phrase eis to hen eisin ('are into the one,' i.e., 'agree as one') indicates not identity but unanimous testimony. Under Jewish law, two or three witnesses established a matter (Deuteronomy 19:15); God provides three converging witnesses to his Son. The Spirit witnesses through ongoing testimony in the community, the water through the baptism that inaugurated Jesus's ministry, and the blood through the death that completed it.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 19:15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

9. The argument moves from the lesser to the greater: if human testimony is accepted in legal proceedings, how much more should divine testimony be trusted? The perfect *memartyrēken* ('he has testified') indicates that God's testimony is a completed and standing witness. The content of God's testimony is explained in v. 11.
10. The believer possesses God's testimony internally — through the Spirit's witness (cf. 3:24, 4:13). The one who refuses to believe does something far worse than mere skepticism: he 'has made God a liar' (*pseustēn pepoiēken auton*). This is the ultimate insult — calling God's testimony about his own Son false. The perfect tenses (*pepoiēken*, *pepisteuken*, *memartyrēken*) emphasize settled states with ongoing consequences.
11. The content of God's testimony is now made explicit: he has given eternal life, and that life is located exclusively in his Son. The aorist *edōken* ('gave') points to the definitive gift accomplished through Christ's death and resurrection. The phrase 'this life is in his Son' means that eternal life is not an independent commodity but is inseparable from the person of Jesus Christ.
12. The statement is perfectly balanced and admits no middle ground. 'Having the Son' means possessing a living relationship with Christ through faith. The addition of 'of God' (*tou theou*) in the second clause adds formal weight to the negative statement. This verse is the letter's sharpest expression of the exclusive connection between Christ and eternal life.
13. This verse parallels the purpose statement of John's Gospel (John 20:31). The Gospel was written 'so that you may believe'; the letter is written 'so that you may know that you have eternal life.' The audience is those who already believe — the letter's purpose is assurance, not evangelism. The SBLGNT does not include the second clause found in some manuscripts ('and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God').
14. The word *parrēsia* ('confidence, boldness') appears for the fourth time in the letter (2:28, 3:21, 4:17). Prayer confidence is not presumption — it is conditioned by alignment with God's will (*kata to thelōma autou*). The verb *akouēi* ('hears') carries the Hebrew sense of hearing that includes responding and acting.
15. The logic is: if God hears (v. 14), and we know he hears (v. 15a), then we already possess what we have asked (v. 15b). The present *echomen* ('we have') expresses a certainty so firm that the future answer is treated as already in hand. This is the prayer of faith — not manipulating God but trusting his character and alignment with his purposes.
16. The distinction between sin 'not leading to death' (*mē pros thanaton*) and sin 'leading to death' (*pros thanaton*) is the most debated passage in the letter. In context, the 'sin leading to death' most likely refers to the deliberate, settled denial of Christ that characterizes the secessionists — a willful apostasy that places one beyond the reach of intercessory prayer. John does not forbid prayer for such sin but declines to command it. Ordinary sin within the community should prompt intercessory prayer, and God will respond with life.
17. John clarifies that all wrongdoing (*adikia*, 'unrighteousness, injustice') is genuinely sin — he is not trivializing non-fatal sin. But the reassurance is clear: not all sin is the irrecoverable apostasy described in v. 16. Most sin within the community can be addressed through confession and intercessory prayer.
18. The first of three 'we know' (*oidamen*) statements that close the letter. The SBLGNT reading *ho gennētheis ek tou theou* ('the one who was born of God') likely refers to Christ, not the believer — Christ protects the one born of God. The aorist passive *gennētheis* (referring to Christ's unique divine birth) is distinguished from the perfect *gegennēmenos* (referring to the believer's new birth). The evil one 'does not touch' (*ouch haptetai*) — the verb implies grasping or laying hold of, suggesting that Satan cannot seize or control the one Christ guards.
19. The second 'we know' statement. The contrast is stark: believers are 'from God' (*ek tou theou*), while the entire world-system 'lies in the evil one' (*en tō ponērō keitai*). The verb *keitai* ('lies') suggests a passive, helpless state — the world lies in the devil's grip without resistance. The dative/locative *en tō ponērō* is better rendered 'in the power of the evil one' than the KJV's abstract 'in wickedness.'
20. The third and climactic 'we know' statement. The verb *hēkei* ('has come') is present tense with perfect force — he has come and is present. The word *dianoian* ('understanding, insight, mind') denotes the faculty of spiritual comprehension that Christ has given. The final sentence — *houtos estin ho alēthinos theos kai zōē aiōnios* ('this one is the true God and eternal life') — is among the strongest christological affirmations in the New Testament. The pronoun *houtos* ('this one') most naturally refers to the nearest antecedent, Jesus Christ, identifying him directly as 'the true God and eternal life.'
21. The letter's abrupt closing has puzzled commentators. The imperative *phylaxate* ('guard, protect, keep') is an aorist suggesting decisive, urgent action. In context, the 'idols' (*eidōlōn*) likely refer not to pagan statues but to the false conceptions of God promoted by the secessionists — any substitute for the 'true God' just identified in v. 20. After a letter devoted to distinguishing truth from falsehood, the final word warns against every counterfeit. The SBLGNT does not include the 'Amen' found in some manuscripts.

2 John

1

Summary: *Second John is the shortest book in the New Testament by word count. Written by 'the elder' to 'the elect lady and her children,' the letter commends the community for walking in truth and love, reaffirms the commandment of mutual love, and issues a sharp warning against deceivers who deny that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. The elder instructs the community not to receive such false teachers into their homes or extend them hospitality, lest they share in their wicked work. The letter closes with the hope of a personal visit.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The letter demonstrates that Johannine theology is not abstract but has immediate practical implications — the community must make concrete decisions about whom to welcome. The identification of the author as 'the elder' (ho presbyteros) rather than 'the apostle' suggests either a deliberate choice of a relational title or a different figure within the Johannine circle. The 'elect lady' (eklektē kyria) is almost certainly a personification of a house church rather than an individual woman, as indicated by the plural 'you' in the body of the letter and the greeting from the 'children of your elect sister' in v. 13.*

Translation Friction: *The instruction not to welcome false teachers (vv. 10-11) raises questions about the limits of hospitality and tolerance. In the ancient world, extending hospitality to traveling teachers was effectively sponsoring their mission. The elder's prohibition is not about personal rudeness but about material and social support for a message that undermines the gospel. The identity of the 'elect lady' — whether a specific woman, a personified church, or a title — cannot be resolved with certainty from the text alone.*

Connections: *The christological test (v. 7) parallels 1 John 4:2-3. The love commandment 'from the beginning' echoes 1 John 2:7-8 and John 13:34. The 'teaching of Christ' (v. 9) connects to the Johannine emphasis on remaining in the received tradition. The elder's hope for a face-to-face visit (v. 12) parallels 3 John 13-14 and reflects the limitations of written communication in the ancient world.*

¹The elder, to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth — and not I alone, but also all who have known the truth — ²Because the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and will be with us for ever. ³Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and in love. ⁴I rejoiced greatly to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we received a commandment from the Father. ⁵And now I ask you, dear lady — not as though I am writing a new commandment to you, but one that we have had from the beginning — that we love one another. ⁶

And this is love: that we walk according to his commandments. This is the commandment, just as you heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it. ⁷For many deceivers have gone out into the world — those who do not confess that Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh. Such a person is the deceiver and the antichrist. ⁸Watch yourselves, so that you do not lose what we have worked for, but may receive a full reward. ⁹Everyone who goes too far and does not remain in the teaching of Christ does not have God. Whoever remains in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, ¹¹Indeed, since he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. ¹²Though I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that our joy may be made complete. ¹³The children of your elect sister greet you.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The self-designation *ho presbyteros* ('the elder') is a title of both age and authority within the early church. The phrase *eklektē kyria* ('elect lady') most likely refers to a local church community personified as a woman (cf. the 'elect sister' in v. 13 and the personification of the church as female in Revelation 12 and 2 Corinthians 11:2). 'In truth' (*en alētheia*) could mean 'truly' (adverbially) or 'in the sphere of truth' — both senses may be intended.
2. Truth is personified as an abiding presence — it dwells in believers and accompanies them eternally. The language parallels Jesus's promise of the Spirit of truth who 'remains with you and will be in you' (John 14:17). The future *estai* ('will be') extends the assurance beyond the present into eternity.
3. The greeting is unusual in its confidence — *estai* ('will be') is declarative rather than optative, stating a certainty rather than expressing a wish. The triad 'grace, mercy, and peace' appears elsewhere only in 1 Timothy 1:2 and 2 Timothy 1:2. The title 'the Son of the Father' (*tou huiou tou patros*) is found only here in the New Testament and emphasizes the unique filial relationship. The closing phrase 'in truth and in love' previews the letter's twin themes.
4. The phrase *ek tōn teknōn sou* ('some of your children') may imply that not all members of the community are walking in truth — a gentle pastoral concern. The verb *peripatountas* ('walking') uses the standard metaphor for daily conduct. The commandment 'from the Father' connects truthful living to divine authority, not human preference.
5. The request (*erōtō*, a polite verb for asking) echoes 1 John 2:7-8: the commandment is both old and foundational. The singular 'you' (*se*) addresses the community as a whole through its personified identity. 'From the beginning' (*ap' archēs*) refers to the original reception of the gospel message.
6. Love is defined as obedient walking (*peripatōmen kata tas entolas autou*). The circular structure — love is keeping commandments, and the commandment is to love — is intentional, not confused. Love and obedience are mutually defining in Johannine theology. The final pronoun 'in it' (*en autē*) could refer to the commandment or to love — the ambiguity reinforces their inseparability.
7. The participle *erchomenon* ('coming') is present tense, which could refer to Christ's past coming (historical present), his ongoing incarnate state, or his future return. The confession affirms the full, continuing reality of the incarnation — Jesus Christ did not merely appear in flesh temporarily but remains the incarnate one. The singular *houtos* ('this one') individualizes the type: every such deceiver embodies the spirit of the antichrist. This closely parallels 1 John 4:2-3.
8. The imperative *blepete* ('watch, look out, beware') is urgent. The SBLGNT mixes persons — 'you' do not lose what 'we' worked for — suggesting that the elder's apostolic labor is at stake in the community's faithfulness. The 'full reward' (*misthon plērē*) implies that partial loss is possible through compromise with false teaching, even if ultimate salvation is not in view.
9. The verb *proagōn* ('going ahead, going beyond, advancing') is used here negatively — the false teachers see themselves as progressive, going beyond basic Christianity, but the elder judges their innovation as departure. 'The teaching of Christ' (*tē didachē tou Christou*) could mean the teaching about Christ or the teaching that comes from Christ; both are likely intended. The consequence of departing is devastating: one 'does not have God' — the loss of relationship, not merely of correct doctrine.
10. In the ancient world, traveling teachers depended on private hospitality. Receiving someone into one's home (*eis oikian*) was effectively sponsoring their ministry. The prohibition against greeting (*chairein*, literally 'rejoice,' the standard greeting) is not about rudeness but about withholding the social endorsement that would legitimize the false teacher's mission. The 'house' may refer to a private home or to the house church that met there.
11. The verb *koinōnei* ('shares in, participates in, has fellowship with') is strong — extending hospitality to a false teacher makes one a partner in the deception. The principle is that material and social support for false teaching constitutes complicity. This verse has sometimes been misapplied to justify general inhospitality; its original scope is specific to those who deny the incarnation and actively propagate a counter-gospel.
12. The Greek *stoma pros stoma* ('mouth to mouth') is the literal expression behind 'face to face.' The preference for personal presence over written communication reflects both the limitations of ancient letter-writing and the Johannine conviction that personal encounter is superior to mediated communication (cf. John 1:14 — the Word became flesh, not text). The phrase 'our joy may be made complete' (*hē chara hēmōn peplērōmenē ē*) echoes John 15:11 and 16:24.

- 13.** The 'elect sister' (tēs adelphēs sou tēs eklektēs) is most likely another church community — the one from which the elder writes. The parallel language of 'elect lady' (v. 1) and 'elect sister' (v. 13) suggests two sister congregations within the Johannine network. The 'children' are the members of that community. The SBLGNT does not include the 'Amen' found in some manuscripts.

3 John

1

Summary: *Third John is a personal letter from 'the elder' to a beloved individual named Gaius. The elder commends Gaius for his faithfulness and especially for his hospitality to traveling missionaries, even those who were strangers to him (vv. 1-8). He then sharply condemns Diotrephes, a church leader who refuses to welcome the elder's representatives, speaks malicious nonsense against the elder, and excommunicates those who do offer hospitality (vv. 9-10). Demetrius is briefly commended as a trustworthy figure (vv. 11-12). The letter closes with a hope for a personal visit.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Third John provides a rare window into the internal power struggles of the early church. Diotrephes represents a local leader who has effectively seized control of a congregation, rejecting apostolic authority and punishing those who disagree. This is not a doctrinal dispute (unlike 2 John's concern about false teaching) but a conflict over authority and hospitality. The letter reveals that the apostolic church was not a utopian community but a human institution with real power dynamics. The contrast between Gaius (who gives) and Diotrephes (who controls) is the letter's central moral lesson.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of 'the elder' remains debated — he may be the apostle John, a distinct figure called John the Elder (mentioned by Papias), or another Johannine community leader. The nature of Diotrephes' offense is also debated: some see him as a proto-heretic, others as an ambitious leader who simply resisted outside authority. The text itself focuses on his behavior (refusing hospitality, slandering the elder, excommunicating supporters) rather than his theology. The letter's brevity makes many questions unanswerable from the text alone.*

Connections: *The hospitality theme connects to Romans 12:13, Hebrews 13:2, and the instructions in 2 John 10-11 (though 2 John restricts hospitality to false teachers, 3 John commends it for true ones). The 'walking in truth' language (vv. 3-4) parallels 2 John 4. The elder's self-designation matches 2 John 1. Diotrephes' love of 'being first' (philoprōteuōn) contrasts with Jesus's teaching that the first shall be last (Mark 10:43-44). Demetrius's commendation 'by the truth itself' (v. 12) echoes the Johannine emphasis on truth as a living reality.*

¹The elder, to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. ²Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. ³For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. ⁴I have no deeper joy than knowing that my children live according to the truth. ⁵Belove

d, it is a faithful thing you do in all your efforts for the brothers, especially those who are strangers. ⁶They have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on their journey in a manner worthy of God, ⁷Indeed, because that for his name's sake they traveled forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. ⁸Therefore we ought to support people like these, so that we may be fellow workers for the truth. ⁹I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. ¹⁰So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking malicious nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers himself, and he also stops those who want to and expels them from the church. ¹¹Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God. ¹²Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone, and from the truth itself. We also add our testimony, and you know that our testimony is true. ¹³I had much to write to you, but I would rather not write with ink and pen. ¹⁴I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face. ¹⁵Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends, each by name.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The self-designation *ho presbyteros* ('the elder') matches 2 John 1, linking the two letters to the same author. Gaius is called *agapētō* ('beloved') — a term of deep personal affection. The phrase *en alētheia* ('in truth') can mean 'truly, genuinely' or 'within the sphere of truth.' The name Gaius was extremely common in the Roman world; this is not necessarily the same Gaius mentioned in Acts 19:29, 20:4, Romans 16:23, or 1 Corinthians 1:14.
2. The prayer-wish follows standard Hellenistic letter conventions but is transformed by genuine pastoral concern. The verb *euodousthai* ('to prosper, to have a good journey, to go well') and *hygiainein* ('to be healthy') cover material and physical welfare. The comparison *kathōs euodoutai sou hē psychē* ('as your soul prospers') is a compliment — Gaius's spiritual health is the standard by which the elder measures his wish for physical health.
3. Traveling brothers (*adelphōn*) have brought reports to the elder about Gaius. The verb *martyrountōn* ('testifying, bearing witness') uses courtroom language for a solemn attestation. 'Your truth' (*sou tē alētheia*) means the truth that characterizes Gaius — his truthful way of living. The present tense *peripateis* ('you are walking') indicates an ongoing pattern of conduct, not a single event.
4. The superlative *meizōteran* ('greater') is intensified — literally 'more greater,' a double comparative found in colloquial Greek. The phrase *ta ema tekna* ('my children') reveals the elder's pastoral relationship to Gaius and others in his care. The greatest joy for a spiritual father is not institutional success but the faithful conduct of those he has nurtured.
5. The adjective *piston* ('faithful, trustworthy, reliable') characterizes Gaius's actions as consistent with his faith. The phrase *kai touto xenous* ('and this, strangers') adds emphasis — Gaius's hospitality extends not only to known believers but to traveling missionaries who are unknown to him personally. In the ancient world, hospitality to strangers was both a social virtue and a practical necessity, since public inns were often dangerous or disreputable.
6. The missionaries have publicly (*enōpion ekklēσίας*, 'before the church/assembly') testified to Gaius's love. The verb *propempsas* ('having sent forward, having provided for their journey') was a technical term for equipping travelers with provisions, money, and companions for the next stage of their journey (cf. Acts 15:3, Romans 15:24, 1 Corinthians 16:6). The standard is *axiōs tou theou* ('worthy of God') — the hospitality should reflect the God whom both host and guest serve.
7. The missionaries went out *hyper tou onomatos* ('for the sake of the Name') — 'the Name' without further specification is Jesus Christ. This absolute use of 'the Name' reflects early Christian reverence (cf. Acts 5:41). They accept nothing from *ethnikōn* ('Gentiles, pagans, non-believers'), maintaining the principle that the gospel mission should be funded by believers, not by those who do not share the faith. This makes Christian hospitality essential to the church's mission.
8. The verb *hypolambanein* ('receive, support, take up') goes beyond mere welcome to active support. The theological motivation is striking: by supporting missionaries, believers become *synergoi* ('fellow workers, co-laborers') *tē alētheia* ('for the truth'). Hospitality is not charity but partnership in mission. Those who stay home and support those who go are equally engaged in the work of the gospel.
9. The transition is abrupt: a letter was sent to the church, but Diotrephes blocked it. The participle *philoprōteuōn* ('loving to be first, desiring preeminence') is a rare compound word found only here in the New Testament. It describes not a formal office but a personality — someone who craves control. The verb *epidechetai* ('receive, welcome, acknowledge') means Diotrephes refuses to accept the elder's authority or his representatives. The 'something' (*ti*) written to the church may be a lost letter, 2 John, or a general communication.
10. The elder lists Diotrephes' offenses in escalating severity: (1) *phylarōn hēmas* ('babbling malicious nonsense against us') — spreading slander with poisonous words; (2) *oute autos epidechetai tous adelphous* ('he himself does not receive the brothers') — personally refusing hospitality to traveling missionaries; (3) *tous boulomenous kōlyei* ('he prevents those who wish to') — blocking others from showing hospitality; (4) *ek tēs ekklēσίας ekballei* ('he throws them out of the church') — excommunicating those who defy his control. This is a portrait of authoritarian leadership: monopolizing communication, controlling access, and punishing dissent.
11. The imperative *mē mimou* ('do not imitate') uses the verb from which 'mimic' derives. The principle is stated in absolute Johannine terms: doing good (*agathopoiōn*) is evidence of being *ek tou theou* ('from God'), while doing evil (*kakopoiōn*) proves one *ouch heōraken ton theon* ('has not seen God'). This echoes 1 John 3:6 and 4:20. In context, the implicit contrast is between Gaius (good) and Diotrephes (evil), with Gaius urged to continue

his pattern despite Diotrephes' opposition.

12. Demetrius receives a threefold commendation: (1) *hypo pantōn* ('from everyone') — universal reputation; (2) *hypo autēs tēs alētheias* ('from the truth itself') — his life conforms to truth as an objective standard, so that truth itself bears witness to him; (3) *hēmeis de martyroumen* ('we also testify') — the elder's personal endorsement. The phrase 'you know that our testimony is true' (*oidate hoti hē martyria hēmōn alēthēs estin*) echoes John 21:24. Demetrius may be the bearer of this letter, which would explain why he needs an introduction and recommendation to Gaius.
13. The closing mirrors 2 John 12 almost exactly. The elder has more to say but prefers personal communication to written correspondence. The mention of *melanos* ('ink,' literally 'black') and *kalamou* ('reed pen') are the standard writing implements of the ancient world. The preference for face-to-face communication over written media is a recurring theme in the Johannine letters.
14. The phrase *stoma pros stoma* ('mouth to mouth') is more literally physical than the English idiom 'face to face.' It emphasizes the directness and intimacy of personal conversation over the limitations of written communication. The adverb *eutheōs* ('immediately, soon') conveys urgency — the situation with Diotrephes likely requires prompt personal intervention.
15. The farewell *eirēnē soi* ('peace to you') is the standard Semitic greeting-and-farewell (Hebrew *shalom lekha*), here placed at the close. The designation *hoi philoi* ('the friends') for fellow believers is distinctive — it appears as a group designation only here in the New Testament and echoes Jesus's words in John 15:14-15 ('I have called you friends'). The instruction *kat' onoma* ('by name, individually') insists on personal, not generic, greetings — each person matters individually. The letter that began with one beloved name (Gaius) ends with an insistence on naming each friend.

Jude

Summary: *Jude writes to urge believers to 'contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints' (v. 3) because certain people have infiltrated the community who pervert grace into licentiousness and deny Jesus Christ as Lord. Jude marshals a barrage of Old Testament and Second Temple examples of divine judgment — the exodus generation, the fallen angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, Cain, Balaam, Korah — to demonstrate that such false teachers face certain destruction. The letter reaches its rhetorical peak in verses 14-15 with a direct quotation from 1 Enoch prophesying judgment on the ungodly. After warning that the apostles predicted such scoffers would come, Jude closes with practical instructions for the community and one of the most magnificent doxologies in all of Scripture (vv. 24-25).*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Jude is unique in the New Testament for its explicit citation of 1 Enoch (vv. 14-15), a Jewish apocalyptic text that was widely read but never accepted into the Hebrew canon. The citation is introduced with the formula 'Enoch prophesied' (eprophēteusen), treating the text as genuine prophecy without necessarily endorsing the entire book as canonical. Verse 9 alludes to the Assumption of Moses (or a related tradition) regarding a dispute between the archangel Michael and the devil over the body of Moses — a tradition not found in the Old Testament. These references demonstrate that early Christians drew on a wider literary and theological tradition than the Hebrew Bible alone. The doxology (vv. 24-25) is among the most liturgically influential passages in Christianity.*

Translation Friction: *Jude's use of non-canonical sources raises hermeneutical questions. The 1 Enoch citation (vv. 14-15) is presented as prophecy, and the Michael-and-Moses tradition (v. 9) is presented as historical event. Neither claim requires that 1 Enoch or the Assumption of Moses be treated as canonical Scripture; ancient authors regularly cited non-canonical sources to make theological points (cf. Paul quoting pagan poets in Acts 17:28 and Titus 1:12). We render the Greek as given and note the sources without adjudicating their canonical status. The relationship between Jude and 2 Peter 2 (which shares much of Jude's content but omits the non-canonical references) remains debated — most scholars see Jude as the earlier text.*

Connections: *The faith 'once for all delivered' (v. 3) anticipates the concept in Hebrews 9:26-28. The fallen angels (v. 6) connect to Genesis 6:1-4 and the Enochic tradition. Sodom and Gomorrah (v. 7) echo Genesis 19. Cain, Balaam, and Korah (v. 11) draw on Genesis 4, Numbers 22-24, and Numbers 16 respectively. The 1 Enoch citation (vv. 14-15) comes from 1 Enoch 1:9. The Michael-Moses dispute (v. 9) is attributed to the Assumption of Moses. The doxology (vv. 24-25) has influenced Christian worship from the patristic period to the present.*

¹Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ: ²May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. ³Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. ⁴For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. ⁵Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe, ⁶And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under deep darkness for the judgment of the great day — ⁷Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to sexual immorality, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. ⁸Yet in like manner these people also, relying on their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme the glorious ones. ⁹But when the archangel Michael, contending with the devil, was disputing about the body of Moses, he did not presume to pronounce a blasphemous judgment, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.' ¹⁰But these people blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively. ¹¹Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for profit to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion. ¹²These are hidden reefs at your love feasts, as they feast with you without fear, shepherds feeding only themselves; waterless clouds swept along by winds; fruitless trees in late autumn, twice dead, uprooted; ¹³They are wild waves of the sea, churning up the foam of their own disgrace. They are wandering stars, for whom the deepest darkness has been reserved forever. ¹⁴It was also about these that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, 'Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, ¹⁵To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly in the midst of them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken opposed to him. ¹⁶These are grumblers, malcontents, following their own sinful desires; their mouth speaks boastful words, and they show favoritism to gain advantage. ¹⁷But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁸They said to you, 'In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.' ¹⁹It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. ²⁰But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹Keep yourselves safe in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. ²²And have mercy on those who doubt; ²³Others rescue with be afraid, pulling them out of the flames. Hating not even the garment spotted by the physical nature. ²⁴Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, ²⁵Indeed, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and authority, both now and ever. Amen.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Jude identifies himself as *doulos* ('servant, slave') of Jesus Christ and *adelphos* ('brother') of James — almost certainly James the brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:13, Galatians 1:19). Like James, he does not claim the title 'brother of the Lord,' instead defining his identity through service. The recipients are described with three perfect participles: *ēgapēmenois* ('having been loved,' permanently loved), *tetērēmenois* ('having been kept,' preserved and guarded), and *klētois* ('called'). The SBLGNT reads 'beloved in God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ,' though some manuscripts read 'sanctified' (*hēgiasmenois*) instead of 'beloved.'
2. The greeting triad — *eleos* ('mercy'), *eirēnē* ('peace'), *agapē* ('love') — is unique to Jude. Most epistles use 'grace and peace' (Paul) or 'grace, mercy, and peace' (Pastorals). Jude substitutes 'love' for 'grace,' anticipating the letter's concern that grace is being perverted (v. 4). The optative *plēthyntheīē* ('may it be multiplied') is a prayer-wish for abundance, not merely presence.
3. Jude had planned a general letter about salvation but was compelled by circumstances to write an urgent warning instead. The verb *epagōnizesthai* ('contend, fight for, struggle on behalf of') is an athletic or military term — the faith requires active defense, not passive reception. The phrase *tē hapax paradotheisē tois hagiois pistei* ('the faith once for all delivered to the saints') treats the Christian faith as a fixed deposit (*paradosis*) entrusted to the community, not as something still being developed. The adverb *hapax* ('once for all') emphasizes finality and completeness.
4. The verb *pareisedysan* ('crept in secretly, slipped in by the side door') describes infiltration, not open attack. These people are *hoi palai proگرامmenoi* ('written about long ago,' 'designated beforehand') for judgment — their condemnation was anticipated in Scripture and tradition. Their two-fold offense: (1) *metatithentes* ('changing, perverting, transforming') God's grace into *aselgeian* ('sensuality, licentiousness, moral abandon'); (2) *arnoumenoi* ('denying') Jesus Christ as *despotēn kai kyrion* ('Master and Lord'). Grace that permits immorality is not grace but its perversion.

5. The first of three Old Testament examples of judgment. Some manuscripts read 'the Lord' (kyrios), others read 'Jesus' (Iēsous) — the SBLGNT follows manuscripts reading kyrios, but the variant 'Jesus' (found in significant early manuscripts) would mean Jude identifies the pre-incarnate Christ with the God who led the exodus. The point is stark: being saved once does not guarantee final salvation — the exodus generation was delivered from Egypt but destroyed in the wilderness for unbelief (Numbers 14:26-35, 1 Corinthians 10:1-12).
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 14:26-35 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The second example: fallen angels who abandoned their archēn ('position, domain, sphere of authority') and their oikētērion ('dwelling, habitation'). This draws on the tradition of Genesis 6:1-4 as elaborated in 1 Enoch 6-16, where angelic 'Watchers' descended to earth, took human wives, and were imprisoned as punishment. They are kept (tetērēken, a perfect tense indicating ongoing state) in desmois aidiois ('eternal bonds/chains') hypozophon ('under deep darkness/gloom') awaiting final judgment. Even supernatural beings face consequences for transgressing their appointed boundaries.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 6:1-4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The third example: Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). The phrase ekporneusasai ('having given themselves over to sexual immorality') and apelhousai opisō sarkos heteras ('having gone after other/different flesh') describe the sexual transgression. The phrase sarkos heteras ('different flesh') connects the sin of Sodom to the angels of verse 6 — both transgressed the boundaries of their nature. The cities prokeintai ('are displayed, lie before us') as deigma ('example, sample, specimen') of divine judgment — their destruction is a visible preview of eschatological punishment.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 19. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Jude now applies the three examples to the present infiltrators. The participle enypniazomenoi ('dreaming') suggests they claim visionary authority for their behavior. Their threefold offense mirrors the three examples: (1) sarka miainousin ('they defile the flesh') — like Sodom; (2) kyriotēta athetousin ('they reject lordship/authority') — like the exodus rebels; (3) doxas blasphēmousin ('they blaspheme the glorious ones') — like the fallen angels. The 'glorious ones' (doxas) most likely refers to angelic beings, whether good or evil.
9. This episode is not found in the Old Testament. Ancient sources attribute it to the Assumption of Moses (also called the Testament of Moses), a Jewish pseudepigraphal work largely lost. The argument from the lesser to the greater is: if Michael the archangel — the highest of angels — would not blaspheme even the devil but deferred judgment to the Lord, how much less should mere humans blaspheme angelic beings. The phrase epitimēsai soi kyrios ('May the Lord rebuke you') echoes Zechariah 3:2, where the Lord rebukes Satan in a heavenly courtroom scene. Jude uses a non-canonical source to make a canonical point about restraint and deference to divine authority.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 34:5-6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Zechariah 3:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The contrast is between two kinds of knowledge: what they do not understand (ouk oidasin) they blaspheme, and what they know instinctively (physikōs epistantai) — like animals driven by appetite — destroys them. The comparison to aloga zōa ('unreasoning animals, creatures without logos') is severe: they have rejected the capacity for rational moral thought and now operate purely on instinct. The verb phtheirontai ('are being destroyed, are corrupted') is in the present tense — their destruction is already underway.
11. Three more Old Testament examples in rapid succession, each introduced with a different verb: (1) tē hodō tou Kain eporeuthēsan ('they went in the way of Cain') — Cain's 'way' represents hatred and murder of a brother (Genesis 4); (2) tē planē tou Balaam misthou exechythēsan ('they poured themselves out into the error of Balaam for hire') — Balaam represents the corruption of prophetic office for money (Numbers 22-24, 31:16); (3) tē antilogia tou Kore apōlonto ('they perished in the rebellion of Korah') — Korah's rebellion represents challenging divinely established authority (Numbers 16). The aorist tenses treat their destruction as already accomplished — prophetically certain.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 22-24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. A torrent of metaphors describes the false teachers: (1) spilades ('hidden reefs' or 'blemishes') at the agapais ('love feasts,' communal meals of the early church) — they are a concealed danger; (2) they feast aphobōs ('fearlessly, without reverence') and poimainontes heautous ('shepherd only themselves') — an echo of Ezekiel 34:2's condemnation of selfish shepherds; (3) nephelai anydroi ('waterless clouds') — they promise rain but deliver nothing; (4) dendra phthinopōrina akarpa ('fruitless late-autumn trees') — past the season for bearing fruit; (5) dis apothanonta ('twice dead') — dead by nature and dead by judgment; (6) ekrizōthenta ('uprooted') — permanently removed.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 34:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

13. The metaphor cascade continues: (5) *kymata agria thalassēs* ('wild waves of the sea') that foam up their own shame — their sin is not hidden but publicly visible like sea foam; (6) *asteres planētai* ('wandering stars,' the root of English 'planet') — in ancient cosmology, wandering stars were irregular and unreliable, unlike the fixed stars that guided navigation. For these wanderers, *ho zophos tou skotous* ('the gloom of darkness') is reserved *eis aiōna* ('forever'). The six metaphors move from earth (reefs, trees) to sea (waves) to sky (stars), encompassing the entire cosmos in condemnation.
14. Jude introduces a direct quotation from 1 Enoch 1:9, a Jewish apocalyptic text dating to the third-second century BC. Enoch is identified as *hebdomos apo Adam* ('seventh from Adam'), following the genealogy of Genesis 5. The formula *prophēteusen* ('prophesied') treats the Enochic text as genuine prophecy — a notable use of a non-canonical source with prophetic authority. This does not necessarily mean Jude regarded the entirety of 1 Enoch as Scripture, but he treats this particular prophecy as divinely inspired truth. The Lord's coming *en hagiis myriasis* ('with his holy myriads/ten thousands') depicts a theophany accompanied by an angelic army.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The quotation from 1 Enoch 1:9 is characterized by the relentless repetition of 'all' (*antas/pantōn/panta*, four occurrences) and the cognate forms of 'ungodly' (*asebeias/ēsebēsan/asebeis*, four occurrences). The judgment is universal (*kata pantōn*, 'against all') and the ungodliness is both in action (*ergōn asebeias*, 'works of ungodliness') and in speech (*sklērōn*, 'harsh things spoken against him'). The fourfold repetition of *aseb-* roots hammers the single point: ungodliness in every form will face divine reckoning.
16. Five characteristics: (1) *goggystai* ('grumblers, murmurers') — echoing Israel's grumbling in the wilderness; (2) *mempsimolroi* ('malcontents, fault-finders,' literally 'blamers of their lot/fate'); (3) following their own desires; (4) their mouth speaks *hyperogka* ('swollen, pompous, arrogant things'); (5) *thaumazontes prosōpa* ('showing admiration for faces') *ōpheleias charin* ('for the sake of benefit') — flattering people for personal gain. The portrait is of people who simultaneously complain about everything and flatter those who can benefit them.
17. The tone shifts from denunciation to direct pastoral address. The imperative *mnēsthēte* ('remember') calls the community to anchor themselves in apostolic teaching. The phrase *tōn rhēmatōn tōn proeirēmēnōn* ('the words previously spoken') suggests the apostolic era is viewed as a completed period — the apostles spoke 'beforehand' (*proeirēmēnōn*), and their words now function as authoritative prophecy. This may suggest a date after the first generation of apostles.
18. The apostolic prediction is summarized: *ep' eschatou tou chronou* ('in the last time/period') there will be *empaiktai* ('mockers, scoffers') who follow their own desires. Similar predictions appear in Acts 20:29-30, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, and 2 Peter 3:3. The present situation is not a surprise but the fulfillment of what the apostles foresaw. The community should be prepared, not panicked.
19. Three final descriptions: (1) *apodiorizontes* ('those who make boundaries, those who cause divisions') — they fragment the community they have infiltrated; (2) *psychikoi* ('natural, worldly, soul-ish') — the same word James uses (3:15) for wisdom that is 'earthly, unspiritual'; (3) *pneuma mē echontes* ('not having the Spirit') — the definitive diagnosis. Despite any claims to spiritual insight, they lack the Holy Spirit entirely. The contrast between *psychikos* (natural) and *pneumatikos* (spiritual) echoes 1 Corinthians 2:14-15.
20. The contrast is emphatic: *hymeis de* ('but you'). While the false teachers destroy, the community is to build. The participle *epoikodomountes* ('building up') uses construction imagery — the faith is the foundation, and believers are the structure being raised upon it. The faith is called *hagiōtatē* ('most holy'), the superlative reinforcing the sacredness of the deposit they have received. Prayer in the Holy Spirit (*en pneumatī hagiō*) distinguishes them from the false teachers who are *pneuma mē echontes* ('without the Spirit,' v. 19).
21. The main imperative in this section: *tērēstate heautous en agapē theou* ('keep yourselves in the love of God'). The verb *tērēstate* ('keep, guard, maintain') echoes verse 1 where believers are *tetērēmenoi* ('kept') by God — there is a divine keeping and a human keeping that work together. The participle *prosdēchomenoi* ('waiting for, expecting') turns their gaze to the future: the mercy (*eleos*) of Jesus Christ at his return, which leads *eis zōēn aiōnion* ('to eternal life'). The letter's emotional arc moves from urgent warning to confident hope.
22. The textual tradition for verses 22-23 is notoriously unstable, with manuscripts preserving two-fold, three-fold, and other arrangements. The SBLGNT follows a reading that distinguishes two or three groups. The first group: *eleate diakrinomenous* ('have mercy on those who are doubting/wavering'). The participle *diakrinomenous* can mean 'doubting' or 'disputing' — these are people caught between faithfulness and the false teachers' influence. They need compassion, not condemnation.
23. The remaining groups require more urgent action: (1) some must be *sōzete ek pyros harpazontes* ('saved by snatching them from the fire') — a rescue operation from imminent destruction, echoing Zechariah 3:2 and Amos 4:11; (2) others require mercy with *phobō* ('fear, caution'), while *misountes* ('hating') even the *chitōna* ('inner garment, tunic') that has been *espilōmenon* ('stained, spotted') by *sarx* ('flesh'). The image is of a garment so contaminated by sin that even it must be avoided — the rescuer must be careful not to be contaminated by the very person being rescued. The pastoral wisdom is nuanced: different situations require different approaches.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 3:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Amos 4:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. The great doxology begins. After a letter focused on danger, Jude turns to the One who can *phylaxai* ('guard, protect, keep safe') believers *aptaistous* ('without stumbling') — the very security the false teachers threaten. The verb *stēsai* ('to stand, to present') before *katenōpion tēs doxēs autou*

('before the presence of his glory') is an eschatological courtroom image: God will present believers amōmous ('blameless, without blemish') — the same word used for sacrificial animals without defect (cf. Ephesians 1:4, 5:27). The final note is en agalliasei ('with exultation, great joy') — the presentation is not somber but jubilant.

- 25.** The doxology ascribes four attributes to God: doxa ('glory'), megalōsynē ('majesty, greatness'), kratos ('might, dominion, sovereign power'), and exousia ('authority, right to rule'). The temporal scope is comprehensive: pro pantos tou aiōnos ('before all the ages' — eternity past), kai nyn ('and now' — the present), kai eis pantas tous aiōnas ('and unto all the ages' — eternity future). God's sovereignty spans the totality of time. The mediation dia Iēsou Christou tou kyriou hēmōn ('through Jesus Christ our Lord') ensures that the doxology is christologically grounded. The final amēn seals the prayer and the letter. This doxology has been used in Christian worship from the earliest centuries and remains one of the most recognized benedictions in the church.

Revelation

Summary: *Revelation 1 opens with a prologue identifying the work as a revelation from God, given through Jesus Christ to his servant John. A blessing is pronounced on those who read and heed its words. John then addresses seven churches in the province of Asia with a greeting of grace and peace. He describes being 'in the Spirit' on the Lord's day on the island of Patmos, where he hears a loud voice commanding him to write what he sees and send it to the seven churches. Turning, he sees a vision of the glorified Christ standing among seven golden lampstands — a figure with white hair, blazing eyes, feet like burnished bronze, and a voice like rushing waters, holding seven stars in his right hand with a sharp two-edged sword coming from his mouth. John falls at his feet as though dead, but Christ lays his right hand on him and identifies himself as 'the first and the last, the living one' who holds the keys of death and Hades.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The opening vision draws heavily on Daniel 7:9-14 (the Ancient of Days and Son of Man), Daniel 10:5-6 (the angelic figure), and Ezekiel 1:24-28 (the throne vision). The description of Christ merges attributes that Daniel assigns to both the Ancient of Days (white hair) and the Son of Man (glory, dominion), making a striking theological claim about Christ's identity. The seven lampstands echo Zechariah 4:2. The 'sharp two-edged sword' from his mouth alludes to Isaiah 49:2 and anticipates the word-as-weapon imagery throughout Revelation. The self-designation 'the Alpha and the Omega' uses the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet to express totality and sovereignty.*

Translation Friction: *The Greek apokalypsis ('unveiling, revelation') gives the book its name and its genre designation. We render the apocalyptic imagery as written without attempting to decode symbols into modern equivalents — the text presents visions, and we translate them as visions. The phrase en pneumati ('in the Spirit') in verse 10 could mean 'in a state of spiritual ecstasy' or 'by the agency of the Spirit'; we preserve the ambiguity. Some textual variants exist in the doxology of verses 5-6; we follow the SBLGNT reading.*

Connections: *Daniel 7:9-14 (Son of Man, Ancient of Days), Daniel 10:5-6 (angelic figure description), Ezekiel 1:24-28 (throne theophany), Zechariah 4:2 (seven lampstands), Isaiah 49:2 (sword from mouth), Isaiah 44:6 (first and last). The greeting formula in verses 4-5 echoes the covenant name of God from Exodus 3:14. The 'seven spirits before his throne' may allude to Isaiah 11:2 or Zechariah 4:2-10.*

¹The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, ²Who bare record of the message of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he noticed. ³Blessed is the one who reads aloud, and blessed are those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep what is written in it, for the time is near. ⁴John, to the seven churches in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, ⁵From Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the initially brought into the world of the no longer alive, and the prince of the kings of the age. To him that loved us, and washed us from our wrongdoings in his own blood,, ⁶Has fashioned us kings and priests to God and his Parent. To him be splendor and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. ⁷Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over him. Yes, amen. ⁸"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." ⁹I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation, the kingdom, and the endurance that are in Jesus — I was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last — and, What you seest, write in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia. To Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea. ¹²I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³Among the lampstands stood someone who looked like the Son of Man. He was dressed in a long robe and wore a golden sash across his chest. ¹⁴His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow, and his eyes were like a flame of fire. ¹⁵His feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining at full strength. ¹⁷When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me and said, "Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, ¹⁸Indeed, I am he that liveth, and was dead. And, take notice, I am alive for evermore, Amen. And have the keys of hell and of death. ¹⁹Therefore write what you have seen, what is now, and what will take place after this. ²⁰As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek apokalypsis means 'unveiling' or 'disclosure' — the removal of a covering to reveal what was hidden. This is not merely a prediction of the future but a disclosure of heavenly realities. The phrase *en tachei* ('in quickness/soon') can mean 'soon' or 'swiftly when it begins'; the temporal ambiguity is inherent in the Greek. The verb *esēmanen* ('made known, signified') shares a root with *sēmeion* ('sign'), suggesting that the revelation communicates through signs and symbols rather than plain speech.
2. The Greek *emartyrēsen* ('testified, bore witness') and *martyrian* ('testimony') share the root *martyr-*, connecting witness with suffering — a theme that pervades Revelation. John's role is as a witness who reports what he has seen, not as an interpreter who explains it.
3. This is the first of seven beatitudes in Revelation (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14). The singular 'the one who reads aloud' (*ho anaginōskōn*) and the plural 'those who hear' (*hoi akouontes*) reflect the practice of public reading in early Christian assemblies — one reader, many listeners. The Greek *kairos* ('time, appointed season') differs from *chronos* ('clock time'); *kairos* suggests a decisive moment, not merely a date.
4. The phrase *ho ōn kai ho ēn kai ho erchomenos* ('the one who is and who was and who is coming') is a deliberate expansion of the divine name revealed in Exodus 3:14. The Greek grammar is intentionally broken — *apo* ('from') should govern a genitive, but *ho ōn* is nominative, as if the divine name resists grammatical subordination. The 'seven spirits' may refer to the Holy Spirit in sevenfold fullness (cf. Isaiah 11:2) or to seven angelic beings before God's throne (cf. Zechariah 4:2-10); we render the phrase as written without deciding between interpretations.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 3:14. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 11:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Zechariah 4:2-10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Three titles are given to Christ: 'faithful witness' (*ho martys ho pistos*), 'firstborn from the dead' (*ho prōtotokos tōn nekron*), and 'ruler of the kings of the earth' (*ho archōn tōn basileōn tēs gēs*). The third title echoes Psalm 89:27, where God promises David's heir will be 'the highest of the kings of the earth.' The SBLGNT reads *lysanti* ('freed, released') rather than the variant *lousanti* ('washed'), which changes the metaphor from washing to liberation. We follow the SBLGNT. The present participle *agapōnti* ('who loves') indicates ongoing love, while the aorist *lysanti* ('freed') points to a completed act.

5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 89:27 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The Greek *basileian*, *hierais* ('a kingdom, priests') echoes Exodus 19:6, where Israel is called 'a kingdom of priests.' The singular 'kingdom' (not 'kings') with the apposition 'priests' is the SBLGNT reading — the community collectively forms a kingdom, and each member serves as a priest. This democratization of priestly identity is a major theme in Revelation. The doxology *eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn* ('into the ages of the ages') is the strongest Greek expression of endlessness.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 19:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. This verse fuses two Old Testament passages: Daniel 7:13 ('one like a son of man coming with the clouds') and Zechariah 12:10 ('they will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn'). The combination identifies the pierced one of Zechariah with Daniel's Son of Man — a connection with profound christological implications. The verb *exekentēsan* ('pierced') is the same word the Fourth Gospel applies to Christ's crucifixion (John 19:37). The closing *nai, amēn* pairs a Greek affirmation with a Hebrew one, bridging both linguistic worlds.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zechariah 12:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, expressing totality — God encompasses all reality from beginning to end. This echoes Isaiah 44:6 ('I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God'). The title *pantokratōr* ('Almighty, ruler of all') translates the Hebrew *Shaddai* and occurs nine times in Revelation — more than in the rest of the New Testament combined. The threefold temporal description repeats from verse 4.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 44:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. John identifies himself not with a title of authority but as 'brother' and 'partner' (*synkoinōnos*, 'co-sharer'). Three things are shared: tribulation (*thlipsis*), kingdom (*basileia*), and endurance (*hypomonē*) — all bound together 'in Jesus.' Patmos is a small island in the Aegean Sea, traditionally understood as a place of exile. The phrase *dia ton logon* ('because of the word') could mean John was exiled for preaching or that he went to Patmos to receive the word; the traditional reading of exile is more likely given the context of tribulation.
10. The phrase *en pneumati* ('in the Spirit') describes a state of prophetic vision or ecstasy — John is transported beyond ordinary perception. This phrase recurs at key structural points in Revelation (4:2; 17:3; 21:10). The 'Lord's day' (*tē kyriakē hēmera*) is the earliest extra-biblical reference to Sunday as a distinctive day for Christians. The trumpet voice echoes Exodus 19:16, where a trumpet blast accompanies God's appearance at Sinai.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 19:16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The SBLGNT does not include 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last' in this verse, which appears in some later manuscripts (reflected in the KJV). We follow the critical text. The Greek *biblion* ('scroll, book') refers to a papyrus scroll, not a codex. The seven churches are listed in geographical order, forming a rough circuit through the province of Asia (western modern Turkey), beginning with Ephesus, the largest city and nearest to Patmos.
12. The synesthetic phrase 'see the voice' (*blepein tēn phōnēn*) is striking — John turns to see a sound. This conflation of senses reflects the overwhelming nature of visionary experience. The seven golden lampstands (*lychnias chrysas*) recall the menorah of the tabernacle (Exodus 25:31-37) and Zechariah's vision of a golden lampstand with seven lights (Zechariah 4:2). Verse 20 will identify the lampstands as the seven churches.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 25:31-37. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zechariah 4:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The phrase *homoion huion anthrōpou* ('one like a son of man') directly echoes Daniel 7:13 (LXX), where one 'like a son of man' approaches the Ancient of Days and receives dominion. The long robe (*podērē*) is the garment of a priest (Exodus 28:4; Ezekiel 9:2), and the golden sash (*zōnēn chrysan*) also suggests priestly or royal authority. The description that follows will merge attributes of Daniel's Ancient of Days with the Son of Man figure, making a claim about Christ's divine identity.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:13 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 28:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 9:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The white hair is drawn from Daniel 7:9, where it describes the Ancient of Days — not the Son of Man. By applying this attribute to the risen Christ, Revelation makes a bold identification: the Son of Man shares the characteristics of the eternal God. The fiery eyes echo Daniel 10:6, where they describe an angelic or divine figure. Each element of this vision is drawn from Old Testament theophany and reassigned to Christ.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 7:9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 10:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The Greek *chalkolibanō* is a rare word, possibly a copper-zinc alloy or orichalcum — the exact metal is uncertain. 'Burnished bronze' captures the sense of a glowing, refined metal. The 'sound of many waters' echoes Ezekiel 1:24 and 43:2, where it describes the voice of God himself. Daniel 10:6 similarly describes an angelic figure with bronze limbs and a powerful voice. The cumulative effect is of overwhelming divine majesty.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ezekiel 1:24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 10:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The seven stars are identified in verse 20 as the angels of the seven churches. The two-edged sword (*rhomphaia distomos oxeia*) proceeding from his mouth alludes to Isaiah 49:2 ('He made my mouth like a sharp sword') and represents the power of Christ's word to judge and divide. The image is not of a physical weapon but of divine speech that cuts. His face shining like the sun recalls the transfiguration (Matthew 17:2) and the angel of Daniel 10:6, as well as the radiance of Moses's face after encountering God (Exodus 34:29-30).
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 49:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 10:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 34:29-30. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. Falling 'as though dead' (*hōs nekros*) is the typical human response to a divine encounter (cf. Daniel 8:17-18; 10:8-9; Ezekiel 1:28). The reassuring touch and 'do not be afraid' also follow the pattern of Daniel 10:10-12. 'The first and the last' (*ho prōtos kai ho eschatos*) is a direct claim to the title God applies to himself in Isaiah 44:6 and 48:12. Christ applies to himself the exclusive self-designation of YHWH.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 8:17-18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 1:28. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 10:10-12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 44:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The self-identification moves from eternal existence ('the first and the last') to incarnate death ('I was dead') to resurrection ('I am alive forever and ever') — the entire gospel compressed into a single sentence. The 'keys of death and Hades' (*tas kleis tou thanatou kai tou hadou*) represent authority over the realm of the dead. Hades (*hadēs*) is the Greek equivalent of Hebrew Sheol — the abode of the dead, not the later Christian concept of hell as a place of punishment. Christ's possession of these keys means death no longer operates as a final, unopposed power.
19. This verse provides a threefold outline that many interpreters use to structure the entire book: 'what you have seen' (the vision of chapter 1), 'what is now' (the situation of the seven churches in chapters 2-3), and 'what will take place after this' (the visions of chapters 4-22). Whether or not John intended this as a formal outline, the three temporal categories — past vision, present reality, future events — frame the entire work.
20. The Greek *mystērion* ('mystery') does not mean 'puzzle' but 'revealed secret' — something previously hidden that is now disclosed. Christ himself provides the interpretation of the vision's symbols, establishing a pattern for the rest of the book where some symbols are explained and others are left for the reader. The identity of the 'angels' (*angeloi*) of the churches is debated: they may be heavenly guardians, human leaders (the Greek *angelos* can mean 'messenger'), or the spiritual identity of each congregation. The text does not resolve this ambiguity.

2

Summary: *Revelation 2 contains four of the seven letters to the churches of Asia: Ephesus (vv. 1-7), Smyrna (vv. 8-11), Pergamum (vv. 12-17), and Thyatira (vv. 18-29). Each letter follows a consistent pattern: an address identifying Christ by a feature from the chapter 1 vision, a commendation ('I know your works'), a criticism or encouragement, a command, and a promise 'to the one who conquers.' Ephesus is praised for endurance but has abandoned its first love. Smyrna faces suffering and is told to be faithful unto death. Pergamum holds fast to Christ's name but tolerates false teaching. Thyatira is commended for love and service but rebuked for tolerating a false prophetess.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *Each letter begins with a self-description of Christ drawn from the vision of 1:12-20, creating a direct literary connection. The promises to the conqueror in each letter anticipate the final vision of the new creation in chapters 21-22 (tree of life, no second death, hidden manna, morning star). The reference to 'the synagogue of Satan' (2:9) reflects a sharp conflict between the early church and local Jewish communities over claims to be the true people of God. The 'Nicolaitans' and the teaching of 'Balaam' appear to involve compromise with Greco-Roman religious culture, particularly eating food offered to idols and sexual immorality.*

Translation Friction: *The phrase 'synagogue of Satan' (2:9) is historically specific to a first-century dispute and must not be generalized; we render it as written. 'Jezebel' in the Thyatira letter (2:20) is likely a symbolic name drawn from the Old Testament figure, not a literal name; we note the allusion. The precise identity of the Nicolaitans is uncertain; we render the name without speculative identification.*

Connections: *Ephesus: Genesis 2:9 and Revelation 22:2 (tree of life). Smyrna: Daniel 1:12-14 (testing period). Pergamum: Numbers 22-25 (Balaam), Numbers 25:1-2 (eating sacrifices, sexual immorality), Exodus 16:33-34 (hidden manna), Isaiah 62:2 (new name). Thyatira: 1 Kings 16:31, 21:25 (Jezebel), Psalm 2:8-9 (ruling nations with iron rod), Isaiah 14:12 (morning star).*

¹To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands: ²"I know your works, your labor and your endurance, and that you cannot tolerate evil people. You have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and you have found them to be false. ³You have endurance, and you have borne up for the sake of my name, and you have not grown weary. ⁴But I have this against you: you have abandoned the love you had at first. ⁵Remember then how far you have fallen. Repent, and do the works you did at first. If you do not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place — unless you repent. ⁶But you do have this: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. ⁷Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers, I will grant the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." ⁸To the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of the first and the last, who was dead and came to life: ⁹"I know your tribulation and your poverty — but you are rich — and the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Look, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested, and you will face tribulation for ten days. Be faithful even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life. ¹¹Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be harmed by the second death." ¹²To the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of the one who has the sharp two-edged sword: ¹³"I know where you dwell — where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast to my name, and you did not deny your faith in me even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. ¹⁴But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they would eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. ¹⁵In the same way, you also have some who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶Therefore repent. If you do not, I will come to you soon and wage war against them with the sword of my mouth. ¹⁷Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers, I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written that no one knows except the one who receives it." ¹⁸To the angel of the church in Thyatira

write: These are the words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire and feet like burnished bronze: ¹⁹"I know your works — your love, faith, service, and endurance — and that your last works are greater than your first. ²⁰But I have this against you: you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess and teaches and deceives my servants to practice sexual immorality and to eat food sacrificed to idols. ²¹I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her sexual immorality. ²²Look, I will throw her onto a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her works. ²³I will strike her children dead, and all the churches will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you according to your works. ²⁴But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not known what they call 'the deep things of Satan' — I place no other burden on you. ²⁵Only hold fast to what you have until I come. ²⁶The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end — to that one I will give authority over the nations, ²⁷He will rule them with a rod of iron. As the vessels of a potter will they be broken to shivers:. ²⁸Indeed as I received of my Father. And I will provide him the morning star. ²⁹Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The formula *tade legei* ('these things says') echoes the prophetic messenger formula of the Old Testament ('thus says the LORD'). Christ's self-identification draws from 1:13 and 1:16. The verb *peripatōn* ('walking') implies active presence — Christ is not distant from his churches but moves among them. Ephesus was the largest and most prominent city in the province of Asia, home to the famous temple of Artemis.
2. The Greek *oida* ('I know') is emphatic — Christ's knowledge is comprehensive and personal. The triad of 'works, labor, endurance' (*erga, kopon, hypomonēn*) suggests both active effort and patient suffering. The testing of false apostles indicates a community with strong doctrinal vigilance — a quality that will be contrasted with their deficiency in verse 4.
3. The Greek *ou kekopiakes* ('you have not grown weary') uses the perfect tense, indicating a sustained state — they have not flagged despite ongoing hardship. The phrase 'for the sake of my name' (*dia to onoma mou*) connects their suffering to their identification with Christ.
4. The Greek *aphēkes* ('you have abandoned, left behind') is a strong word — not 'diminished' or 'cooled' but actively forsaken. The 'first love' (*tēn agapēn sou tēn prōtēn*) likely refers to the initial fervent devotion to Christ and to one another that characterized the community's founding. The irony is sharp: a church excellent at doctrinal vigilance has lost the very thing that motivated its faith.
5. Three imperatives frame the call to restoration: 'remember' (*mnēmoneue*), 'repent' (*metanoēson*), and 'do' (*poiēson*). Repentance here is not merely feeling sorry but taking concrete action — returning to the 'first works.' The threat to remove the lampstand means the loss of the church's identity and witness — it would cease to exist as a church. This is not about individual salvation but about the community's corporate calling.
6. The identity of the Nicolaitans (*Nikolaitōn*) is uncertain. Early church tradition connected them to Nicolas of Antioch (Acts 6:5), but this is unverifiable. Their 'works' appear related to the teaching of Balaam in 2:14-15 — compromise with pagan religious practices. The name may be a Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Balaam (both possibly meaning 'conqueror of the people'), though this etymology is debated. Christ's statement 'which I also hate' validates the church's rejection of these practices.
7. The hearing formula ('let the one who has an ear hear') echoes Jesus's words in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 11:15; 13:9). The promise of the 'tree of life' (*xylou tēs zōēs*) reaches back to Genesis 2:9 and 3:22-24 — access to the tree that was lost at the fall is restored to those who conquer. The same tree reappears in Revelation 22:2. The word *paradeisos* ('paradise') is a Persian loanword originally meaning 'an enclosed garden,' used in the Septuagint for the Garden of Eden.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 2:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. Christ's self-identification draws from 1:17-18. For a church facing death, Christ identifies himself as one who has already passed through death and conquered it. Smyrna (modern Izmir) was a prosperous port city; its name is related to the word for myrrh, an aromatic resin associated with burial — an ironic connection given the letter's theme of suffering and death.
9. The paradox 'poverty but rich' (*ptōcheian, alla plousios*) inverts worldly categories — material deprivation coexists with spiritual wealth, a reversal that contrasts sharply with Laodicea (3:17). The phrase 'synagogue of Satan' (*synagōgē tou satana*) reflects a specific local conflict where certain members of the Jewish community were opposing or denouncing Christians to Roman authorities. This is not a blanket condemnation of Judaism but a charge against specific accusers. The Greek *blasphēmian* here means 'slander' or 'defamation' rather than blasphemy in the theological sense.
10. The 'ten days' (*hēmerōn deka*) may echo Daniel 1:12-14 (Daniel's ten-day test) or simply indicate a limited, defined period of suffering. The promise 'be faithful unto death' (*ginou pistos achri thanatou*) does not mean 'until you die of old age' but 'even if faithfulness costs your life.' The 'crown of life' (*ton stephanon tēs zōēs*) uses *stephanos*, the victor's wreath given to athletic champions, not *diadēma* (a royal crown) — the imagery is of winning a contest through endurance. Smyrna was famous for its athletic games, making this metaphor locally resonant.

10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 1:12-14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The double negative *ou mē* ('absolutely not') is the strongest form of negation in Greek — there is no possibility of harm from the second death for the one who conquers. The 'second death' (*tou thanatou tou deuterou*) is defined in 20:14 as 'the lake of fire.' Physical death may come to the faithful in Smyrna, but the second death — final, permanent separation from God — holds no power over them.
12. Christ's self-identification draws from 1:16. For a church in a city dominated by Roman imperial authority, the reference to a sword is significant — Rome claimed the 'right of the sword' (*ius gladii*), the authority to execute. Christ holds a greater sword, one that proceeds from his mouth (the word of truth that judges all human authority). Pergamum was the administrative capital of the province of Asia and a major center of emperor worship.
13. The 'throne of Satan' (*ho thronos tou satana*) may refer to the great altar of Zeus on the Pergamum acropolis, the temple of Augustus and Roma (the first provincial temple of the imperial cult in Asia), or the city's role as the judicial seat where death sentences were pronounced. The exact referent is uncertain; the point is that Pergamum was a stronghold of forces opposed to Christ. Antipas is called 'my faithful witness' (*ho martyrs mou ho pistos mou*) — the same title given to Christ himself in 1:5. The word *martyrs* here carries both its original meaning ('witness') and its developing sense of 'one who dies for testimony' — the English word 'martyr' derives from this Greek word.
14. The reference to Balaam draws on Numbers 22-25 and 31:16. According to the tradition, Balaam could not curse Israel directly, so he advised Balak to seduce Israel into idolatry and sexual sin through Moabite women — an indirect strategy of corruption from within. The parallel is clear: some in Pergamum are teaching that participation in pagan religious feasts (which involved eating idol-sacrificed food and often ritual sexual activity) is acceptable. The Greek *eidōlothyta* ('food sacrificed to idols') and *porneusai* ('to practice sexual immorality') are the same issues addressed at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:20, 29).
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Numbers 22-25. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The word *homoiōs* ('in the same way, likewise') links the Nicolaitans directly to the teaching of Balaam — the two groups may be identical or share the same essential error of accommodating pagan practice. The SBLGNT does not include 'which thing I hate' (found in some manuscripts and reflected in the KJV); we follow the critical text.
16. The command to repent is directed to the whole church ('you,' singular, addressing the congregation), but the war is directed against 'them' (the Nicolaitans/Balaamites). The church as a whole is responsible for tolerating false teaching within its community. The 'sword of my mouth' (*tē rhomphaia tou stomatos mou*) is the word of Christ that exposes and judges — the same sword described in 1:16 and drawn from Isaiah 49:2.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 49:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. Three gifts are promised: hidden manna, a white stone, and a new name. The 'hidden manna' (*tou manna tou kekrymmenou*) alludes to the jar of manna preserved in the ark of the covenant (Exodus 16:33-34; Hebrews 9:4) and to Jewish tradition that Jeremiah hid the ark before the Babylonian destruction. Against the temptation to eat idol-food, Christ offers heavenly food. The 'white stone' (*psēphon leukēn*) has been variously interpreted: a voting pebble signifying acquittal, an admission token to a feast, or a victor's token. The 'new name' may echo Isaiah 62:2 ('you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow'). Its secrecy — known only to the recipient — suggests an intimate, personal relationship between Christ and the individual believer.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 16:33-34. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 62:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. This is the only place in Revelation where the title 'Son of God' (*ho huios tou theou*) is used explicitly. The description draws from 1:14-15. Thyatira was the smallest of the seven cities but receives the longest letter. The city was known for its trade guilds (including dyeing — Lydia, the seller of purple cloth in Acts 16:14, was from Thyatira). Guild membership typically required participation in guild feasts held in pagan temples, creating the central tension of this letter.
19. Four qualities are listed: love (*agapēn*), faith (*pistin*), service (*diakonian*), and endurance (*hypomonēn*). Notably, Thyatira possesses the very quality Ephesus has lost — love. The statement that their 'last works are greater than the first' (*ta erga sou ta eschata pleiona tōn prōtōn*) indicates a growing, maturing community — the opposite trajectory from Ephesus, which declined from its first love.
20. The name 'Jezebel' (*Iezabel*) almost certainly alludes to Ahab's wife in 1 Kings 16:31 and 21:25, who promoted Baal worship in Israel and persecuted the prophets of the LORD. Whether this is the woman's actual name or a prophetic label is debated; the Old Testament association — a woman who leads God's people into idolatry — is clearly intended. The charges are identical to the Balaam/Nicolaitan teaching in the Pergamum letter: idol-food and sexual immorality, the twin temptations of assimilation into Greco-Roman culture.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Kings 16:31 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. The verb *edōka* ('I gave') is aorist — time for repentance was given at a specific past point. The present tense *ou thelei* ('she does not wish, refuses') indicates an ongoing, deliberate choice. The opportunity for repentance was real but has been rejected. God's patience has a boundary.

- 22.** The 'bed' (klinēn) is an ironic reversal — the bed of illicit pleasure becomes a bed of illness and judgment. The Greek moicheuontas ('committing adultery') may be literal or metaphorical (spiritual unfaithfulness, following the Old Testament prophetic tradition where idolatry is depicted as adultery — cf. Hosea, Ezekiel 16, 23). The condition 'unless they repent' (ean mē metanoēsōsin) keeps the door open — even followers of Jezebel can still turn back.
- 22.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 23.** The phrase 'her children' (ta tekna autēs) likely refers to her committed followers, not biological offspring. The expression 'searches minds and hearts' (eraunōn nephrous kai kardias) echoes Jeremiah 17:10 ('I the LORD search the heart and test the mind'), directly applying a divine prerogative of YHWH to Christ. The Greek nephrous literally means 'kidneys,' which in ancient thought were the seat of deep emotion and will — we render it as 'minds' for clarity. The principle of judgment 'according to your works' (kata ta erga hymōn) echoes Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 17:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 62:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 23.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Proverbs 24:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 24.** The phrase ta bathēa tou satana ('the deep things of Satan') is ambiguous: it may be what Jezebel's followers claimed as their own teaching (claiming to know 'deep things,' possibly gnostic-style secret knowledge, which Christ relabels as satanic), or it may be Christ's own label for their teaching. The phrase hōs legousin ('as they say') suggests the former — they advertised their knowledge of 'deep things,' and Christ reframes it. The phrase 'no other burden' (ou...allo baros) echoes the language of the Jerusalem Council's decision (Acts 15:28).
- 25.** The imperative kratēsate ('hold fast, grip firmly') implies active resistance, not passive waiting. The phrase achri hou an hēxō ('until I come') points to the return of Christ — the eschatological horizon that frames all seven letters.
- 26.** The promise shifts from individual rewards (tree of life, hidden manna) to cosmic authority. The phrase exousian epi tōn ethnōn ('authority over the nations') draws from Psalm 2, which is quoted directly in the next verse. This is a royal promise: those who share in Christ's faithful endurance will share in his reign.
- 26.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 27.** This is a direct quotation from Psalm 2:9 (LXX), a royal enthronement psalm. The verb poimanei can mean 'to rule' or 'to shepherd' — the dual meaning is deliberate, as ancient kings were conceived as shepherds of their people. The iron rod and shattered pottery express the irresistible authority of the messianic king. In Psalm 2, this authority belongs to God's anointed; here Christ shares it with those who conquer.
- 27.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalms 2:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 28.** Christ's authority is derived from the Father and then shared with the faithful — a chain of delegated sovereignty. The 'morning star' (ton astera ton prōinon) is identified in 22:16 as Christ himself ('I am the bright morning star'). The gift of the morning star is therefore the gift of Christ's own presence and glory. The morning star allusion may also draw on Numbers 24:17 ('A star will come out of Jacob'), one of the oldest messianic oracles.
- 28.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Numbers 24:17 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 29.** In the first three letters, the hearing formula precedes the promise to the conqueror; in the last four (beginning with Thyatira), the promise precedes the hearing formula. This structural shift at the midpoint of the seven letters may be intentional, though its significance is debated.

3

Summary: *Revelation 3 contains the final three of seven letters to the churches of Asia: Sardis (vv. 1-6), Philadelphia (vv. 7-13), and Laodicea (vv. 14-22). Sardis has a reputation for being alive but is actually dead and is called to wake up. Philadelphia, despite little power, has kept Christ's word and is promised an open door that no one can shut and protection from the coming hour of trial. Laodicea is famously 'lukewarm' — neither hot nor cold — and is warned that Christ is about to spit them out of his mouth. Yet even to Laodicea the invitation remains: Christ stands at the door and knocks.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Sardis and Laodicea letters contain no commendation, while the Philadelphia and Smyrna letters (ch. 2) contain no criticism — only two churches on each extreme. The 'open door' promise to Philadelphia (3:8) may relate to missionary opportunity or eschatological access. The Laodicea letter's imagery is drawn from local conditions: Laodicea's water supply came via aqueduct from hot springs near Hierapolis and arrived lukewarm; the city was a wealthy banking center (hence 'you say I am rich'); and it was famous for black wool and eye salve (hence the counsel to buy white garments and eye ointment). The image of Christ knocking at the door (3:20) has become one of the most recognized images in Christian art and devotion.*

Translation Friction: *The 'synagogue of Satan' reference recurs in the Philadelphia letter (3:9), reflecting the same first-century Jewish-Christian conflict noted in the Smyrna letter. The 'hour of trial coming on the whole world' (3:10) has been variously interpreted as a local persecution, a future tribulation, or both; we render the text as written. The phrase 'I will spit you out of my mouth' (3:16) uses the Greek emesai, which literally means 'to vomit.'*

Connections: *Sardis: Isaiah 29:13 (outward appearance vs. reality), Daniel 5:27 (weighed and found wanting). Philadelphia: Isaiah 22:22 (key of David), Isaiah 60:14 (enemies bowing before God's people), Isaiah 62:2 (new name). Laodicea: Hosea 12:8 (Israel's false self-assessment of wealth), Proverbs 3:12 (whom the Lord loves he disciplines), Song of Solomon 5:2 (knocking at the door).*

¹To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of the one who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works. You have a reputation for being alive, but you are dead. ²Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete before my God. ³Remember then what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. ⁴Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. ⁵The one who conquers will be clothed in white garments in this way, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. ⁶Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ⁷To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens: ⁸"I know your works. Look, I have placed before you an open door that no one is able to shut. I know that you have little power, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. ⁹Look, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie — look, I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will know that I have loved you. ¹⁰Because you have kept my word of endurance, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹I am coming soon. Hold fast to what you have, so that no one takes your crown. ¹²The one who conquers — I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he will never go out of it again. I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God — the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God — and my own new name. ¹³Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ¹⁴To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the origin of God's creation: ¹⁵"I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot. ¹⁶So, because you are lukewarm — neither hot nor cold — I am about to vomit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷For you say, 'I am rich; I have prospered and need nothing,' not realizing that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. ¹⁸I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may be clothed and the shame of your nakedness not be exposed, and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. ¹⁹Those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline. Therefore be zealous and repent. ²⁰Look, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. ²¹The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, just as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²²Let the one who has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Christ identifies himself by holding both the seven spirits (fullness of the Spirit) and the seven stars (the churches' angels) — complete authority over spiritual life and over the churches. The indictment is devastating: *onoma echeis hoti zēs* ('you have a name that you are alive') — reputation without

reality. Sardis was historically captured twice by enemies who exploited its defenders' complacency (by Cyrus in 547 BC and by Antiochus III in 214 BC), giving the command to 'wake up' in verse 2 a pointed local resonance.

2. The imperative ginou grēgorōn ('become watchful/wake up') uses the present imperative, indicating a state that must begin and continue. The verb stērisōn ('strengthen') is aorist — an urgent, decisive action. What remains is 'about to die' (emellon apothanein) — the situation is critical but not yet beyond rescue. The works are not called sinful but 'incomplete' (peplērōmena in the negative) — Sardis has started well but not followed through.
3. The four imperatives — 'remember' (mnēmoneue), 'keep' (tērei), 'repent' (metanoēsōn) — escalate in urgency. The thief metaphor (hōs kleptēs) echoes Jesus's teaching in Matthew 24:43-44 and Paul's use in 1 Thessalonians 5:2. Given Sardis's history of being captured because its watchmen fell asleep, the image of a thief in the night would have been particularly stinging. The phrase 'come against you' (hēxō epi se) is threatening rather than comforting — this is a coming in judgment.
4. The word onomata ('names') is used metonymically for people — a few individuals amid the spiritually dead church have remained faithful. 'Soiled their garments' (emolunan ta himatia) is a metaphor for moral or spiritual contamination. Walking 'in white' (en leukois) symbolizes purity, victory, and festal celebration — white garments were worn at Roman triumphs and at festivals. The declaration 'they are worthy' (axioi eisin) stands in implicit contrast to the unworthiness of the majority.
5. Three promises: white garments (purity/victory), retention in the book of life, and personal acknowledgment by Christ before God. The 'book of life' (tēs biblou tēs zōēs) appears in Exodus 32:32-33, Psalm 69:28, and Daniel 12:1 — a register of those who belong to God. The double negative ou mē ('never, absolutely not') provides emphatic assurance. Christ's promise to 'confess' (homologēsō) their name echoes his teaching in Matthew 10:32 ('whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven').
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 32:32-33 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 69:28 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 12:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The hearing formula closes the Sardis letter. As in the final four letters, it follows rather than precedes the promise to the conqueror.
7. Unlike the other letters, Christ does not identify himself by features from the chapter 1 vision but by titles — 'the holy one' (ho hagios) and 'the true one' (ho alēthinos) — that are divine attributes in the Old Testament. The 'key of David' (tēn klein Daid) draws directly from Isaiah 22:22, where Eliakim is given the key to the house of David, granting unrestricted authority to grant or deny access. Applied to Christ, this means he alone controls access to God's kingdom. Philadelphia ('brotherly love') was a frontier city founded to spread Greek culture eastward — a detail that adds resonance to the 'open door' promise.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 22:22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The 'open door' (thyran ēneōgmenēn) has been interpreted as missionary opportunity (cf. Paul's use in 1 Corinthians 16:9, 2 Corinthians 2:12, Colossians 4:3) or as assured access to God's kingdom. Given the key-of-David context, the latter is primary — Christ has opened a door for Philadelphia that no earthly power can close. The phrase 'little power' (mikran echeis dynamin) is not a rebuke but an acknowledgment of the church's small size and limited social influence. Despite their weakness, they have been faithful — the opposite of Sardis, which had reputation but no reality.
9. The 'synagogue of Satan' reappears from the Smyrna letter (2:9), indicating a similar conflict in Philadelphia. The promise that opponents will 'bow before your feet' (proskynēsousin enōpion tōn podōn sou) echoes Isaiah 60:14 ('the children of your oppressors will come bowing before you') and Isaiah 49:23. The ironic reversal is striking: those who denied the Philadelphian Christians' status before God will be brought to acknowledge that God's love rests on this small, weak community. The verb proskynēsousin here means 'bow down' or 'do obeisance,' not necessarily 'worship' in the fullest sense.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 60:14. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 49:23. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The phrase ton logon tēs hypomonēs mou ('my word of endurance') means either 'the word about my endurance' or 'the word that calls for endurance' — the genitive is ambiguous and may be intentionally so. The promise tērēsō ek ('I will keep from') is debated: ek can mean 'out of' (removal from) or 'through' (protection within). The text does not resolve whether Christians will be absent from the trial or preserved through it. The 'hour of trial' (tēs hōras tou peirasmou) coming on the 'whole world' (tēs oikoumenēs holēs) indicates a universal scope — not merely local persecution but a worldwide crisis.
11. The present tense erchomai ('I am coming') conveys imminence and certainty. The 'crown' (ton stephanon) is the victor's wreath, as in 2:10 — not a possession to be casually held but a prize that can be forfeited through unfaithfulness. The warning 'so that no one takes' (hina mēdeis labē) implies that the crown is not irrevocably secured but depends on continued faithfulness.
12. Three names are inscribed on the conqueror: God's name, the city's name, and Christ's new name — expressing total belonging. The 'pillar' (stulon) metaphor promises permanence in God's presence. Philadelphia experienced frequent earthquakes, and after the devastating earthquake of 17 AD, residents often fled the city to the surrounding countryside; the promise 'he will never go out again' (exō ou mē exelthē eti) would resonate

powerfully with people who knew the terror of collapsing buildings. The 'new Jerusalem' (kainēs Ierousalēm) anticipates the climactic vision of chapters 21-22. Christ says 'my God' (tou theou mou) four times in this verse, emphasizing his mediatorial role.

13. The hearing formula closes the Philadelphia letter, the sixth of seven. Philadelphia and Smyrna are the only two churches that receive no rebuke — both are small, suffering communities that have remained faithful.
14. Christ identifies himself with three titles: 'the Amen' (ho amēn) — the one in whom all God's promises find their 'yes' (cf. 2 Corinthians 1:20; Isaiah 65:16, where God is called 'the God of Amen/truth'); 'the faithful and true witness' (ho martys ho pistos kai alēthinos); and 'the origin of God's creation' (hē archē tēs ktiseōs tou theou). The Greek archē can mean 'beginning,' 'origin,' 'ruler,' or 'first cause.' We render it as 'origin' to avoid the misreading that Christ was the first created being — the term indicates source and sovereignty, not temporal sequence, consistent with its use in Colossians 1:15-18.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 65:16. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The hot/cold metaphor has often been misread as 'fervent vs. opposed.' In context, both hot water (from the nearby hot springs of Hierapolis, used for healing) and cold water (from the mountain springs of Colossae, refreshing and pure) were useful. Lukewarm water — what Laodicea actually received through its aqueduct — was nauseating and useless. The point is not that opposition is preferable to indifference, but that the Laodicean church provides neither healing nor refreshment. The Greek ophelon ('I wish, would that') expresses strong desire.
16. The Greek emesai literally means 'to vomit' — a visceral, revolting image. The KJV's 'spue' (spew) softens this slightly. We render the physical force of the verb directly. The verb mellō ('I am about to') indicates imminence but not yet completion — there is still time for Laodicea to change. Anyone who drank the tepid, mineral-laden water arriving through Laodicea's aqueduct would understand this metaphor immediately.
17. The contrast is total: Laodicea's self-assessment ('rich, prospered, needing nothing') is the exact opposite of Christ's diagnosis ('wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, naked'). The fivefold indictment dismantles every claim. Laodicea was genuinely wealthy — after an earthquake in 60 AD, the city famously refused imperial aid and rebuilt with its own resources (Tacitus, Annals 14.27). The church has absorbed the city's self-sufficient attitude. The echo of Hosea 12:8 ('I have become wealthy; I have found riches for myself') is unmistakable — Israel made the same boast.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Hosea 12:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. Each remedy precisely addresses a local industry and a spiritual deficiency. Laodicea was a banking center (gold), known for its glossy black wool textiles (garments), and home to a famous medical school that produced a Phrygian eye powder (eye salve). Christ ironically tells this commercially successful city to 'buy' from him — the only merchant whose goods can address their actual poverty. The gold 'refined by fire' (pepyrōmenon ek pyros) suggests faith tested through suffering (cf. 1 Peter 1:7). The white garments contrast with the city's signature black wool.
19. This verse reveals that the severe language of the Laodicean letter is motivated by love (philō), not rejection. The principle echoes Proverbs 3:12 ('the LORD disciplines those he loves') and Hebrews 12:6. The Greek verb philō indicates personal, affectionate love — even lukewarm Laodicea is loved. The two imperatives 'be zealous' (zēleue) and 'repent' (metanoēson) call for passionate commitment and a decisive turn — the opposite of lukewarm indifference.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Proverbs 3:12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. This verse is often read as an evangelistic appeal to non-believers, but in context Christ is addressing a church — he stands outside the door of a community that bears his name. The image may draw on Song of Solomon 5:2 ('I slept but my heart was awake. A sound! My beloved is knocking'). The meal (deipnēsō, 'I will dine/eat the evening meal') suggests intimate fellowship — table fellowship in the ancient world signified deep personal relationship. The reciprocity is striking: 'I with him and he with me' (met' autou kai autos met' emou) — a shared meal where both host and guest give and receive.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Song of Solomon 5:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. This is the climactic promise of the seven letters — the greatest of all the rewards. The conqueror is offered a share in Christ's own throne, which is itself a share in the Father's throne. The chain is explicit: the Father shares his throne with Christ, Christ shares his throne with the faithful. The verb enikēsa ('I conquered') uses the same root as nikōn ('the one who conquers') — Christ's conquest (through faithful suffering and death) is the pattern for the believer's conquest.
22. The hearing formula closes the seventh and final letter, completing the cycle that began in 2:1. The seven letters collectively address every possible condition a church can face: persecution, false teaching, compromise, complacency, decline, faithfulness in weakness, and self-satisfied indifference. Together they form a comprehensive pastoral address to the church in every age.

4

Summary: *Revelation 4 shifts from the seven churches on earth to the throne room of heaven. John sees an open door in heaven and hears the trumpet-like voice from chapter 1 calling him to come up. He is immediately 'in the Spirit' and sees a throne with one seated on it, described in terms of precious stones and surrounded by a rainbow. Twenty-four elders on twenty-four thrones encircle the central throne, dressed in white with golden crowns. From the throne come lightning, thunder, and voices. Seven blazing torches burn before the throne. A crystal sea stretches before it. Four living creatures — one like a lion, one like an ox, one with a human face, and one like a flying eagle — each covered with eyes and having six wings, never cease to cry: 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come.' When they give glory, the twenty-four elders fall down in worship, casting their crowns before the throne.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The throne-room vision draws heavily from three Old Testament sources: Isaiah 6 (seraphim with six wings crying 'Holy, holy, holy'), Ezekiel 1 and 10 (four living creatures with multiple faces and eyes), and Daniel 7 (the Ancient of Days on his throne). John synthesizes these traditions into a single, cohesive vision. The one on the throne is never directly named or described in anthropomorphic terms — only through the imagery of light refracted through gemstones. The 'trisagion' (threefold 'holy') is one of the oldest continuous liturgical elements in Christian worship. The twenty-four elders may represent the twelve tribes and twelve apostles — the full people of God from both covenants.*

Translation Friction: *We render the vision as presented without attempting to identify the symbolic referents definitively. The rainbow (iris) is described as 'like an emerald' (homoios horasei smaragdīnō), which is unusual since rainbows are multicolored; this may refer to a dominant green hue or to a circular halo of light. The precise identification of the gemstones (iaspidi, sardiō) is uncertain; ancient gem names do not always correspond to modern ones.*

Connections: *Isaiah 6:1-4 (seraphim, trisagion), Ezekiel 1:4-28 (four living creatures, throne, rainbow, crystal), Ezekiel 10 (cherubim), Daniel 7:9-10 (Ancient of Days, throne, fire), 1 Kings 22:19 (heavenly court), Exodus 24:10 (sapphire pavement under God's feet). The 'sea of glass' may echo the bronze sea in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7:23) or the cosmic waters above the firmament (Genesis 1:6-7).*

¹After this I looked, and there before me was an open door in heaven. And the first voice that I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." ²At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne set in heaven, with one seated on the throne. ³And the one seated there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. ⁴Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads. ⁵From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder. Before the throne burned seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God. ⁶Before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the center, around the throne, were four living creatures covered with eyes in front and behind. ⁷The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature was like an ox, the third living creature had a face like that of a human, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.

⁸Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around and within. Day and night they never cease to say:

"Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty,
who was and is and is to come!"

⁹And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanksgiving to the one seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰The four and twenty elders fall down prior to him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns prior to the throne and stated,

¹¹"Worthy are you, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase *meta tauta* ('after this') marks a major structural transition — from the earthly churches to the heavenly throne room. The 'first voice' (*hē phōnē hē prōtē*) refers back to 1:10, connecting this scene to the initial commission. The open door in heaven (*thyra ēneōgmenē en tō ouranō*) recalls Ezekiel 1:1 ('the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God'). The phrase *ha dei genesthai* ('what must take place') echoes Daniel 2:28-29 (LXX), where Daniel reveals to Nebuchadnezzar 'what must happen in the last days.'
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 1:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 2:28-29. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. This is the second of four 'in the Spirit' (*en pneumati*) experiences in Revelation (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10), each introducing a major new vision. The description of the one on the throne is strikingly restrained — no human features are described, only the appearance of gemstones and light (v. 3). This reticence about depicting God directly follows the tradition of Ezekiel 1:26-28, where the prophet describes only 'the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.'
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 1:26-28. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. God is described entirely through light and gemstones — jasper (*iaspidi*, likely a clear, brilliant stone, not the modern opaque jasper) and carnelian (*sardiō*, a red stone). The combination of clear brilliance and deep red may evoke glory and judgment. The rainbow (*iris*) echoes Genesis 9:13-16, where the rainbow is the sign of God's covenant with Noah — its presence around the throne is a covenant symbol. The emerald-like quality (*smaragdīnō*) gives the rainbow a dominant green hue, suggesting life and renewal. Ezekiel 1:28 similarly describes 'the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds' surrounding the divine presence.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 9:13-16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 1:28 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The twenty-four elders (*eikosi tessaras presbyterous*) have been variously identified as angelic beings, heavenly representatives of Israel's tribes, the combined twelve patriarchs and twelve apostles, or the twenty-four priestly divisions of 1 Chronicles 24. Their white garments recall the promise to the faithful in 3:4-5, and their crowns (*stephanous*, victor's wreaths) will be cast before the throne in verse 10. They sit on thrones (*thronous*), indicating delegated authority within a heavenly court.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Chronicles 24. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. Lightning, voices/rumblings, and thunder (*astrapai kai phōnai kai brontai*) echo the Sinai theophany (Exodus 19:16) and recur at key structural points in Revelation (8:5; 11:19; 16:18), each time with escalating intensity. The seven torches (*hepta lampades pyros*) are explicitly identified as the seven spirits of God, connecting to 1:4 and 3:1. The imagery merges Zechariah's seven-lamped menorah (Zechariah 4:2) with the fiery presence of God. The Greek *lampades* refers to torches or large lamps, not small candles.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 19:16 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 4:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The 'sea of glass' (*thalassa hyalinē*) may recall the cosmic waters above the firmament (Genesis 1:6-7), the bronze sea in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7:23-26), or the pavement of sapphire under God's feet at Sinai (Exodus 24:10). Its crystal-like stillness contrasts with the turbulent sea that symbolizes chaos elsewhere in Revelation. The four 'living creatures' (*zōa*, not 'beasts' as in the KJV — *zōa* means 'living beings,' while the hostile creatures of later chapters are *thēria*, 'beasts/wild animals'). Their eyes covering front and back suggest omniscient awareness. The description draws on Ezekiel 1:5-21 and 10:12.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 1:6-7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Kings 7:23-26. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 24:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 1:5-21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The four faces correspond to Ezekiel 1:10, where each cherub has all four faces simultaneously; here each creature bears one face. The lion, ox, human, and eagle have been traditionally interpreted as representing the noblest, strongest, wisest, and swiftest of all creatures — the entirety of animate creation in worship before the Creator. Early Christian tradition also associated them with the four Gospels (lion = Mark, ox = Luke, human = Matthew, eagle = John), though this association is not in the text. The Greek *moschos* ('calf, young bull') is rendered 'ox' to capture the full-grown stature implied by the parallel with lion and eagle.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 1:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The six wings come from Isaiah 6:2 (the seraphim), while the eyes come from Ezekiel 1 and 10 (the cherubim). John's living creatures merge features of Isaiah's seraphim and Ezekiel's cherubim into a single heavenly order. The trisagion ('Holy, holy, holy') is a direct echo of Isaiah 6:3. In Hebrew, repetition for emphasis is common (doubling = superlative), but the threefold repetition is unique in the Old Testament and expresses the absolute holiness of God. The threefold temporal designation (*ho ēn kai ho ōn kai ho erchomenos*) repeats from 1:4 and 1:8, but here the order shifts — 'who was' comes first, perhaps emphasizing God's eternal past as foundation for present and future sovereignty.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 6:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The temporal clause *hotan dōsousin* ('whenever they give') uses the indefinite construction, indicating a repeated, ongoing action — each time the living creatures offer their praise, the elders respond. The three offerings — glory (*doxan*), honor (*timēn*), and thanksgiving (*eucharistian*) — will be expanded to seven in 7:12. The phrase *tō zōnti eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn* ('the one living into the ages of the ages') affirms God's eternal, inexhaustible life.
10. The casting of crowns (*balousin tous stephanous*) is an act of subordination — whatever authority or honor the elders possess is derived from and returned to the one on the throne. In Greco-Roman culture, subject kings would lay their crowns before the emperor as a sign of submission; here the gesture acknowledges that all created authority is delegated from and belongs to God. The repetition of 'forever and ever' reinforces the endless nature of this worship.
11. The acclamation 'worthy are you' (*axios ei*) deliberately echoes the Roman acclamation 'axios' ('worthy!') used to acclaim emperors. The heavenly court declares God — not Caesar — as the one truly worthy of universal praise. The title 'our Lord and God' (*ho kyrios kai ho theos hēmōn*) is notably the same title the emperor Domitian reportedly demanded: *dominus et deus noster* ('our lord and god'). The ground for worship is creation — God made all things, and all things exist because of his will (*dia to thelēma sou*). The verb *ēsan* ('they existed') preceding *ektisthēsan* ('they were created') is puzzling; it may mean 'they came into being and were created' or 'they existed [in God's purpose] and [then] were created.'

5

Summary: *Revelation 5 continues the throne-room vision as John sees a scroll sealed with seven seals in the right hand of the one on the throne. A mighty angel asks who is worthy to open the scroll, and no one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth is found worthy. John weeps bitterly. Then one of the elders tells him to stop weeping: 'The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered.' But when John looks, he sees not a lion but a Lamb standing as though slaughtered, with seven horns and seven eyes. The Lamb takes the scroll, and the four living creatures and twenty-four elders fall before him, each holding harps and golden bowls of incense (the prayers of the saints). They sing a new song declaring the Lamb worthy because he was slaughtered and purchased people for God from every tribe and language. Myriads of angels join the worship, and finally every creature in all creation praises the one on the throne and the Lamb together.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The central literary and theological moment of the chapter — arguably of the entire book — is the contrast between what John hears and what he sees. He hears 'the Lion of Judah' but sees a slaughtered Lamb. This hear/see pattern is a key interpretive device in Revelation: the Lamb redefines what it means to be the Lion. Power operates through sacrifice. The Lamb (to arnion, a diminutive form) appears 28 times in Revelation, becoming the dominant christological image. The seven horns represent complete power, seven eyes complete knowledge (identified as the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth). The 'new song' combines themes from Isaiah 42:10*

(new song of salvation), Psalm 33:3, and Psalm 96:1.

Translation Friction: *The scroll (biblion) sealed with seven seals has been identified with various Old Testament backgrounds: Ezekiel's scroll of woes (Ezekiel 2:9-10), a Roman testament or will, a contract deed, or God's plan for history. We render it as written without resolving the identification. The phrase 'standing as though slaughtered' (hestēkos hōs esphagmenon) presents a paradox: the Lamb bears the marks of slaughter yet stands alive. We preserve this tension.*

Connections: *Genesis 49:9-10 (Lion of Judah), Isaiah 11:1, 10 (Root of David/Jesse), Isaiah 53:7 (lamb led to slaughter), Ezekiel 2:9-10 (scroll written on both sides), Daniel 7:10 (myriads of angels), Zechariah 4:10 (seven eyes of the LORD), Psalm 33:3, 96:1, 149:1 (new song), Exodus 19:6 (kingdom of priests), Isaiah 42:10 (new song of redemption).*

¹Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ²And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" ³And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁴And I wept and wept because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. ⁵Then one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping. Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals." ⁶Then I saw, in the center of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the center of the elders, a Lamb standing as though slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷He came and took the scroll from the right hand of the one seated on the throne. ⁸When he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

⁹And they sang a new song, saying:

"Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slaughtered
and by your blood you purchased people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,

¹⁰Hast made us to our God kings and priests — and we will reign on the earth. ¹¹Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders, and their number was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹²Declaring with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to accept authority, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

¹³And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea — everything in them — saying:

"To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honor and glory and dominion
forever and ever!"

¹⁴And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshiped.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The scroll (biblion) written on both sides echoes Ezekiel 2:9-10, where God's scroll was 'written on both sides with words of lamentation, mourning, and woe.' Writing on both sides indicates completeness — there is no room for additions. The seven seals (sphragisin hepta) indicate maximum security; each must be broken in sequence. In Roman legal practice, a testament required seven witnesses and seven seals. The scroll may represent God's redemptive plan, a decree of judgment, or the inheritance deed of creation.

1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 2:9-10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

2. The 'mighty angel' (angelon ischyron) reappears in 10:1 and 18:21. The question 'who is worthy?' (tis axios) uses the same word (axios) as the acclamation in 4:11, where God is declared 'worthy.' The question is not merely 'who is able?' but 'who has the moral standing and authority?' The proclamation goes out to all of creation — the universal scope of the search emphasizes the uniqueness of the one who is eventually found worthy.
3. The threefold cosmic division — heaven, earth, under the earth — encompasses the totality of created existence (cf. Philippians 2:10). The Greek oudeis ('no one') is absolute. Not even looking at the scroll (blepein auto) is possible — the scroll's contents are completely inaccessible without a worthy mediator. The impossibility is total: no angel, no human, no being of any kind can approach God's sealed purpose.
4. The Greek ekleiaion poly ('I was weeping much') uses the imperfect tense, indicating continued, uncontrollable weeping — not a single tear but sustained grief. John's weeping reflects the devastating implication: if no one can open the scroll, God's purposes remain sealed and unrealized. Creation's story has no resolution, no redemption, no ending. The emotional intensity makes the resolution in verse 5 all the more dramatic.
5. Two messianic titles converge: 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah' from Genesis 49:9-10 (Jacob's blessing on Judah: 'Judah is a lion's cub') and 'the Root of David' from Isaiah 11:1, 10 (the shoot from Jesse's stump). Both are titles of royal power and conquest. The verb enikēsen ('has conquered') is the same root as nikōn ('the one who conquers') used in the promises to the seven churches — Christ is the archetypal conqueror. But the nature of his conquest will be radically redefined in the next verse.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 49:9 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 11:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. This is the pivotal moment of Revelation's theology. John hears 'Lion' but sees 'Lamb' — the hear/see contrast redefines conquest as sacrificial death. The Lamb (arnion, a diminutive of arēn) is small, vulnerable — yet it stands at the very center of heaven's power. 'Standing as though slaughtered' (hestēkos hōs esphagmenon) is a paradox: the marks of violent death are visible, yet the Lamb is alive and upright. The verb sphazō ('to slaughter') is the same used for ritual sacrifice. Seven horns represent complete power (horns = strength in biblical symbolism); seven eyes represent complete knowledge, identified with the seven spirits of God (cf. Zechariah 4:10, 'the eyes of the LORD that range through all the earth'). The slaughtered Lamb possesses omnipotence and omniscience.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Zechariah 4:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The simplicity of this verse belies its enormity. The Lamb approaches the throne of God and takes the scroll — an act no one in all creation could perform. The perfect tense eilēphen ('has taken') in some manuscripts emphasizes the permanence of the act. The transfer of the scroll from the hand of God to the Lamb is the decisive moment of the entire heavenly scene — the one who was slaughtered now holds the destiny of creation.
8. The living creatures and elders offer the Lamb the same worship they gave to the one on the throne in 4:10 — a striking theological claim about the Lamb's divine status. The harps (kitharan) accompany the 'new song' of verse 9. The golden bowls of incense (phialas chrysas gemousas thymiamaton) directly identified as 'the prayers of the saints' (hai proseuchai tōn hagiōn) — the prayers of God's people on earth are present in heaven as fragrant offerings. This echoes Psalm 141:2 ('Let my prayer be set before you like incense'). The prayers of suffering believers are not lost but are held in golden vessels before the throne.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 141:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The 'new song' (ōdēn kainēn) echoes Psalms 33:3, 96:1, and 149:1, as well as Isaiah 42:10 — always a song celebrating God's new act of salvation. The Lamb is 'worthy' (axios) — answering the question of verse 2. The ground of worthiness is sacrificial death: 'you were slaughtered' (esphagēs) and 'you purchased' (ēgorasas). The SBLGNT does not include 'us' (hēmas) after 'purchased,' reading instead 'you purchased for God' people from every group — the universal scope is the emphasis. The fourfold formula 'tribe, language, people, nation' (phylēs, glōssēs, laou, ethnous) appears seven times in Revelation with slight variations, expressing the complete diversity of humanity.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 33:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 42:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The SBLGNT reads 'them' (autous) and 'they will reign' (basileusousin) rather than 'us' and 'we shall reign' — the elders and living creatures speak about the redeemed rather than identifying themselves as the redeemed. The echo of Exodus 19:6 ('a kingdom of priests') continues from 1:6. The future tense basileusousin ('they will reign') points to a still-future consummation of the saints' royal priesthood on earth — not in heaven as disembodied spirits but on the renewed earth.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 19:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The worship expands concentrically: the four living creatures and twenty-four elders (v. 8), then countless angels (v. 11), then every creature in existence (v. 13). The numbers myriades myriadōn kai chiliades chiliadōn ('myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands') echo Daniel 7:10, where the heavenly court numbers 'a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.' These are not precise counts but expressions of innumerable multitude.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 7:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

12. Seven attributes are ascribed to the Lamb — power (dynamis), wealth (plouton), wisdom (sophia), might (ischyn), honor (timē), glory (doxa), and blessing (eulogia). The sevenfold list represents completeness — the Lamb deserves all praise without remainder. The angels' acclamation parallels but expands the threefold praise of 4:11 (glory, honor, power), now directed not to the Creator alone but to the slaughtered Lamb. That a slain animal receives the same worship as the one on the throne is the theological climax of the chapter.
13. The worship reaches its widest circle — every creature (pan ktisma) in the fourfold cosmic division (heaven, earth, under earth, sea) joins the praise. The Lamb now receives praise alongside the one on the throne in a single doxology — 'to the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb' (tō kathēmenō epi tō thronō kai tō arniō). This coordinated worship is one of Revelation's strongest statements of the Lamb's divine status. The four attributes (blessing, honor, glory, dominion) are directed jointly to God and the Lamb, with no distinction in the quality or degree of worship. The phrase eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn ('forever and ever') ensures this is not temporary acclaim but eternal worship.
14. The chapter closes with the simplest possible response: 'Amen' from the living creatures and silent prostration from the elders. After the expanding circles of praise — four creatures, twenty-four elders, myriads of angels, every creature in existence — the scene resolves into stillness and wordless adoration. The SBLGNT does not include 'him who lives forever and ever' after 'worshiped' (found in some later manuscripts); the object of worship is implicit from the preceding context — both the one on the throne and the Lamb.

6

Summary: *Revelation 6 recounts the opening of the first six of the seven seals on the scroll. The first four seals release the four horsemen: a white horse (conquest), a red horse (war), a black horse (famine), and a pale horse (death), followed by Hades. The fifth seal reveals the souls of the martyrs under the altar, crying out for justice and told to wait until the full number of their fellow servants is completed. The sixth seal unleashes a cosmic catastrophe — a great earthquake, the sun turning black, the moon becoming like blood, stars falling, the sky rolling up, and every mountain and island displaced. The chapter ends with the terrified cry of kings, generals, and all people: 'Who is able to stand?'*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The four horsemen draw on Zechariah 1:8-11 and 6:1-8, where colored horses patrol the earth as agents of divine sovereignty. The imagery of cosmic collapse in the sixth seal comes from Isaiah 34:4 (the heavens rolled up like a scroll), Joel 2:31 (sun darkened, moon to blood), and Isaiah 2:19-21 (people hiding in rocks from God's terror). The cry of the martyrs under the altar (fifth seal) introduces a theology of divine justice delayed but not denied — God's people suffer and die, but their blood is remembered. The altar imagery suggests their deaths are sacrificial offerings. The chapter moves from human violence (horsemen) to divine response (cosmic signs), framing history as moving toward judgment.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the rider on the white horse (first seal) is debated: some identify him as Christ (cf. 19:11), others as the Antichrist or a personification of conquest/imperialism. The text does not explicitly identify the rider, and we render the vision without resolving the ambiguity. The martyrs' cry 'How long?' (heos pote) echoes the psalms of lament, not vindictiveness. The cosmic language of the sixth seal may be literal, metaphorical, or both; we render it as written.*

Connections: *Zechariah 1:8-11, 6:1-8 (colored horses), Ezekiel 14:21 (four judgments: sword, famine, wild beasts, pestilence), Isaiah 34:4 (sky rolled up), Joel 2:31 (sun and moon), Isaiah 2:19-21 (hiding in rocks), Hosea 10:8 ('say to the mountains, cover us'), Psalm 79:5-10 (how long?), Nahum 1:6 (who can stand?), Malachi 3:2 (who can endure?).*

¹Then I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, "Come!" ²I looked, and there was a white horse. Its rider held a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he rode out conquering and to conquer. ³When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" ⁴And out came another horse, fiery red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth so that people would slaughter one another, and he was given a great sword. ⁵When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there was a black horse, and its rider held a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶And I heard what sounded like a voice from among the four living creatures, saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius — but do not damage the oil and the wine." ⁷When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" ⁸I looked, and there was a pale green horse. Its rider's name was Death, and Hades was

following close behind him. They were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild animals of the earth. ⁹When the Lamb opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the word of God and because of the testimony they had held. ¹⁰They cried out with a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" ¹¹Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to rest a little longer, until the number would be completed of their fellow servants and their brothers and sisters who were about to be killed just as they had been. ¹²I watched as the Lamb opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake, the sun turned black like sackcloth made of hair, and the whole moon became like blood. ¹³The stars of heaven fell to the present age, indeed as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. ¹⁴The sky was split apart like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved from its place. ¹⁵Then the kings of the earth, the nobles, the generals, the rich, the powerful, and every slave and free person hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains. ¹⁶They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! ¹⁷For the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT reads simply *erchou* ('come'), without 'and see' (*kai ide/blepei*), which appears in some manuscripts and is reflected in the KJV. The command is directed to the horseman, summoning him forth, not to John. Each of the four living creatures in turn summons a horseman — they are agents of divine sovereignty, not passive observers. The voice 'like thunder' (*hōs phōnē brontēs*) conveys irresistible authority.
2. The white horse (*hippos leukos*) and its rider have been interpreted as Christ, the gospel's advance, military conquest, or the Antichrist. The passive *edothē* ('was given') — a 'divine passive' recurring throughout the seal judgments — indicates that the horseman's authority is granted from above. The bow (*toxōn*) and crown (*stephanos*, victor's wreath) suggest military conquest. The phrase *nikōn kai hina nikēsē* ('conquering and in order to conquer') expresses unstoppable momentum. We render the vision as described without identifying the rider.
3. The pattern repeats: each seal opening is accompanied by a summons from one of the four living creatures. The second creature corresponds to the ox-like figure of 4:7.
4. The red horse (*hippos pyrrhos*, 'fire-red') represents bloodshed and war. The verb *sphaxousin* ('they will slaughter') is the same root (*sphazō*) used for the Lamb's sacrificial death in 5:6 — an ironic echo. Human beings slaughter one another while the slaughtered Lamb opens the seals. The 'great sword' (*machaira megalē*) is the short sword of close combat, not the long sword (*rhomphaia*) of Christ's mouth. The divine passive *edothē* ('was given/permitted') appears twice, emphasizing that even warfare operates under God's sovereign permission.
5. The black horse (*hippos melas*) represents famine and economic hardship. The scales (*zygon*, literally 'yoke' or 'balance') are instruments for measuring grain by weight — indicating scarcity so severe that food must be rationed. In prosperous times, grain was sold by volume; selling by weight indicates extreme shortage.
6. A *choenix* (approximately one quart or one liter) of wheat was a daily ration for one person. A *denarius* was a day's wage for a laborer (Matthew 20:2). Normally, a *denarius* could buy eight to twelve quarts of wheat. These prices represent inflation of roughly eight to twelve times normal — extreme but not total famine. Barley, the poor person's grain, is cheaper but still inflated. The command 'do not damage the oil and the wine' (*to elaion kai ton oionon mē adikēsēs*) has been interpreted as a limitation on the famine (luxury goods survive while necessities are scarce) or as divine protection of certain resources. Some see a reference to Domitian's edict regarding vineyard management in Asia Minor.
7. The fourth and final horseman is summoned by the eagle-like living creature (4:7). The four horsemen together correspond to the four judgments of Ezekiel 14:21 — sword, famine, plague, and wild beasts — which God sends as comprehensive judgment.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 14:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Greek *chlōros* means 'pale green, yellowish green' — the color of a corpse or of vegetation. It is the same word used for green grass in Mark 6:39. 'Pale green' captures the deathly pallor better than the KJV's generic 'pale.' This is the only horseman explicitly named: Death (*ho Thanatos*), with Hades (*ho Hadēs*) as his companion collecting the dead. The four means of killing — sword (*rhomphaia*), famine (*limos*), pestilence (*thanatos*, here meaning 'plague/deadly disease' rather than 'death'), and wild animals (*thēriōn*) — correspond to Ezekiel 14:21's four judgments. The scope is limited to 'a fourth of the earth' — devastating but not total, allowing room for repentance.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 14:21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The scene shifts from earth to heaven. The martyrs are 'under the altar' (*hypokatō tou thysiastēriou*), corresponding to the base of the sacrificial altar where the blood of offerings was poured (Leviticus 4:7). Their placement under the altar frames their deaths as sacrificial offerings — their blood, like animal blood, is at the altar's base. The verb *esphagmenōn* ('slaughtered') is the same word used for the Lamb in 5:6 — the martyrs' deaths mirror the

Lamb's death. They were killed *dia* ('because of') the word of God and their testimony — their faithfulness was the cause of their deaths.

9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 4:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The cry 'how long?' (*heōs pote*) echoes the psalms of lament (Psalm 6:3; 13:1-2; 79:5; 94:3) — the ancient cry of God's suffering people. The address *ho despotēs* ('Sovereign Lord, Master') is stronger than *kyrios* and emphasizes God's absolute authority — the martyrs appeal not to a peer but to the supreme ruler who has the power and right to act. The request for vengeance (*ekdikēis*, 'vindicate, avenge') is not personal revenge but a plea for divine justice — the restoration of moral order. 'Those who dwell on the earth' (*tōn katoikountōn epi tēs gēs*) becomes a fixed phrase in Revelation for humanity in opposition to God.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 6:3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The white robe (*stolē leukē*) is an interim reward — vindication and honor even before the final judgment. The instruction to 'rest a little longer' (*anapausontai eti chronon mikron*) implies that divine justice operates on a timeline that encompasses more martyrdoms yet to come. The disturbing implication is that God's plan includes the deaths of more faithful witnesses before the end. The phrase 'until the number would be completed' (*heōs plērōthōsin*) suggests a divinely determined measure of suffering — not arbitrary prolongation but purposeful completion. We render *adelphoi* as 'brothers and sisters' since the Greek can be inclusive.
12. The cosmic disruptions draw on Joel 2:31 ('The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood') and Isaiah 13:10 ('The stars of heaven and their constellations will not show their light'). Sackcloth (*sakkos trichinos*, 'sackcloth of hair') was a coarse, dark fabric made of goat hair, worn in mourning. The sun in sackcloth suggests the cosmos itself mourning. The moon 'like blood' (*hōs haima*) — reddened, ominous. These images appear in multiple prophetic texts as signs of the Day of the LORD (Isaiah 13:10; Joel 2:31; Amos 8:9), signaling divine intervention in cosmic terms.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Joel 2:31. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 13:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Amos 8:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The simile of the fig tree (*sykē*) dropping unripe figs (*olynthous*, the late figs that cling to the branch through winter) in a violent wind is vivid and agricultural — even the stars are no more secure in the sky than winter figs on a branch in a storm. The image echoes Isaiah 34:4 ('All the stars of the heavens will dissolve and the sky will be rolled up like a scroll; all their host will wither like leaves withering on a vine, like a withered fig falling from a fig tree').
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 34:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The sky splitting like a rolled scroll comes directly from Isaiah 34:4 (LXX). The image suggests the sky peeling back to reveal the reality behind it — the barrier between heaven and earth torn open. Mountains and islands displaced (*ekinēthēsan*, 'were moved, shaken') represents the destabilization of what seems most permanent and immovable. The vision depicts the total unmaking of the created order — not merely weather events but the dissolution of the cosmic framework.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 34:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The list includes seven categories of people — from kings to slaves — representing the totality of human society. No one is exempt from the terror of God's judgment, regardless of rank or status. The movement from the powerful (kings, nobles, generals, rich, powerful) to the common (slave, free) shows that social hierarchies dissolve before divine judgment. Hiding in caves and rocks echoes Isaiah 2:19-21 ('People will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from the fearful presence of the LORD').
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 2:19-21 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The cry to the mountains echoes Hosea 10:8 ('they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!" and to the hills, "Fall on us!""), which Jesus also cited in Luke 23:30. The phrase 'the wrath of the Lamb' (*tēs orgēs tou arniou*) is one of Revelation's most arresting paradoxes — a lamb is the least wrathful of creatures, yet this Lamb's anger terrifies kings. The juxtaposition of 'the one on the throne' and 'the Lamb' as joint sources of wrath parallels their joint reception of worship in 5:13.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Hosea 10:8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The SBLGNT reads *autōn* ('their,' referring to both the one on the throne and the Lamb) rather than *autou* ('his'). The 'great day' (*hē hēmera hē megalē*) echoes the prophetic 'Day of the LORD' (Joel 2:11, 31; Zephaniah 1:14-18; Malachi 3:2; 4:5). The question 'who is able to stand?' (*tis dynatai stathēnai*) echoes Nahum 1:6 ('Who can endure his fierce anger?') and Malachi 3:2 ('Who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears?'). The question is rhetorical but receives its answer in chapter 7 — those sealed by God are able to stand.

17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Joel 2:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Zephaniah 1:14-18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Malachi 3:2. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Nahum 1:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

7

Summary: *Revelation 7 provides an interlude between the sixth and seventh seals, answering the question of 6:17: 'Who is able to stand?' Two scenes are presented. First, four angels hold back the four winds of the earth while another angel ascends from the rising sun with the seal of the living God, commanding that 144,000 servants of God be sealed on their foreheads — 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel (vv. 1-8). Second, John sees an innumerable multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and the Lamb, clothed in white robes, holding palm branches, and crying out that salvation belongs to God and to the Lamb. Angels, elders, and living creatures worship. One of the elders identifies the multitude as those who have come out of the great tribulation, who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. The chapter concludes with a promise that God will shelter them, and the Lamb will shepherd them to springs of living water, and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The hear/see pattern from chapter 5 recurs: John hears a number (144,000 from Israel's tribes) but sees a vision (an innumerable multitude from every nation). As with the Lion/Lamb contrast, what is heard and what is seen may describe the same reality from different perspectives — the sealed community of God's people is both defined (rooted in Israel's covenant identity) and unlimited (encompassing all nations). The tribal list is unusual: Dan is omitted and Manasseh is included separately from Joseph, which has generated extensive scholarly discussion. The final verses (15-17) anticipate the new creation vision of chapters 21-22.*

Translation Friction: *Whether the 144,000 and the great multitude are the same group described differently or two distinct groups is debated. We render both visions as written without resolving the relationship. The omission of Dan from the tribal list has been variously explained (a scribal error, a tradition associating Dan with idolatry, an association with the Antichrist); we note it without adopting a position. The phrase 'the great tribulation' (tēs thlipseōs tēs megalēs) is rendered with the article as it appears in Greek.*

Connections: *Ezekiel 9:4-6 (marking foreheads for protection), Ezekiel 37:15-28 (reunification of Israel's tribes), Isaiah 49:10 (no hunger or thirst), Isaiah 25:8 (God will wipe away tears), Psalm 23:1-2 (shepherd, still waters), Zechariah 6:5 (four winds), Leviticus 23:40 (palm branches at Sukkot/Tabernacles), Joel 2:32 (whoever calls on the name of the LORD will be saved).*

1After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree. 2Then I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, holding the seal of the living God. He called out with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the earth and the sea, 3Indeed, declaring, Hurt not the world, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. 4And I heard the number of the sealed: 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel: 5From the tribe of Juda, twelve thousand were sealed. From the tribe of Reuben, twelve thousand were sealed. From the tribe of Gad, twelve thousand were sealed. 6From the tribe of Aser, twelve thousand were sealed. From the tribe of Nepthalim, twelve thousand were sealed. From the tribe of Manasses, twelve thousand were sealed. 7From the tribe of Simeon, twelve thousand were sealed. From the tribe of Levi, twelve thousand were sealed. From the tribe of Issachar, twelve thousand were sealed. 8From the tribe of Zabulon, twelve thousand were sealed. From the tribe of Joseph, twelve thousand were sealed. From the tribe of Benjamin, twelve thousand were sealed. 9After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude

that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.

¹⁰They cried out in a loud voice:

"Salvation belongs to our God
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb!"

¹¹And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹²Indeed, declaring, Amen — Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and authority, and might, be to our God for ever and ever. Amen. ¹³Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "These who are clothed in white robes — who are they, and where did they come from?" ¹⁴I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵For this reason they are before the throne of God, and they serve him day and night in his temple, and the one seated on the throne will shelter them with his presence. ¹⁶They will hunger no more and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat, ¹⁷Because the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne will feed them, and will lead them to living fountains of waters — and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The 'four corners of the earth' (tas tessaras gōnias tēs gēs) is a standard ancient expression for the whole world (cf. Isaiah 11:12; Ezekiel 7:2), not a cosmological claim about the earth's shape. The four winds (tessaras anemous) represent destructive forces held in check by divine command (cf. Jeremiah 49:36; Daniel 7:2; Zechariah 6:5). The three domains — earth, sea, trees — represent the totality of the natural world. The restraining of the winds creates a dramatic pause before the sealing, ensuring God's servants are protected before judgment proceeds.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 11:12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 7:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 49:36. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 7:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Zechariah 6:5. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The angel ascends 'from the rising of the sun' (apo anatolēs hēliou) — the east, the direction of dawn and new beginnings. The 'seal of the living God' (sphragida theou zōntos) echoes Ezekiel 9:4, where a man with a writing case marks the foreheads of those in Jerusalem who grieve over its abominations, protecting them from the coming slaughter. The phrase 'living God' (theou zōntos) contrasts with the dead idols that pervade the Roman world — this God is active and capable of protecting his own.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 9:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The sealing (sphragisōmen) on the forehead is a mark of ownership and protection — like a royal seal on a document declaring its origin and inviolability. In Ezekiel 9:4, the mark (Hebrew tav, which in ancient script looked like an X or +) protected the faithful from destruction. The seal does not prevent suffering (the great multitude in verse 14 has come 'out of the great tribulation') but guarantees ultimate preservation. The first-person plural 'we have sealed' (sphragisōmen) suggests the angel speaks on behalf of a divine company.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 9:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. John hears (ēkousa) the number — he does not see it. As in 5:5-6 (hearing 'Lion,' seeing 'Lamb'), what John hears may be interpreted by what he sees (the innumerable multitude in v. 9). The number 144,000 (12 x 12 x 1,000) is a symbolic number of completeness: twelve tribes times twelve (perhaps twelve apostles) times one thousand (a large, round number representing fullness). Whether this represents ethnic Israel, the church as spiritual Israel, or a specific end-time remnant is debated. We render the text as stated.

5. Judah is listed first rather than Reuben (the firstborn), likely because Judah is the messianic tribe — the tribe of the Lamb. The list departs from every Old Testament tribal order, creating a unique arrangement that prioritizes Judah and includes Levi (normally omitted from territorial lists because the Levites had no tribal land allotment).
6. Manasseh is listed separately from Joseph (v. 8), which is unusual — normally Manasseh and Ephraim together constitute Joseph. The separate listing of Manasseh and Joseph (without Ephraim) maintains the count of twelve while substituting for the omitted tribe of Dan.
7. The inclusion of Levi is notable — in Old Testament territorial lists, Levi is typically excluded because the Levites received no land inheritance, being set apart for priestly service (Numbers 18:20-24). Their inclusion here suggests that the list is not based on territorial divisions but on a new ordering of God's people.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Numbers 18:20-24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The list ends with Benjamin, completing twelve tribes with each contributing exactly 12,000. The tribe of Dan is conspicuously absent — an omission that has generated much speculation. Some scholars point to Dan's association with idolatry (Judges 18:30; 1 Kings 12:29), an early tradition linking Dan to the Antichrist (based on a reading of Genesis 49:17 and Jeremiah 8:16), or a simple scribal error confusing Dan and Manasseh. The text does not explain the omission, and we do not speculate beyond noting it.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Judges 18:30 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Kings 12:29 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 49:17 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 8:16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The contrast with the 144,000 is striking: the previous group was precisely numbered and ethnically defined; this group is innumerable and universally sourced. John heard a number (v. 4) but now sees a countless crowd (v. 9) — the hear/see pattern that in chapter 5 revealed Lion and Lamb as the same reality viewed differently. The fourfold formula *ethnous, phylōn, laōn, glōssōn* ('nation, tribe, people, language') echoes 5:9. The palm branches (*phoinikes*) recall the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*, Leviticus 23:40), a celebration of God's provision during the wilderness wandering, and also the triumphal entry traditions.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 23:40. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The Greek *hē sōtēria tō theō* ('salvation to our God') can mean 'salvation belongs to God' (attributing salvation to its source) or 'salvation/praise to our God' (an acclamation). The multitude credits their deliverance jointly to God and the Lamb — as in chapter 5, the two receive unified worship. The cry is the multitude's answer to the question of 6:17 ('who is able to stand?') — those who attribute their salvation to God and the Lamb are the ones who stand.
11. The concentric arrangement reappears: throne at the center, living creatures and elders next, angels surrounding them, and the great multitude beyond. The angels respond to the multitude's cry by falling prostrate (*epesan epi ta prosōpa autōn*, 'fell on their faces') — a posture of complete submission and reverence.
12. A sevenfold doxology — blessing (*eulogia*), glory (*doxa*), wisdom (*sophia*), thanksgiving (*eucharistia*), honor (*timē*), power (*dynamis*), and might (*ischys*) — framed by double 'Amen.' The seven attributes parallel the sevenfold praise to the Lamb in 5:12, with slight variations (thanksgiving replaces wealth). The framing 'Amen...Amen' seals the praise with absolute affirmation. The angels ascribe to God the totality of praise — seven attributes representing completeness.
13. The elder's question is pedagogical — he asks in order to teach, a common technique in apocalyptic literature (cf. Zechariah 4:4-5; Daniel 7:16). The Greek *apekrithē* ('answered') can mean 'responded' or 'spoke up' even without a prior question from John, as it does here.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 4:4-5 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:16 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. John's reply 'my lord, you know' (*kyrie mou, sy oidas*) is respectful deference, not divine address — *kyrie* here is a polite title for the elder. The phrase 'the great tribulation' (*tēs thlipseōs tēs megalēs*) has the definite article, indicating a specific, known period of suffering. The present participle *hoi erchomenoi* ('the ones coming') suggests an ongoing process, not a single past event — they are continually arriving. The paradox of washing robes white in blood is striking: blood normally stains, but the Lamb's blood purifies. The image combines sacrifice (blood) with cleansing (washing white), echoing Isaiah 1:18 ('though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow').

14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 1:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The verb *latreuouein* ('they serve, worship') is cultic language — priestly service in the temple. Day and night service echoes the Levitical priests' perpetual ministry (1 Chronicles 9:33). The verb *skēnōsei* ('will tabernacle, will spread his tent over') is related to *skēnē* ('tent, tabernacle') and evokes the Shekinah — God's dwelling presence among his people. The concept echoes John 1:14 ('the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us') and anticipates Revelation 21:3 ('the tabernacle of God is with humanity'). We render it as 'shelter with his presence' to capture both the protective and relational dimensions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 1 Chronicles 9:33 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. This verse quotes Isaiah 49:10 almost verbatim from the Septuagint: 'They will not hunger or thirst, neither will the scorching heat or the sun strike them.' The Isaiah passage describes the return from exile — God's people journeying home under divine protection. The application to the great multitude frames their experience as a new exodus, a journey through tribulation to the promised presence of God. The negations are emphatic: no more hunger, no more thirst, no more exposure to harsh elements.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 49:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The paradox of a lamb shepherding is striking — normally lambs are shepherded, not shepherds. Yet the Lamb who was slaughtered now leads and protects. The verb *poimanei* ('will shepherd') echoes Psalm 23:1 ('The LORD is my shepherd') and Ezekiel 34:23 ('I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David'). 'Springs of living water' (*zōēs pēgas hydatōn*) echoes Jeremiah 2:13 ('the spring of living water') and anticipates 21:6 and 22:1 (the river of life). The final image — God wiping tears from their eyes — comes from Isaiah 25:8 and is repeated in Revelation 21:4, forming an inclusio between this interlude and the new creation vision. The intimacy of the gesture is remarkable: the sovereign God of the universe personally attending to human grief.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 25:8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 23:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 34:23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 2:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

8

Summary: *Revelation 8 opens with the seventh seal, which produces a dramatic half-hour silence in heaven. Seven angels are given seven trumpets. Another angel with a golden censer offers incense mingled with the prayers of the saints on the golden altar, then fills the censer with fire from the altar and hurls it to earth, producing thunder, lightning, rumblings, and an earthquake. The first four trumpets sound in sequence: the first brings hail and fire mixed with blood, burning a third of the earth and trees; the second causes something like a great burning mountain to fall into the sea, turning a third of it to blood; the third sends a blazing star called Wormwood into the rivers, poisoning a third of the waters; the fourth strikes a third of the sun, moon, and stars, darkening them. The chapter closes with an eagle flying through the sky, crying 'Woe, woe, woe' to those on earth because of the remaining three trumpets.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The half-hour silence after the seventh seal is unique in Revelation's relentless visionary movement. It may echo the silence before creation, the awestruck silence of the heavenly court (cf. Habakkuk 2:20, Zephaniah 1:7, Zechariah 2:13), or the breathless pause before the Day of the LORD. The incense-prayer-judgment sequence (vv. 3-5) explicitly connects the prayers of the saints to the execution of judgment — the martyrs' cry of 6:10 is being answered. The trumpet judgments echo the Egyptian plagues (hail, water to blood, darkness) but are limited to a third of creation, indicating restrained judgment that leaves room for repentance.*

Translation Friction: *The relationship between the seals, trumpets, and bowls (ch. 16) is debated: sequential, recapitulatory, or telescoping. We render each vision as it stands. The 'great mountain burning with fire' (v. 8) and 'great star blazing like a torch' (v. 10) are described with *hōs* ('like, as if'), maintaining their visionary, symbolic character. We render the imagery as presented without naturalistic interpretation.*

Connections: *Exodus 7-10* (Egyptian plagues: hail, water to blood, darkness), *Ezekiel 10:2* (coals from the altar), *Joel 2:30-31* (blood, fire, columns of smoke), *Jeremiah 9:15, 23:15* (wormwood), *Amos 5:7, 6:12* (justice turned to wormwood), *Habakkuk 2:20* (silence before the LORD), *Exodus 30:1-10* (golden altar of incense), *Isaiah 14:12* (fallen star).

¹When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ²Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. ³Another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer. He was given a large quantity of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne. ⁴The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the angel's hand. ⁵Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. ⁶Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them. ⁷The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was thrown to the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. ⁸The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, and a third of the sea became blood. ⁹A third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed. ¹⁰The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many people died from the water because it had been made bitter. ¹²The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light was darkened. A third of the day was without light, and likewise a third of the night. ¹³Then I looked, and I heard an eagle flying in midheaven, crying with a loud voice, "Woe, woe, woe to those who dwell on the earth, because of the remaining trumpet blasts that the three angels are about to sound!"

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. After chapters of praise, thunder, and acclamation, the silence (sigē) is startling. The Greek hēmiōrion ('half an hour') is the only time reference in the heavenly visions. The silence may reflect the tradition of reverent stillness before God (*Habakkuk 2:20*, 'Let all the earth be silent before him'; *Zephaniah 1:7*, 'Be silent before the Lord GOD'; *Zechariah 2:13*, 'Be still before the LORD'). Jewish tradition held that angels cease their praise in heaven during moments when God listens to human prayers — the silence may create space for the saints' prayers to be heard (vv. 3-4).
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes *Habakkuk 2:20*. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes *Zephaniah 1:7*. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes *Zechariah 2:13*. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The definite article 'the seven angels' (tous hepta angelous) suggests a recognized group — possibly the archangels known from Jewish tradition (*Tobit 12:15*, 'I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels who present the prayers of the saints'). The trumpets (salpiggēs) recall the trumpets at Sinai (*Exodus 19:16, 19*), the trumpets at Jericho (*Joshua 6:4-20*), and the eschatological trumpet of *Joel 2:1* and *1 Thessalonians 4:16*. In ancient Israel, trumpets summoned to worship, announced war, and heralded the king.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on *Exodus 19:16*. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on *Joshua 6:4-20*. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on *Joel 2:1*. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The angel performs a priestly function — offering incense on the golden altar, which in the tabernacle/temple stood directly before the Holy of Holies (*Exodus 30:1-10*). The incense is added to (not substituted for) the prayers of the saints — the prayers are already there (cf. 5:8), and the incense mingles with them. The 'golden altar before the throne' (to thysiastērion to chrysoun to enōpion tou thronou) corresponds to the altar of incense in the earthly tabernacle, now revealed in its heavenly archetype.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References *Exodus 30:1-10* — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

4. The visual image is powerful: the smoke carrying the prayers ascends into God's presence. The prayers are not merely spoken and forgotten but physically rise to God. This echoes Psalm 141:2 ('Let my prayer be set before you like incense; the lifting up of my hands like the evening sacrifice'). The scene makes the theological claim that human prayer reaches God and has consequences — the fire that follows (v. 5) is the divine response to those prayers.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 141:2. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The same censer that carried prayers upward now carries fire downward — the connection between prayer and judgment is direct. The fire from the altar echoes Ezekiel 10:2, where coals from between the cherubim are scattered over Jerusalem in judgment. The thunder, rumblings, lightning, and earthquake reprise the Sinai-theophany pattern from 4:5, now with the addition of an earthquake (seismos). This formula recurs at 11:19 and 16:18, each time with intensification.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ezekiel 10:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The preparation (hētoimasan) creates a moment of anticipation before the first trumpet blast. The deliberate sequence — silence, prayer, fire, preparation — slows the narrative pace, building tension before the rapid succession of trumpet judgments.
7. The first trumpet echoes the seventh Egyptian plague — hail mixed with fire (Exodus 9:23-24). The addition of blood intensifies the image beyond the Exodus account, recalling Joel 2:30 ('blood and fire and columns of smoke'). The destruction is limited to a third (to triton) — a recurring fraction in the trumpet judgments that indicates severe but not total devastation. The SBLGNT includes 'a third of the earth was burned up' (to triton tēs gēs katekae), which some manuscripts lack; we follow the critical text.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 9:23-24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Joel 2:30. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The simile hōs oros mega ('like a great mountain') maintains the visionary quality — John describes what he sees without claiming to know exactly what it is. The sea turning to blood echoes the first Egyptian plague (Exodus 7:20-21). The 'burning mountain' may recall Jeremiah 51:25, where Babylon is called a 'destroying mountain' that God will turn into a 'burned-out mountain.' The destruction moves from land (first trumpet) to sea (second trumpet), systematically affecting the created order.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 7:20-21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 51:25 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The scope of destruction includes both marine life (ktismatōn...ta echonta psychas, 'creatures having life/soul') and human commerce (ploiōn, 'ships'). The destruction of ships represents economic devastation — maritime trade was the backbone of the Roman economy, and the loss of a third of shipping would be catastrophic. The pattern of 'one-third' continues, emphasizing that the judgment, while severe, is not total annihilation.
10. The progression continues: land, sea, now fresh water. The falling star (astēr megas) burning like a torch (lampas) moves the destruction from sea to rivers and springs — the sources of drinking water. Stars falling from heaven echo Isaiah 14:12 (the fall of the king of Babylon, 'How you have fallen from heaven, morning star') and may also recall the ancient association of stars with angelic beings (cf. Revelation 1:20; 12:4). The shift from salt water to fresh water intensifies the threat to human survival.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 14:12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. Apsinthos ('Wormwood') is a bitter plant (Artemisia absinthium) that was proverbially associated with bitterness and suffering. In Jeremiah 9:15 and 23:15, God threatens to feed Israel 'wormwood' and give them 'poisoned water to drink' as punishment for following false prophets. In Amos 5:7 and 6:12, justice turned to 'wormwood' describes the perversion of what should sustain life into what destroys it. The naming of the star gives the judgment a personal, identifiable character. The verb epikranthēsan ('were made bitter') describes the transformation of life-giving water into death-dealing poison.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 9:15. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Amos 5:7. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The fourth trumpet echoes the ninth Egyptian plague — darkness (Exodus 10:21-23). The progression of the first four trumpets covers the created order systematically: land and vegetation (1st), sea and marine life (2nd), fresh water (3rd), and celestial bodies (4th). This mirrors the creation sequence of Genesis 1 in reverse — an undoing of creation. The fraction 'one-third' applies to light itself — the most fundamental element of the created order (Genesis 1:3-5). The result is a diminishment of the cosmos, not yet its destruction.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 10:21-23. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The SBLGNT reads *aetou* ('eagle') rather than *angelou* ('angel'), which is the reading of some later manuscripts reflected in the KJV. An eagle (or vulture — *aetos* can mean either) flying in midheaven (*mesouranēmati*, the point of the sky directly overhead, where the sun stands at noon) would be visible to all. The threefold 'woe' (*ouai ouai ouai*) corresponds to the three remaining trumpets — the fifth, sixth, and seventh — which will be called the three 'woes' (9:12; 11:14). The phrase 'those who dwell on the earth' (*tous katoikountas epi tēs gēs*) is Revelation's recurring designation for humanity in rebellion against God.

9

Summary: *Revelation 9 describes the fifth and sixth trumpet judgments — the first two 'woes.'* The fifth trumpet (vv. 1-12): a star fallen from heaven opens the shaft of the abyss, releasing smoke that darkens the sun and air, and from the smoke emerge locust-like creatures with scorpion power. They are commanded not to harm vegetation but only those who do not have God's seal on their foreheads. They torment people for five months but do not kill them; people will seek death but not find it. The locusts are described in terrifying composite imagery — faces like human faces, hair like women's hair, teeth like lions' teeth, breastplates of iron, wings like chariots rushing to battle. Their king is the angel of the abyss, named Abaddon in Hebrew and Apollyon in Greek. The sixth trumpet (vv. 13-21): a voice from the golden altar commands the release of four angels bound at the great river Euphrates, prepared for a specific hour, day, month, and year, to kill a third of humanity. A cavalry of 200 million with horses bearing lion heads and serpent tails kills through fire, smoke, and sulfur. Yet the rest of humanity does not repent of their idolatry, murders, sorcery, sexual immorality, or theft.

What Makes This Remarkable: *The locust vision draws on Joel 1-2 (the locust plague as the Day of the LORD), but transforms natural locusts into supernatural beings of torment. The composite description — combining human, animal, and military features — is characteristic of apocalyptic symbolism and should be rendered as written, not decoded into specific modern equivalents. The Euphrates River was the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire and the traditional invasion route from Parthia, Rome's great rival — the sixth trumpet evokes the terror of invasion from beyond civilization's borders. The chapter's climax is theological: despite all these judgments, the survivors do not repent (vv. 20-21). The purpose of judgment is to provoke repentance, but the human heart resists.*

Translation Friction: *The composite imagery of the locusts defies naturalistic interpretation and should be rendered symbolically as John describes it. The number 200 million (*dismyriades myriadōn*, literally 'two myriads of myriads') is an enormous figure that may be symbolic of an incalculable army rather than a literal count. The names Abaddon/Apollyon are translated in the text itself; we retain both names as given.*

Connections: *Joel 1:2-2:11 (locust plague), Exodus 10:12-15 (Egyptian locust plague), Daniel 7 (composite beasts), Genesis 15:18, Deuteronomy 1:7 (Euphrates as boundary), Isaiah 5:26-30 (invading army from afar), Jeremiah 51:27 (armies from the north), Psalm 115:4-8, 135:15-18 (idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, wood).*

1The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from heaven to earth, and the key to the shaft of the abyss was given to him. 2He opened the shaft of the abyss, and smoke rose from the shaft like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened by the smoke from the shaft. 3From the smoke, locusts came down on the earth, and they were given power like the power of scorpions of the earth. 4They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any green plant or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5They were allowed to torment them for five months but not to kill them, and their torment was like the torment of a scorpion when it stings a person. 6In those days people will seek death and will not find it. They will long to die, but death will flee from them. 7In appearance the locusts were like horses prepared for battle. On their heads were what looked like crowns of gold, and their faces were like human faces. 8They had hair like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. 9They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the sound of many horse-drawn chariots rushing into battle. 10They have tails and stings like scorpions, and in their tails is their power to harm people for five months. 11They have as king over them the angel of the abyss. His name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon. 12The first woe has

passed. Two woes are still to come after this. ¹³The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar that is before God, ¹⁴Indeed, declaring to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the remarkable river Euphrates. ¹⁵So the four angels were released, who had been prepared for this hour, day, month, and year, to kill a third of humanity. ¹⁶The number of the mounted troops was two hundred million; I heard their number. ¹⁷And this is how I saw the horses in the vision and their riders: they wore breastplates the color of fire, dark blue, and sulfur yellow. The heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur. ¹⁸By these three plagues a third of humanity was killed — by the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur coming out of their mouths. ¹⁹For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails, for their tails are like serpents, with heads, and with them they inflict harm. ²⁰The rest of humanity, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands or stop worshiping demons and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood — which cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹And they did not repent of their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality, or their thefts.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The star (astera) is personified — 'him' (autō) — indicating an angelic or demonic being, not a literal celestial body. The perfect participle peptōkota ('having fallen') indicates a completed fall, not one in progress — this star has already fallen. The 'abyss' (abyssou) in Revelation is the prison of demonic forces (cf. 11:7; 17:8; 20:1-3). The 'shaft' (phreatos) suggests a well or pit with a covering that can be opened and closed. The divine passive edothē ('was given') indicates that even this destructive action operates under God's permission.
2. The smoke (kapnos) obscuring sun and air recalls the pillar of smoke at Sinai (Exodus 19:18, 'Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace'). The same vocabulary (kaminos, 'furnace') appears in both passages. But whereas the Sinai smoke signaled God's presence, this smoke releases destructive forces — a dark inversion. The darkening of the sky by smoke continues the darkness motif from the fourth trumpet (8:12).
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 19:18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The locusts (akrides) emerge from the abyss, not from the natural world — they are demonic entities in locust form. Their power is compared to scorpions (skorpioi), combining two of the most feared creatures in the ancient Near East. The divine passive edothē ('was given') again emphasizes that their power is delegated, not inherent. The locust plague echoes Joel 1-2, where a devastating locust invasion prefigures the Day of the LORD.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Joel 1-2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. Natural locusts devour vegetation; these supernatural locusts are commanded to leave vegetation alone and target humans instead — a complete inversion of natural behavior that marks them as demonic rather than natural. The exemption of those with God's seal (tēn sphragida tou theou) connects directly to the sealing of the 144,000 in 7:3-4. God's servants are protected from demonic torment even in the midst of worldwide suffering.
5. The five-month period (mēnas pente) may correspond to the typical lifespan of locusts (roughly May through September). The torment (basanismos) is agonizing but not lethal — a carefully limited judgment. The verb basanisthēsontai ('they will be tormented') is the same word used for the testing of gold in fire and for the interrogation of prisoners. The scorpion sting comparison specifies the type of suffering: intense, burning pain that incapacitates but does not kill.
6. The double statement — seeking death, longing to die — emphasizes the extremity of the torment. Death personified as fleeing (pheugei, present tense — it keeps fleeing) inverts the normal human experience where death is the pursuer and life flees. This echoes Job 3:21 ('who long for death, but it does not come, who search for it more than for hidden treasure'). The irony is that those who 'dwell on the earth' (the ones opposed to God throughout Revelation) sought security in earthly things; now even death offers no escape.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Job 3:21. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The description begins a composite portrait that combines features from Joel 2:4 ('They have the appearance of horses; they gallop along like cavalry'). The repeated use of hōs and homoios ('like, resembling') — at least seven times in vv. 7-10 — maintains the visionary quality. John is describing what he sees in terms of the closest analogies he can find. The 'crowns of gold' (hōs stephanoi homoioi chrysō) suggest authority or victory, though the qualifier 'what looked like' indicates they are not actual crowns. Human faces suggest intelligence or cunning.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Joel 2:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The hair 'like women's hair' (hōs trichas gynaikōn) may refer to the locusts' antennae, which could suggest flowing hair, or may evoke a sense of the uncanny — a blurring of categories that makes these creatures more disturbing. The lion's teeth echo Joel 1:6 ('It has the teeth of a lion, the fangs of a lioness'), directly linking these creatures to Joel's locust-plague prophecy. The combination of human faces, flowing hair, and predatory teeth creates a composite that is deliberately disorienting.

8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Joel 1:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The iron breastplates (thōrakas hōs thōrakas sidērous) suggest invulnerability — these creatures cannot be fought or stopped. The thunderous sound of their wings echoes Joel 2:5 ('like the noise of chariots, they leap over the mountaintops, like the crackling of fire consuming stubble, like a mighty army drawn up for battle'). The cumulative effect of the description is of an unstoppable, invulnerable, terrifying army that combines the worst features of insects, predators, warriors, and supernatural beings.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joel 2:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The description circles back to the scorpion imagery of verse 3, creating a frame around the composite portrait. The five-month period is repeated from verse 5, confirming the limited duration. Their power (exousia, 'authority') resides in their tails — the part that delivers the sting. The description has moved from head to tail: golden crowns, human faces, women's hair, lion's teeth, iron breastplates, chariot-wing sound, and scorpion tails — a top-to-bottom portrait of supernatural terror.
11. Both names mean 'Destroyer' — Abaddon from the Hebrew root 'b-d ('to perish, destroy') and Apollyon from the Greek apollymi ('to destroy'). In the Old Testament, Abaddon is a place — the realm of the dead (Job 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Psalm 88:11; Proverbs 15:11; 27:20). Here it becomes a personal name for the ruler of that realm. Some scholars see a wordplay on Apollo (Apollōn), the Greco-Roman deity claimed as patron by several Roman emperors — if so, this is a subversive identification of the imperial god with the king of the underworld. Proverbs 30:27 states that 'locusts have no king,' making these supernatural locusts a deliberate contrast to natural ones.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Job 26:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 88:11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 15:11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Proverbs 30:27. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. This editorial interjection marks the structural division of the three woes announced by the eagle in 8:13. The fifth trumpet = first woe; the sixth trumpet = second woe (11:14); the seventh trumpet = third woe (11:15ff). The phrase 'two woes are still to come' (erchetai eti duo ouai) maintains the escalating tension — if the locust plague was only the first woe, the remaining judgments will be worse.
13. The voice comes from the golden altar of incense — the same altar where the saints' prayers were offered in 8:3-4. The connection implies that the sixth trumpet is a response to those prayers, specifically the martyrs' cry in 6:10 ('How long...until you avenge our blood?'). The 'four horns' (tessarōn keratōn) of the altar are the projections at its four corners (cf. Exodus 30:2-3), where sacrificial blood was applied. The SBLGNT brackets tessarōn ('four'), as it is absent in some manuscripts, but the reading is well-attested.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 30:2-3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. These four angels (tous tessaras angelous) are distinct from the four angels of 7:1 who hold back the winds — these are 'bound' (dedemenous), suggesting they are malevolent beings restrained by divine authority. The Euphrates (Euphratē) was the traditional eastern boundary of both the promised land (Genesis 15:18; Deuteronomy 1:7) and the Roman Empire. Enemies from beyond the Euphrates — Assyria, Babylon, Parthia — were the archetypal invading threat throughout Israel's history. The release of these angels symbolizes the unleashing of forces from beyond the boundary of the known world.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 15:18. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 1:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The fourfold time specification — hour, day, month, year — emphasizes divine precision. These angels were prepared for this exact moment (hētoimasmenoi, 'having been prepared' — perfect passive, indicating prior divine arrangement). The killing of 'a third of humanity' (to triton tōn anthrōpōn) escalates beyond the trumpet pattern of damaging a third of creation to the direct killing of a third of the human race. Where the fifth trumpet tormented but did not kill, the sixth trumpet kills on a massive scale.
16. The Greek dismyriades myriadōn literally means 'two ten-thousands of ten-thousands' — 200,000,000. This number far exceeds any ancient army (the entire Roman Empire may have had only 50-70 million inhabitants). The staggering figure likely represents an innumerable, overwhelming force rather than a precise count. John specifies 'I heard their number' (ēkousa ton arithmon autōn) — the number was told to him, not counted by him, underscoring its symbolic character.
17. The breastplates are described by three colors matching the three agents of death: fire-red (pyrinous), dark blue like hyacinth (hyakinthinous, the deep blue of smoke), and sulfur-yellow (theiōdeis). Fire, smoke, and sulfur (pyr kai kapnos kai theion) recall the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-28), establishing this as divine judgment. The lion heads continue the predatory imagery — these horses are weapons, not transport. John frames this as 'what I saw in the vision' (en tē horasei), reminding the reader of the visionary medium.

17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 19:24-28. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. The three destructive agents are called 'plagues' (plēgōn), the same word used for the Egyptian plagues in the Septuagint. The identification of fire, smoke, and sulfur as distinct 'plagues' formalizes what verses 15 and 17 described visually. The repetition of 'a third' (to triton) maintains the pattern established throughout the trumpet sequence — severe but not total destruction.
19. The horses are deadly at both ends — fire from their mouths and serpent-tails that bite. Like the locusts of verses 7-10, the description defies natural categories. The serpent tails (homoiai ophesin, 'like snakes') add another layer to the composite imagery and may evoke the primordial serpent of Genesis 3. The description of tails 'having heads' (echousai kephalas) is deliberately unsettling — these are creatures designed to harm from every direction.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. This is the theological climax of the chapter — the purpose of judgment was to provoke repentance, but the survivors refuse to turn. The critique of idolatry (ta eidōla ta chrysa kai ta argyra kai ta chalka kai ta lithina kai ta xylina) echoes Daniel 5:23 and Psalm 115:4-8 / 135:15-18, which mock idols that 'have eyes but cannot see, ears but cannot hear.' The list of materials descends in value (gold, silver, bronze, stone, wood), suggesting the absurdity of exchanging the living God for increasingly worthless substitutes. Behind the idols stand 'demons' (daimonia) — the worship appears religious but serves destructive spiritual realities.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 5:23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 115:4-8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. Four sins are listed alongside idolatry from verse 20: murders (phonōn), sorceries (pharmakōn), sexual immorality (porneias), and thefts (klemmatōn). The Greek pharmakōn (from which 'pharmacy' derives) refers to the use of drugs, potions, and spells — sorcery in the ancient world often involved pharmacological substances used in magical rituals. These four sins roughly correspond to violations of the second table of the Decalogue (murder, false worship through magic, adultery, theft). The double statement of non-repentance (verses 20 and 21) frames the human response as tragically, stubbornly defiant in the face of overwhelming evidence of divine power.

10

Summary: *Revelation 10 provides an interlude between the sixth and seventh trumpets, paralleling the interlude between the sixth and seventh seals (chapter 7). A mighty angel descends from heaven, wrapped in a cloud with a rainbow over his head, his face like the sun and legs like pillars of fire. He holds a small open scroll, places his right foot on the sea and left foot on the land, and shouts like a lion. Seven thunders speak, but John is commanded to seal up what they said and not write it down. The angel then swears by the Creator that there will be no more delay — when the seventh angel sounds his trumpet, the mystery of God will be fulfilled. John is told to take the scroll from the angel and eat it; it is sweet in his mouth but bitter in his stomach. He is told he must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The 'mighty angel' (angelos ischyros) has features reminiscent of Christ's description in chapter 1 (face like the sun, cloud, authority over sea and land) and of the angel of Daniel 10 and 12. His stance on sea and land claims authority over the entire earth. The sealed seven thunders are unique in Revelation — every other vision is recorded, but this one is suppressed, suggesting that not all of God's purposes are revealed. The eating of the scroll directly parallels Ezekiel 2:8-3:3, where Ezekiel eats a scroll that is sweet as honey — John's experience adds the element of bitterness, reflecting the mixed content of prophetic proclamation (sweet truth, bitter judgment).*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the 'mighty angel' is debated: some identify him as Christ, others as a powerful angel (like Michael). The divine features could describe either a theophany or an angel bearing divine glory. We render the text as written without identifying the figure beyond what the text states. The seven thunders remain sealed — any attempt to identify their content is speculation, and we note the deliberate concealment.*

Connections: *Daniel 10:5-6 (angelic figure), Daniel 12:7 (angel standing on water, swearing by the eternal God), Ezekiel 2:8-3:3 (eating the scroll), Exodus 20:11, Nehemiah 9:6 (God as Creator of heaven, earth, and sea), Amos 3:7-8 (the lion roars, the Lord GOD has spoken), Psalm 29:3-9 (the voice of the LORD as thunder).*

¹Then I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head. His face was like the sun, and his legs were like pillars of fire. ²He held a small scroll open in his hand. He planted his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, ³He shouted in a loud voice, like a lion roaring. When he shouted, seven thunders spoke with their own voices. ⁴When the seven thunders had spoken, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down." ⁵Then the angel whom I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven ⁶Swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created the heavens above, and the things that therein are, and the world, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:. ⁷But in the days when the seventh angel is about to sound his trumpet, the mystery of God will be fulfilled, just as he announced to his servants the prophets." ⁸Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." ⁹So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the small scroll. He said to me, "Take it and eat it. It will turn your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." ¹⁰I took the small scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned bitter. ¹¹Then they said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The angel's description echoes multiple Old Testament theophanies: the cloud recalls God's presence in the wilderness (Exodus 13:21-22); the rainbow recalls the throne-room vision (4:3) and God's covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:13); the sun-like face recalls both the transfiguration (Matthew 17:2) and the glorified Christ (1:16); the fire-pillars recall the pillar of fire that led Israel (Exodus 13:21). The word *allon* ('another') distinguishes this angel from the seven trumpet angels. The Greek *podes* can mean 'feet' or 'legs'; given the pillar imagery, 'legs' better conveys the visual impression.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 13:21-22. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 9:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The 'small scroll' (*biblaridion*, a diminutive of *biblion*) is open (*ēneōgmenon*), in contrast to the sealed scroll of chapter 5. Whether this is the same scroll now unsealed or a different document is debated. The colossus-like stance — one foot on the sea, one on the land — claims authority over the entire created world. The imagery echoes the ancient concept of a conqueror placing his foot on conquered territory (cf. Joshua 10:24). The verb *ethēken* ('planted, set') suggests a firm, deliberate placement.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Joshua 10:24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The lion's roar (*hōsper leōn mykatai*) echoes Amos 3:8 ('The lion has roared — who will not fear? The Sovereign LORD has spoken — who can but prophesy?') and Hosea 11:10 ('He will roar like a lion. When he roars, his children will come trembling from the west'). The 'seven thunders' (*hai hepta brontai*) are introduced with the definite article, as if they are a recognized group — possibly related to the sevenfold voice of the LORD in Psalm 29, where 'the voice of the LORD' (*qol YHWH*) appears seven times, accompanied by thunder.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Amos 3:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Hosea 11:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 29 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. This is the only instance in Revelation where John is told not to write. Elsewhere he is repeatedly commanded to write (1:11, 19; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5). The sealing (*sphragison*) of the thunders' message contrasts with the unsealing of the scroll in chapter 5. The command establishes that there are aspects of God's plan that remain hidden — not every divine purpose is revealed to human knowledge. This echoes Daniel 12:4 ('seal up the words of the scroll until the time of the end') and Deuteronomy 29:29 ('the secret things belong to the LORD our God').
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 12:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 29:29. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The raising of the right hand is the gesture of a solemn oath (cf. Genesis 14:22; Deuteronomy 32:40; Daniel 12:7). The scene closely parallels Daniel 12:7, where 'the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, raised his right hand and his left hand toward heaven and swore by him who lives forever.' In Daniel, the angel swears about the timing of the end; here the angel makes a similar declaration about the fulfillment of God's

mystery.

5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 14:22 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Deuteronomy 32:40 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 12:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The oath is sworn by the eternal Creator — the highest possible authority. The threefold creation formula (heaven and what is in it, earth and what is in it, sea and what is in it) echoes Exodus 20:11 and Nehemiah 9:6. The declaration *chronos ouketi estai* is better rendered 'there will be no more delay' than the KJV's 'time shall be no more' — the Greek *chronos* here means 'time of waiting' or 'interval of delay,' not time itself. The martyrs' cry 'how long?' (6:10) is finally being answered: no more waiting.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 20:11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Nehemiah 9:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The 'mystery of God' (to *mystērion tou theou*) is his complete redemptive plan — the same concept Paul uses in Romans 16:25-26 and Ephesians 3:3-6. The verb *etelesthē* ('will be fulfilled, completed') is the same root as Christ's cry from the cross: *tetelestai* ('it is finished,' John 19:30). The verb *euēngelisen* ('announced good news, proclaimed as gospel') is striking — God's mystery was 'gospelled' to the prophets. The fulfillment of the mystery at the seventh trumpet connects to 11:15-18, where the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of God and of his Christ. The prophets (*tous prophētas*) refers to the Old Testament prophets who proclaimed this coming consummation (cf. Amos 3:7, 'Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets').
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Amos 3:7. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The heavenly voice (from v. 4) now directs John to participate in the vision, not merely observe it. The instruction to 'take the scroll' (*labe to biblion*) transitions John from witness to actor. The angel's posture is reiterated — standing on sea and land — emphasizing the cosmic authority behind the scroll's contents.
9. The command to eat the scroll directly parallels Ezekiel 2:8-3:3, where God commands Ezekiel to eat a scroll containing 'lamentations, mourning, and woe' — and it tasted 'as sweet as honey.' John's experience adds the element of bitterness in the stomach (*pikranei sou tēn koilian*), which Ezekiel's account lacks. The scroll's sweetness represents the pleasure of receiving God's word; its bitterness represents the painful content of what must be proclaimed — judgment, suffering, and woe. The prophet must internalize the message before delivering it.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ezekiel 2:8-3:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The experience unfolds exactly as the angel predicted but in reverse order: he was told bitter-then-sweet, but he experiences sweet-then-bitter. The sweetness comes first — the initial reception of God's word is a delight (cf. Psalm 119:103, 'How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!'). The bitterness follows — the content of prophetic proclamation involves suffering and judgment. This sequence mirrors the experience of many prophets: called with joy, burdened by the message.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 119:103 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The plural *legousin* ('they said') is unexpected — the angel was singular. The plural may indicate a heavenly council or may be an impersonal construction ('it was said to me'). The commission to 'prophesy again' (*palin prophēteusai*) recommissions John for the visions that follow, particularly chapters 11-22. The preposition *epi* can mean 'about, concerning' or 'before, in the presence of.' The fourfold formula (peoples, nations, languages, kings) varies the standard Revelation pattern, substituting 'kings' (*basileusin*) for 'tribes' — anticipating the prominent role of earthly kings in the visions to come.

11

Summary: *Revelation 11 opens with John being given a measuring rod and told to measure the temple of God and the altar but not the outer court, which has been given to the nations who will trample the holy city for forty-two months. Two witnesses are introduced who will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth. They are described as the two olive trees and two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. They have power to shut the sky, turn water to blood, and strike the earth with plagues. When they finish their testimony, the beast from the abyss kills them, and their bodies lie in the street of the great city for three and a half days while the earth's inhabitants celebrate. Then the breath of life from God enters them, they stand up, and a loud voice calls them up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watch. A great earthquake destroys a tenth of the city, killing 7,000, and the survivors give glory to God. The second woe ends, and the seventh trumpet sounds, prompting heavenly voices to declare that the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. The twenty-four elders worship God, and the temple in heaven is opened, revealing the ark of the covenant amid lightning, thunder, earthquake, and hail.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The two witnesses combine features of Moses (turning water to blood, plagues) and Elijah (shutting the sky, fire from their mouths), the two great figures of the Law and the Prophets. Their identification as 'olive trees and lampstands' draws directly from Zechariah 4, where the olive trees represent anointed figures who serve the Lord. The forty-two months / 1,260 days / three and a half years is the same period found in Daniel 7:25, 9:27, and 12:7 — a time of trial and tribulation. The seventh trumpet brings not another judgment but the climactic declaration of God's kingdom — the 'mystery of God' announced in 10:7 is fulfilled. The ark of the covenant appearing in the heavenly temple connects to the lost ark of the earthly temple, suggesting that what was lost on earth is preserved in heaven.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the two witnesses has generated extensive debate: literal future individuals, Moses and Elijah returned, the Law and the Prophets, the church's witness, or Israel and the church together. We render the text as written, noting the Mosaic and Elijahnic allusions. The 'great city' (v. 8) is 'spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was crucified' — this identifies it as Jerusalem but in the language of prophetic condemnation. The measuring of the temple (vv. 1-2) may refer to the physical temple, the spiritual community, or both.*

Connections: *Zechariah 4:2-14 (two olive trees and lampstands), Daniel 7:25, 9:27, 12:7 (three and a half years), 1 Kings 17:1 (Elijah shuts the sky), Exodus 7:17-20 (Moses turns water to blood), 2 Kings 1:10-12 (Elijah calls fire from heaven), Ezekiel 37:5-10 (breath of life enters the dead), Ezekiel 40-42 (measuring the temple), Daniel 7:14, 27 (kingdom given to the saints), Psalm 2:1-2 (nations rage), Isaiah 26:20-21 (God comes to judge), Exodus 25:10-22 (ark of the covenant).*

¹Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Rise and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, ²However, the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not. Since it is given to the Gentiles — and the holy city will they tread under foot forty and two months. ³And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." ⁴These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵If anyone would harm them, fire comes from their mouths and consumes their enemies. If anyone would try to harm them, this is how that person must be killed. ⁶They have the power to shut the sky so that no rain falls during the days of their prophesying, and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they wish. ⁷When they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the abyss will make war on them and conquer them and kill them. ⁸Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is symbolically called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹For three and a half days, people from the peoples, tribes, languages, and nations will gaze at their bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb. ¹⁰Those who dwell on the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and exchange gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who dwell on the earth. ¹¹But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. ¹²Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here."

And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies watched. ¹³At that moment a great earthquake struck, and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. ¹⁴The second woe has passed. The third woe is coming soon.

¹⁵Then the seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying:

"The kingdom of the world has become
the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ,
and he will reign forever and ever!"

¹⁶Then the twenty-four elders, who sit before God on their thrones, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷Saying, We give you thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come. Because you have taken to you your remarkable authority, and hast reigned.

¹⁸The nations raged,
but your wrath has come,
and the time for the dead to be judged,
and the time to reward your servants the prophets
and the saints and those who fear your name,
both small and great,
and the time to destroy those who destroy the earth."

¹⁹Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. There came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The measuring of the temple echoes Ezekiel 40-42, where an angelic figure measures the new temple in detail. In Ezekiel, measuring signifies preservation and divine ownership — what is measured is claimed and protected by God. The Greek *naon* (not *hieron*) specifically refers to the inner sanctuary, the dwelling place of God's presence, not the entire temple complex. The instruction to measure 'those who worship' (*tous proskynountas*) extends the protection to people, not just architecture — the faithful community is measured and preserved.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 40-42. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
3. The outer court (*tēn aulēn tēn exōthen*) — the Court of the Gentiles in the physical temple — is excluded from measurement, meaning it is not preserved but given over (*edothē*, divine passive) to the nations (*ethnesin*). The forty-two months (*mēnas tesserakonta duo*) equals 1,260 days (v. 3) and three and a half years — the period of tribulation drawn from Daniel 7:25, 9:27, and 12:7, where it represents a time of suffering under hostile powers. Luke 21:24 uses the same verb *patēsousin* ('trample') for the Gentile domination of Jerusalem. The distinction between the protected inner sanctuary and the exposed outer court may represent the preservation of God's true people amid the external suffering of the visible community.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:25. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
5. The speaker shifts to first person — God or Christ directly commissions the two witnesses. The 1,260 days equals forty-two months (at 30 days per month), the same period of Gentile trampling in verse 2 — the witnesses prophesy during the time of tribulation, not after it. Sackcloth (*sakkous*) is the garment of mourning, repentance, and prophetic lamentation (cf. Isaiah 20:2; Jonah 3:5-6). Their ministry is one of urgent warning, not celebration. The Greek *martyrsin* ('witnesses') is the same word that gives English 'martyr' — these witnesses will testify and die.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 20:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jonah 3:5-6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. This verse directly identifies the witnesses with the vision of Zechariah 4:2-14, where two olive trees flanking a golden lampstand represent 'the two anointed ones who stand by the Lord of all the earth.' In Zechariah, the olive trees supply oil to the lampstand — they are sources of the Spirit's power. The identification of the witnesses as both olive trees (sources of the Spirit) and lampstands (bearers of light) combines the imagery. The phrase 'the Lord of the earth' (*tou kyriou tēs gēs*) echoes Zechariah 4:14 and asserts God's sovereignty over the world that persecutes his witnesses.

4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Zechariah 4:2-14. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The fire from their mouths echoes 2 Kings 1:10-12, where Elijah calls fire from heaven on the soldiers sent to arrest him, and Jeremiah 5:14 ('I will make my words in your mouth a fire, and this people the wood it consumes'). The double statement ('if anyone would harm them...if anyone would try to harm them') emphasizes the inviolability of the witnesses during their appointed prophetic ministry. The verb *dei* ('must') indicates divine necessity — this is not arbitrary violence but the divinely ordained consequence of opposing God's witnesses.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes 2 Kings 1:10-12 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 5:14 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. Two specific powers combine Moses and Elijah: shutting the sky from rain is Elijah's signature act (1 Kings 17:1; cf. James 5:17, 'Elijah prayed fervently that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months' — notably the same three-and-a-half-year period). Turning water to blood and sending plagues is Moses's role in the Exodus (Exodus 7:17-20; chapters 7-12). The witnesses embody the combined authority of the Law (Moses) and the Prophets (Elijah) — the two figures who appeared with Jesus at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:3). The phrase *hosákis ean thelēsōsin* ('as often as they wish') grants them extraordinary freedom of action.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Kings 17:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 7:17-20. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The temporal clause *hotan teleōsin* ('when they have finished') is crucial — the beast cannot touch them until their prophetic task is complete. Their death is not a failure but comes after the fulfillment of their mission. The 'beast from the abyss' (to *thērion* to *anabainon ek tēs abyssou*) is introduced here abruptly and will be fully described in chapter 13. The word *thērion* ('wild beast') is distinct from *zōon* ('living creature') used for the heavenly beings — this is a predatory, destructive entity. The verbs escalate: war (*polemon*), conquer (*nikēsei*), kill (*apoktenei*). The beast's 'conquering' (*nikēsei*) uses the same verb applied to the Lamb in 5:5 and to the faithful in the seven letters — a counterfeit victory that will itself be overcome.
8. The city is identified by three symbolic names: 'the great city' (*tēs poleōs tēs megalēs* — a term later applied to Babylon in 16:19, 17:18, 18:10), 'Sodom' (representing sexual immorality and divine destruction, Genesis 18-19), and 'Egypt' (representing oppression and enslavement of God's people, Exodus 1-14). The clause 'where their Lord was crucified' (*hopou kai ho kyrios autōn estaurōthē*) identifies the city as Jerusalem — yet Jerusalem is described with the names of Israel's archetypal enemies. The adverb *pneumatikōs* ('spiritually, symbolically') signals that these names are prophetic characterizations, not geographical identifiers.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 18-19 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 1-14 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The fourfold formula (*laōn, phylōn, glōssōn, ethnōn*) indicates worldwide observation — the witnesses' humiliation is public and universal. The three and a half days (*hēmeras treis kai hēmisy*) mirrors the three and a half years of their ministry in miniature. Refusing burial was the ultimate dishonor in the ancient world (cf. the outrage over the unburied body of Polynices in Sophocles' *Antigone*; and the importance of burial in 1 Kings 14:11; Jeremiah 22:19). The denial of burial expresses contempt for the witnesses and for the God they served.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Kings 14:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 22:19. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The celebration over the prophets' death — complete with gift-giving — is a grim parody of a festival. The witnesses' prophetic ministry is described as 'torment' (*ebasanisan*) from the perspective of the unrepentant — the truth of God's word is experienced as agony by those who reject it. The phrase *hoi katoikountes epi tēs gēs* ('those who dwell on the earth') recurs as Revelation's standard term for humanity in rebellion against God. The scene will be dramatically reversed in the next verses.
11. The phrase *pneuma zōēs ek tou theou* ('breath/spirit of life from God') directly echoes Ezekiel 37:5-10, where God breathes life into the valley of dry bones and they stand on their feet — the same verb *histēmi* ('to stand') appears in both passages. The reversal is total: the celebrated death becomes terrifying resurrection. The divine passive construction (*pneuma...eisēlthen*, 'the breath entered') emphasizes God's direct action. The 'great fear' (*phobos megas*) that falls on observers is the typical human response to divine intervention (cf. Luke 1:12, 65; Acts 5:5, 11).
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 37:5-10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The command 'Come up here' (*anabate hōde*) echoes the invitation to John in 4:1. The ascension in a cloud (*en tē nephelē*) recalls both Elijah's ascension (2 Kings 2:11) and Christ's ascension (Acts 1:9). The phrase 'their enemies watched' (*etheōrēsan autous hoi echthroi autōn*) is the ultimate reversal — the same people who refused to bury them and celebrated their death now witness their vindication. The cloud, a symbol of divine presence throughout Scripture, carries them into God's domain in full view of their persecutors.

12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Kings 2:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The earthquake accompanies the witnesses' vindication — divine confirmation of their ministry. A tenth (to dekatōn) of the city falls, and 7,000 die — precise numbers suggesting a measured, controlled judgment. The 7,000 may invert 1 Kings 19:18, where 7,000 in Israel had not bowed to Baal — there, 7,000 were the faithful remnant; here, 7,000 are the judged. Crucially, 'the rest' (hoi loipoi) gave glory to God (edōkan doxan tō theō tou ouranou) — unlike the survivors of the trumpet plagues who refused to repent (9:20-21), these survivors respond with worship. This suggests that the witnesses' ministry, including their death and resurrection, achieves what the plagues alone could not: genuine repentance.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Kings 19:18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. This structural marker parallels 9:12. The second woe (the sixth trumpet, including the interlude of chapters 10-11:13) has ended. The third woe is identified with the seventh trumpet, which sounds in the very next verse. The adverb tachy ('quickly, soon') heightens the urgency — there is no further delay.
15. The seventh trumpet is the climactic moment anticipated since 10:7. The SBLGNT reads the singular hē basileia ('the kingdom') rather than the KJV's plural 'kingdoms' — the entire world-system, conceived as a single rebellious kingdom, is now claimed by God and his Christ. The phrase tou kyriou hēmōn kai tou Christou autou ('of our Lord and of his Christ') echoes Psalm 2:2 ('against the LORD and against his anointed one') — the psalm of universal rebellion is answered by universal sovereignty. The future tense basileusei ('he will reign') may be a 'prophetic future' or may indicate that the reign, while declared, is still being realized. The phrase 'forever and ever' (eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn) ensures this is no temporary political transfer but eternal dominion.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 2:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The elders respond to the kingdom proclamation as they did to the creation hymn in 4:10-11 — falling prostrate in worship. The pattern of heavenly worship in response to divine action is consistent throughout Revelation. Their thrones (thronous, not the KJV's 'seats') indicate their authority, yet they voluntarily prostrate themselves before the supreme throne.
17. The divine title is now twofold — 'who is and who was' (ho ōn kai ho ēn) — the third element ('who is to come') is omitted because he has now come. The future arrival is no longer anticipated; it has occurred. This subtle change signals the fulfillment of the promise. The verb ebasileusas ('you have reigned/begun to reign') is an ingressive aorist — God has always been sovereign, but now he actively exercises that sovereignty in the transformation of the world's kingdoms. The thanksgiving (eucharistoumen) is the appropriate response when the long-awaited kingdom arrives.
18. The opening line 'the nations raged' (ta ethnē ōrgisthēsan) quotes Psalm 2:1 (LXX), where the nations rage against the LORD and his anointed — a rage now met by God's own wrath (hē orgē sou). The verse compresses the entire eschatological program into a single sentence: judgment of the dead, reward for the faithful (prophets, saints, God-fearers — both small and great, demolishing all social hierarchy), and destruction of the destroyers. The final phrase diaphtheirai tous diaphtheirontas tēn gēn ('to destroy those who destroy the earth') contains a powerful wordplay — the same verb is used for both God's action and the destroyers' crime. Those who corrupt and ruin God's creation will themselves be ruined.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 2:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The heavenly temple opens to reveal the ark of the covenant (hē kibōtos tēs diathēkēs autou) — the most sacred object in Israel's worship, lost since the destruction of Solomon's temple in 586 BC. Its appearance in the heavenly temple declares that what was lost on earth is preserved in heaven — God's covenant faithfulness endures even when its earthly symbols are destroyed. The word diathēkēs ('covenant') connects this vision to the entire biblical narrative of God's binding relationship with his people. The Sinai-theophany formula recurs with full intensity: lightning, rumblings, thunder, earthquake, and now hail — the most complete iteration yet, escalating from 4:5 (lightning, rumblings, thunder) and 8:5 (those plus earthquake). Each repetition adds an element, suggesting that the revelation of God's presence intensifies as Revelation progresses.

12

Summary: Revelation 12 presents a cosmic drama in three movements: a woman clothed with the sun gives birth to a male child who is snatched up to God's throne; war erupts in heaven as Michael and his angels defeat the dragon; and the dragon, cast down to earth, pursues the woman and her offspring. The chapter establishes the theological framework for the rest of the book's conflict — the dragon (identified as Satan) has been defeated in heaven and now wages war against those who keep God's commands and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

What Makes This Remarkable: The woman figure is richly symbolic, drawing on imagery from Genesis 37 (Joseph's dream of sun, moon, and twelve stars), Isaiah 26:17-18 and 66:7 (Zion in labor), and the exodus narrative. The male child 'who will rule all nations with an iron rod' echoes Psalm 2:9, a royal messianic psalm. The number 1,260 days (v. 6) equals forty-two months or three and a half years — half of

seven, the number of completion — representing a limited period of tribulation. The victory hymn in verses 10-12 is the theological center: the accuser has been thrown down, and the saints conquer him 'by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.'

Translation Friction: *The identity of the woman has been debated throughout Christian history — she has been understood as Israel, the Church, Mary, or a composite figure. We render the Greek as given without resolving this in the text. The 'time, times, and half a time' formula (v. 14) comes from Daniel 7:25 and 12:7, linking Revelation's timeline to Daniel's prophecy.*

Connections: *The chapter connects to Genesis 3:15 (enmity between the serpent and the woman's seed), Psalm 2 (the messianic king who rules with an iron rod), Isaiah 66:7-8 (Zion giving birth), Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 (the three-and-a-half-year period), and Daniel 10:13, 21 (Michael as Israel's champion). The dragon's identification as 'the ancient serpent' (v. 9) explicitly links to the Eden narrative.*

¹Then a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. ²She was pregnant and was crying out in labor pains, in agony to give birth. ³Then another sign appeared in heaven: a great fiery-red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. ⁴His tail swept a third of the stars from the sky and hurled them to the earth. The dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. ⁵She gave birth to a son, a male child, who is destined to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. ⁶The woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, so that she would be nourished there for one thousand two hundred and sixty days. ⁷Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸Prevailed not. Neither was their location discovered any more in heaven. ⁹The great dragon was thrown down — the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole inhabited world — he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. ¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers and sisters has been thrown down — the one who accuses them before our God day and night. ¹¹They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives even in the face of death. ¹²Therefore rejoice, you heavens and all who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you with great fury, knowing that his time is short." ¹³When the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. ¹⁴But the woman was given the two wings of a great eagle so that she could fly to her place in the wilderness, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, away from the presence of the serpent. ¹⁵Then the serpent spewed water like a river from his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood. ¹⁶But the earth helped the woman: the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had spewed from his mouth. ¹⁷Then the dragon became enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring — those who keep God's commands and hold to the testimony of Jesus. ¹⁸I took my stand on the seashore.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek semeion ('sign') is distinct from the KJV's 'wonder' (teras). A semeion in Revelation is a symbolic vision pointing to a deeper reality, not merely a spectacle. The imagery of sun, moon, and twelve stars echoes Joseph's dream in Genesis 37:9, where these represent Jacob, Rachel, and the twelve tribes of Israel.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 37:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The Greek basanizomene ('being tormented, agonized') is a strong word also used for torture — the birth pangs are depicted with intense suffering. Prophetic birth imagery for Israel's deliverance appears in Isaiah 26:17-18, 66:7-8, and Micah 4:10.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 26:17-18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Micah 4:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

3. The Greek *pyrros* ('fiery-red') suggests the color of fire or blood, not merely 'red.' The seven heads and ten horns echo the fourth beast of Daniel 7:7, 24, linking the dragon to oppressive imperial power. The diadems (*diademata*) are royal crowns, distinct from the victor's wreath (*stephanos*) worn by the woman in verse 1.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 7:7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The sweeping of a third of the stars recalls Daniel 8:10, where the little horn casts stars to the ground. Stars in apocalyptic literature often represent angelic beings (cf. Revelation 1:20). The dragon's posture before the woman evokes Pharaoh's threat to Israel's children (Exodus 1) and Herod's massacre (Matthew 2).
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 8:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The phrase 'shepherd with an iron rod' (*poimainein en rhabdo sidera*) quotes Psalm 2:9 (LXX), where the messianic king rules the nations. The Greek *poimainein* means 'to shepherd, to tend, to rule' — it carries both pastoral care and authoritative governance. The verb *herpassthe* ('was snatched up') is the same root as *harpazo*, used by Paul for the catching up of believers in 1 Thessalonians 4:17.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalms 2:9 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The wilderness (*eremos*) is a place of both danger and divine provision in biblical tradition — Israel was sustained in the wilderness for forty years. The 1,260 days equal forty-two months or three and a half years, a period drawn from Daniel 7:25 and 12:7 that represents a limited time of tribulation under divine control. The passive 'nourished' (*trephōsin*) implies divine provision without naming the agents.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 7:25. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Michael (*Michaēl*, from Hebrew 'Who is like God?') appears in Daniel 10:13, 21 and 12:1 as the angelic prince who fights for Israel. The war in heaven is presented not as a primordial event but as a consequence of the messianic birth and ascension described in verse 5.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 10:13. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The Greek *ouk ischysen* ('he was not strong enough') emphasizes the dragon's inability, not merely his defeat. The phrase 'no place found' (*oude topos heurethe*) echoes Daniel 2:35, where the kingdoms of the world leave no trace. The expulsion is total and permanent.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 2:35 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. This verse provides four identifying titles: 'the great dragon' (the current visionary form), 'the ancient serpent' (linking to Genesis 3), 'the Devil' (*diabolos*, 'slanderer, accuser'), and 'Satan' (*Satanas*, from Hebrew *satan*, 'adversary'). The participle *planōn* ('the one deceiving') describes his ongoing activity. The Greek *oikoumenē* ('the inhabited world') refers to the entire human world, not merely the Roman Empire.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The Greek *katēgōr* ('accuser') is a legal term for a prosecutor. The image draws on Zechariah 3:1, where Satan stands to accuse the high priest Joshua. The fourfold declaration — salvation, power, kingdom, authority — marks the dragon's expulsion as the turning point of cosmic history. The phrase 'day and night' indicates relentless, ceaseless accusation.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 3:1 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The verb *enikēsan* ('they conquered, they overcame') is the same word used of Christ in 5:5 — the believers' victory mirrors and participates in the Lamb's victory. The three instruments of victory — blood, testimony, and self-sacrifice — form a pattern central to Revelation's theology: conquering through faithful witness, not through violence. The phrase 'did not love their lives even in the face of death' (*ouk ēgapēsan tēn psychēn autōn achri thanatou*) does not celebrate death but commends a loyalty that death cannot break.
12. The Greek *skēnountes* ('those who tent, those who dwell') uses the same root as *skēnē* ('tabernacle'), evoking God's dwelling presence. The contrast is sharp: heaven rejoices because the accuser is gone, but earth and sea face intensified danger because a cornered, desperate enemy is more dangerous, not less. The word *thymos* ('fury, rage') is distinct from *orgē* ('wrath') — *thymos* suggests explosive, passionate anger.
13. The Greek *ediōxen* ('pursued, persecuted') carries both senses — physical pursuit and hostile persecution. The narrative resumes from verse 6, now explaining why the woman fled to the wilderness.
14. Eagle wings as divine deliverance echo Exodus 19:4 ('I carried you on eagles' wings') and Deuteronomy 32:11. The time formula 'a time, times, and half a time' (*kairon kai kairous kai hemisy kairou*) comes directly from Daniel 7:25 and 12:7, equaling three and a half years or 1,260 days (v. 6). This deliberate echo ties Revelation's persecution timeline to Daniel's prophetic framework.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 19:4. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 32:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 7:25. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The flood-from-the-mouth imagery may draw on ancient Near Eastern chaos-water mythology and the biblical tradition of threatening waters (Psalm 18:4, 69:1-2, 124:4-5). The Greek potamophoretōn ('carried away by a river') is a rare compound word found only here in the New Testament.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 18:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The earth personified as an agent of rescue reverses the 'woe to the earth' of verse 12. Creation itself assists in God's protective purposes. The imagery of the earth swallowing may echo Numbers 16:32, where the earth swallowed Korah's rebellion — but here the earth swallows the threat rather than the threatened.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 16:32. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The phrase 'the rest of her offspring' (tōn loipōn tou spermatos autēs) echoes Genesis 3:15, where enmity is placed between the serpent and the woman's seed. The two identifying marks of the woman's offspring — keeping God's commands and holding the testimony of Jesus — define the faithful community throughout Revelation (cf. 14:12). The SBLGNT omits 'Christ' after 'Jesus' in the best manuscripts.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 3:15. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. Textual variant: some manuscripts read 'I stood' (estathēn, first person — the KJV reading), but the SBLGNT reads 'he stood' (estathē, third person), referring to the dragon. We follow the SBLGNT. The dragon's position on the seashore anticipates the beast rising from the sea in 13:1. This verse functions as a transition between chapters 12 and 13.

13

Summary: *Revelation 13 introduces the dragon's two agents on earth: a beast rising from the sea with ten horns and seven heads, and a second beast rising from the earth with two horns like a lamb. The first beast receives the dragon's authority and wages war against the saints. The second beast performs signs and compels all people to worship the first beast, enforcing a mark without which no one can buy or sell. The chapter closes with the famous number of the beast: 666.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The sea beast combines features of all four beasts from Daniel 7 — leopard, bear, lion, and ten-horned monster — into a single composite figure, suggesting it embodies all oppressive empire. The fatal wound that was healed (v. 3) parodies Christ's death and resurrection. The second beast acts as a false prophet (later explicitly called this in 16:13, 19:20), forming a counterfeit trinity: the dragon (anti-Father), the sea beast (anti-Christ), and the earth beast (anti-Spirit). The number 666, calculated through gematria (assigning numerical values to letters), most likely points to 'Nero Caesar' in Hebrew letters, though the text deliberately leaves the identification as a riddle.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the beast has generated centuries of speculation. We render the Greek text without identifying the beast with any specific historical or future figure. The 'mark' (charagma) was a term used for imperial stamps and brands in the Roman world, but the text presents it in visionary, symbolic terms that transcend any single historical referent.*

Connections: *The chapter draws heavily on Daniel 7 (the four beasts and the saints' persecution), Daniel 3 (the command to worship an image on pain of death), and Exodus 7-8 (signs performed by competing powers). The mark on the forehead and hand inverts the phylacteries of Deuteronomy 6:8 and the seal of God on the forehead in Revelation 7:3.*

¹And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads. On its horns were ten diadems, and on its heads were blasphemous names. ²The beast I saw resembled a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. The dragon gave it his power and his throne and great authority. ³One of its heads appeared to have been fatally wounded, but its mortal wound had been healed. The whole earth was amazed and followed the beast. ⁴They worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?" ⁵The beast was given a mouth to speak arrogant words and blasphemies, and it was given authority to

act for forty-two months. ⁶It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling — that is, those who dwell in heaven. ⁷It was permitted to wage war against the saints and to conquer them, and it was given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation. ⁸All who dwell on the earth will worship it — everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain. ⁹If anyone has an ear, let them hear: ¹⁰If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity they go. If anyone is to be killed with the sword, with the sword they will be killed. Here is the endurance and the faith of the saints. ¹¹Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. ¹²It exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf and makes the earth and those who dwell on it worship the first beast, whose mortal wound had been healed. ¹³It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of people. ¹⁴It deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs it was permitted to perform on behalf of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image for the beast that had been wounded by the sword and yet lived. ¹⁵It was permitted to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast could even speak and cause all who would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. ¹⁶It also compels everyone — small and great, rich and poor, free and slave — to receive a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, ¹⁷That no person may buy or sell, rescue he that had the mark, or the identity of the beast, or the number of his identity. ¹⁸This calls for wisdom. Let the one who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a person, and its number is six hundred sixty-six.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT places 'and he stood on the sand of the sea' at the end of chapter 12 (12:18), so chapter 13 begins with 'And I saw.' The beast from the sea echoes Daniel 7:3, where four beasts rise from the sea — here compressed into one composite monster. The sea in apocalyptic thought represents chaos and the realm of evil. The diadems are on the horns (political power) rather than the heads, distinguishing this from the dragon's diadems in 12:3. The plural 'blasphemous names' (onomata blasphemias) suggests imperial titles claiming divine status.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 7:3. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The three animal features come from Daniel 7:4-6 but in reverse order — leopard (Daniel's third beast), bear (second), lion (first) — suggesting John sees them from the perspective of the present looking backward. The transfer of power, throne, and authority from dragon to beast establishes the beast as Satan's earthly agent, a dark parody of the Father giving authority to the Son (Matthew 28:18).
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:4-6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The Greek hōs esphagmenēn ('as though slain') uses the same verb (sphazō) applied to the Lamb in 5:6 — the beast parodies Christ's death and resurrection. The 'healing' of the death-wound creates a counterfeit resurrection narrative that captures the world's allegiance. The verb ethaumasthē ('was amazed, marveled') indicates awe that leads to worship.
4. The acclamation 'Who is like the beast?' is a blasphemous inversion of the divine praise 'Who is like you, LORD?' (Exodus 15:11, Psalm 35:10) and even of Michael's name (Mi-ka-el, 'Who is like God?'). The dual worship — of dragon and beast — reveals that the beast's power is derivative; worshiping the beast means worshiping the dragon behind it.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 15:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 35:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The passive 'was given' (edothē) appears twice, indicating that the beast's power operates under divine permission — even the beast's authority has boundaries set by God. The 'mouth speaking great things' echoes Daniel 7:8, 11, 20 (the little horn). The forty-two months equal 1,260 days or three and a half years, the same period of the woman's wilderness refuge in 12:6, 14.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 7:8 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The beast's blasphemy targets three things: God's name, God's dwelling (skēnē, 'tabernacle/tent'), and those who dwell in heaven. The apposition 'his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven' suggests that God's true tabernacle is his people — the dwelling and the dwellers are identified. The Greek skēnē recalls the tabernacle tradition and anticipates 21:3, where God's dwelling will be with humanity.
7. Again the divine passive 'was given' (edothē) — the beast's war against the saints occurs within God's sovereign permission, echoing Daniel 7:21 where the horn prevails against the saints for a time. The fourfold universal formula (tribe, people, language, nation) appears repeatedly in Revelation (5:9, 7:9, 11:9, 14:6) and here describes the beast's totalitarian reach.

7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The phrase 'from the foundation of the world' (apo katabolēs kosmou) can modify either 'written' (names written before creation) or 'slain' (the Lamb slain before creation). The Greek word order most naturally connects it to 'written' — the names were recorded before the world's foundation. Compare 17:8, where the same phrase clearly modifies 'written.' Both readings carry profound theological weight.
9. This formula echoes Jesus's repeated refrain in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 11:15, 13:9) and in Revelation's letters to the seven churches (2:7, 11, etc.). Here it introduces the solemn oracle that follows, demanding careful attention from the hearer.
10. This oracle, echoing Jeremiah 15:2 and 43:11, calls the saints to accept suffering rather than retaliate. The Greek hypomonē ('endurance, patient steadfastness') is one of Revelation's key ethical terms — it describes not passive resignation but active, faithful perseverance under pressure. The SBLGNT reading presents both lines as statements about the saints' destiny, not as threats against persecutors.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 15:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The second beast rises from the earth (gē) rather than the sea, perhaps representing established social and religious structures rather than chaotic political power. Its lamb-like appearance but dragon-like speech makes it a deceiver — it looks harmless but serves the dragon's purposes. Later (16:13, 19:20, 20:10) this beast is called 'the false prophet,' clarifying its role as a religious counterfeit.
12. The second beast functions as enforcer and propagandist for the first. The phrase 'on its behalf' (enōpion autou, literally 'before him/in his presence') indicates the second beast acts as the first beast's representative. This mirrors the Holy Spirit's role in directing worship to Christ — the second beast directs worship to the first beast, completing the counterfeit trinity.
13. Fire from heaven recalls Elijah's contest on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:38) — the second beast counterfeits prophetic signs. Jesus warned that false prophets would perform signs to deceive (Matthew 24:24), and Paul speaks of the lawless one performing counterfeit miracles (2 Thessalonians 2:9). The signs are real in their effects but deceptive in their source and purpose.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References 1 Kings 18:38 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The command to construct an image (eikōn) of the beast recalls Nebuchadnezzar's golden image in Daniel 3, where refusal to worship meant death. The beast's recovery from a sword wound (plēgē tēs machairēs) continues the parody of Christ's death and resurrection. The verb ezēsen ('lived, came to life') is the same word used for Christ's resurrection in 2:8.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The Greek pneuma here means 'breath' rather than 'spirit' or 'life' — the second beast animates the image with breath, parodying God breathing life into Adam (Genesis 2:7). The speaking image may reflect ancient practices of ventriloquism in pagan temples or mechanical devices that made idols appear to speak. The death penalty for non-worship directly parallels Daniel 3:6.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 2:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 3:6 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The Greek charagma ('mark, stamp, brand') was used for the imperial stamp on documents and the brand on livestock or slaves. The three pairs (small/great, rich/poor, free/slave) emphasize that no social category is exempt. The mark on hand and forehead deliberately inverts the Shema practice of Deuteronomy 6:8, where God's words are bound on hand and forehead — the beast demands the same total allegiance that belongs to God alone.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 6:8. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. Economic exclusion as a tool of coercion would have resonated powerfully in the Roman trade-guild system, where participation in commercial life often required offering incense to the emperor or patron deity. The mark, the name, and the number appear to be three expressions of the same allegiance, not three separate requirements.
18. The Greek arithmos anthrōpou ('number of a person/human') could mean either 'a number that identifies a specific person' or 'a human number' (as opposed to an angelic one). The number 666, through Hebrew gematria (where letters carry numerical values), most plausibly corresponds to 'Nero Caesar' (nrwn qsr = 50+200+6+50+100+60+200 = 666). Some manuscripts read 616, which corresponds to 'Nero Caesar' in the Latin spelling. The text presents the calculation as a riddle requiring wisdom, not as an equation with an obvious solution.

14

Summary: *Revelation 14 presents a series of contrasting visions. First, the Lamb stands on Mount Zion with 144,000 redeemed saints singing a new song. Then three angels proclaim messages in sequence: the eternal gospel, the fall of Babylon, and a warning against taking the beast's mark. A voice from heaven pronounces blessing on those who die in the Lord. Finally, two harvest visions close the chapter — one of grain reaped by the Son of Man, and one of grapes thrown into 'the great winepress of God's wrath,' producing blood as deep as a horse's bridle.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The chapter functions as an intermission between the beast visions (ch. 13) and the bowl judgments (chs. 15-16), providing heavenly perspective on earthly events. The 144,000 reappear from chapter 7, now seen in their triumphant state. The three angel messages (vv. 6-11) form a triptych of proclamation that has been extraordinarily influential in Christian history. The harvest imagery draws on Joel 3:13 and Isaiah 63:1-6, with the winepress producing blood to the depth of about 180 miles — a hyperbolically horrifying image of judgment.*

Translation Friction: *The 144,000 who 'have not defiled themselves with women' (v. 4) has been interpreted as literal celibacy, spiritual purity (faithfulness to God), or metaphorical virginity (not participating in idolatrous worship). We render the Greek directly and note the interpretive options. The grain harvest (vv. 14-16) and grape harvest (vv. 17-20) may represent different aspects of judgment, or grain may symbolize salvation and grapes judgment.*

Connections: *Mount Zion connects to Psalm 2:6 and Isaiah 24:23. The new song recalls Psalms 33:3, 96:1, and 149:1. The harvest imagery draws on Joel 3:13, Isaiah 63:1-6, and Jesus's harvest parables (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43). The winepress of God's wrath anticipates 19:15. The declaration 'Fallen is Babylon' echoes Isaiah 21:9 and anticipates chapters 17-18.*

¹Then I looked, and there was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him were one hundred forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ²I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder, and the sound I heard was like harpists playing their harps. ³They were singing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, and no one could learn the song except the one hundred forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth. ⁴These are the ones who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were redeemed from among humanity as firstfruits for God and for the Lamb. ⁵No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless. ⁶Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, carrying an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth — to every nation and tribe and language and people. ⁷He said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship the one who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water." ⁸A second angel followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great — she who made all the nations drink the wine of the fury of her sexual immorality." ⁹A third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on their forehead or on their hand, ¹⁰Indeed, the same will drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation. Then he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: ¹¹The smoke of their torment rises forever and ever, and they have no rest day or night — those who worship the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name." ¹²Here is the endurance of the saints — those who keep God's commands and their faith in Jesus. ¹³Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them." ¹⁴Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵Another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to the one seated on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." ¹⁶So the one seated on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested. ¹⁷Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸Still another angel came from the altar —

the one who has authority over fire — and he called with a loud voice to the angel with the sharp sickle, "Put in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." ¹⁹So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of God's wrath. ²⁰The winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress as high as a horse's bridle for a distance of one thousand six hundred stadia.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The SBLGNT includes both the Lamb's name and the Father's name on the foreheads, in contrast to the KJV which mentions only the Father's name. This double name stands in direct contrast to the beast's mark on the foreheads of its followers (13:16). Mount Zion represents God's chosen dwelling place (Psalm 2:6, 48:2), and the Lamb's standing there asserts sovereign authority over the territory the beast claims.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Psalm 2:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. Three similes describe the heavenly sound: rushing waters (cf. Ezekiel 1:24, 43:2), thunder (associated with divine presence), and harp music (associated with worship). The combination of overwhelming power and musical beauty reflects the dual nature of the heavenly reality — both awesome and beautiful.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 1:24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The 'new song' (ōdē kainē) is a recurring biblical motif (Psalm 33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 144:9, 149:1) signaling a new act of God's deliverance. The Greek ēgorasmenoi ('redeemed, purchased') uses commercial language — these were 'bought' from the earth, the purchase price being the Lamb's blood (cf. 5:9). Only those who have experienced this redemption can sing this song — the content is inseparable from the experience.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 33:3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The Greek parthenoi ('virgins') applied to males is unusual. Three main interpretations exist: (1) literal celibacy as a form of military consecration (cf. Deuteronomy 23:9-10, 1 Samuel 21:4-5); (2) metaphorical sexual purity representing spiritual faithfulness — not participating in the 'fornication' of idolatrous Babylon (cf. 17:2, 18:3); (3) a broader metaphor for covenant faithfulness, since the Old Testament often portrays idolatry as sexual unfaithfulness. The term 'firstfruits' (aparchē) comes from Israel's agricultural offering system (Leviticus 23:10) — the first portion, dedicated to God, that consecrates the whole harvest.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 23:9-10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes 1 Samuel 21:4-5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Leviticus 23:10. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The Greek pseudos ('lie, falsehood') connects to the dragon's identity as deceiver (12:9) and to the exclusion of liars from the New Jerusalem (21:27, 22:15). The word amōmoi ('blameless, without blemish') is sacrificial language — it describes unblemished animals fit for offering (cf. Leviticus 1:3, 1 Peter 1:19). The SBLGNT omits 'before the throne of God' found in some manuscripts and the KJV.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Leviticus 1:3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The Greek euangelion aiōnion ('eternal gospel/good news') is striking — even at the hour of judgment, the message remains 'good news.' The angel flies in mesouranēma ('midheaven,' the zenith of the sky), ensuring maximum visibility and audibility. The fourfold universal formula (nation, tribe, language, people) appears in a different order from 13:7, perhaps emphasizing universality through variation.
7. The angel's proclamation is essentially a call to creation-worship — worship the Creator, not the creature. The fourfold creation catalogue (heaven, earth, sea, springs) echoes Exodus 20:11 and Psalm 146:6. In the context of beast-worship (ch. 13), this is a radical counter-claim: the only one worthy of worship is the Maker of all things. The 'hour of judgment' (hōra tēs kriseōs) recalls Jesus's language in John 12:31.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 20:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 146:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The doubled 'fallen, fallen' (epesen epesen) quotes Isaiah 21:9, where it announces historical Babylon's fall. The metaphor is layered: Babylon's 'wine' represents both the intoxicating allure of her idolatry and empire, and the wrath (thymos) that results from drinking it. The Greek porneia ('sexual immorality, fornication') is used throughout Revelation as a metaphor for idolatrous allegiance — spiritual unfaithfulness to God. This brief announcement anticipates the extended Babylon oracle in chapters 17-18.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 21:9 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

9. The third angel's message is the most severe warning in Revelation, extending through verse 11. The three conditions — worshipping the beast, worshipping its image, receiving its mark — are parallel expressions of the same allegiance. This directly answers the economic coercion of 13:16-17 by declaring the eternal consequences of compliance.
10. The Greek *akratou* ('unmixed, full strength') refers to wine not diluted with water — in the ancient world, wine was normally mixed. Unmixed wine meant maximum intensity. The combination of *thymos* ('fury, passion') and *orgē* ('wrath, settled anger') in the same phrase is unique and emphatic. Fire and sulfur (*theion*, 'brimstone/sulfur') recall the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24). The judgment occurs 'in the presence of' (*enōpion*) the Lamb — the one who offered mercy that was refused now witnesses the consequences of refusal.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 19:24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The phrase *eis aiōnas aiōnōn* ('to the ages of ages, forever and ever') is the strongest expression of unending duration in Greek. The image of smoke ascending echoes Isaiah 34:10 (the destruction of Edom). The 'no rest day or night' contrasts sharply with the four living creatures who worship God 'day and night' (4:8) — perpetual torment mirrors perpetual worship in tragic inversion.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 34:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. This echoes the same double identification from 12:17: keeping God's commands and holding faith in Jesus. The Greek *pistin Iēsou* could be 'faith in Jesus' (objective genitive) or 'the faithfulness of Jesus' (subjective genitive). Both readings are theologically valid — the saints endure because they trust Jesus and because they share in his pattern of faithfulness.
13. This is the second of seven beatitudes in Revelation (1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14). The phrase 'from now on' (*ap' arti*) may mean 'from this point in the visionary narrative' or 'from this eschatological moment.' The Spirit confirms and expands the heavenly voice — a rare dialogue between heaven and the Spirit. The 'rest' (*anapausontai*) directly contrasts with the 'no rest' of beast-worshippers in verse 11. Their 'deeds follow them' — good works are not left behind at death but accompany the faithful into God's presence.
14. The phrase 'one like a son of man' (*homoion huion anthrōpou*) comes from Daniel 7:13, where a human-like figure receives dominion from the Ancient of Days. This same phrase opens Revelation in 1:13. The golden crown (*stephanos*) is a victor's wreath, not a royal diadem. The sickle (*drepanon*) introduces the harvest metaphor that will dominate the rest of the chapter, drawing on Joel 3:13.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 7:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joel 3:13. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The angel comes from the temple (*naos*), indicating the command originates with God. The Greek *exēranthē* ('is dried, is fully ripe') literally means 'has dried out' — grain is harvested when it dries on the stalk. Whether this grain harvest represents salvation (gathering the elect) or judgment (or both) is debated. The distinction between the grain harvest (vv. 14-16) and grape harvest (vv. 17-20) may parallel Jesus's parable of wheat and tares (Matthew 13:24-30).
16. The brevity of this verse is striking — no details are given about the harvest's outcome or destination. The passive 'was harvested' (*etheristhē*) leaves the result unstated, creating a deliberate pause before the far more graphic grape harvest that follows.
17. This angel carries a sickle like the Son of Man figure, but the harvest he will perform is explicitly one of wrath. The specification 'the temple in heaven' (*tou naou tou en tō ouranō*) emphasizes the heavenly origin of this judgment.
18. The angel from the altar connects to 6:9-10, where the souls under the altar cry for justice, and to 8:3-5, where fire from the altar is hurled to earth. The altar-angel's authority over fire links judgment to the prayers of the martyrs. The verb *ēkmasan* ('are ripe') literally means 'have reached their peak' — the grapes are at maximum ripeness, meaning the wickedness of the earth has reached its full measure.
19. The winepress (*lēnos*) as a metaphor for divine judgment comes from Isaiah 63:1-6, where God treads the winepress alone and the nations' lifeblood spatters his garments. The phrase 'the great winepress of God's wrath' (*tēn lēnon tou thymou tou theou ton megan*) uses *thymos* ('fury, passionate wrath'), emphasizing the intensity of divine judgment. This image returns in 19:15.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 63:1-6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The location 'outside the city' may echo the tradition that Jesus suffered 'outside the gate' (Hebrews 13:12) or the Joel 3 judgment in the Valley of Jehoshaphat outside Jerusalem. The scale is deliberately apocalyptic and hyperbolic: blood reaching horse-bridle depth (about four and a half feet) for 1,600 stadia (approximately 184 miles, or roughly the length of Palestine). The number 1,600 may be symbolic: 4 x 4 x 100, representing the four corners of the earth squared and multiplied — totality of judgment. A stadion is approximately 607 feet (185 meters).
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Joel 3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.

15

Summary: *Revelation 15 is the shortest chapter in the book and serves as the prelude to the seven bowl judgments. John sees those who have conquered the beast standing on a sea of glass mixed with fire, singing the Song of Moses and of the Lamb. Then the heavenly temple opens and seven angels emerge with seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, while smoke from God's glory fills the temple so that no one can enter.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The Song of Moses and of the Lamb (vv. 3-4) merges exodus and new covenant in a single hymn. It draws almost entirely from Old Testament scripture — every line echoes Exodus 15, Deuteronomy 32, Psalm 86, Psalm 111, Jeremiah 10, and Malachi 1. The sea of glass mixed with fire recalls the Red Sea crossing, where Israel stood on the far shore and sang (Exodus 15:1-21). The smoke filling the temple so that no one can enter parallels the dedication of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 8:10-11) and the Sinai theophany (Exodus 19:18) — God's glory is so intense that even the heavenly temple becomes inaccessible.*

Translation Friction: *The 'Song of Moses and of the Lamb' combines two great deliverances — from Egypt and from sin — in a single composition. Whether 'of Moses and of the Lamb' means one combined song or two songs is debated; the singular 'song' (ōdēn) in Greek favors a single unified hymn.*

Connections: *The chapter connects to Exodus 15 (the Song of the Sea), 1 Kings 8:10-11 (glory filling the temple), Isaiah 6:4 (smoke in the temple), and Leviticus 26:21 (plagues multiplied sevenfold). The phrase 'King of the nations' echoes Jeremiah 10:7. The seven bowls parallel the seven trumpets (chs. 8-11) but with intensified scope.*

¹Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels with seven plagues — the last ones — because with them the wrath of God is completed. ²I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name were standing beside the sea of glass, holding harps of God. ³They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty! Righteous and true are your ways, King of the nations! ⁴Who will not fear you, Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, because your righteous acts have been revealed." ⁵After this I looked, and the sanctuary of the tent of testimony in heaven was opened, ⁶The seven angels arrived out of the temple, after the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and after their breasts girded with golden girdles. ⁷Then one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven golden bowls filled with the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever. ⁸The sanctuary was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the sanctuary until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. This is the third 'sign' (semeion) in heaven, following the woman (12:1) and the dragon (12:3). The word *eschatas* ('last') indicates these bowl plagues bring God's judgments to their final expression. The verb *etelestē* ('is completed, is finished') from *teleō* shares the root of Jesus's cry *tetelestai* ('It is finished,' John 19:30) — God's wrath, like his salvation, reaches its *telos* (goal/end).
2. The sea of glass first appeared in 4:6 before God's throne. Here it is mixed with fire — possibly reflecting the trials through which the victors have passed, or the judgment about to be poured out. The Greek *epi tēn thalassan* ('on/beside the sea') recalls Israel standing on the far shore of the Red Sea. The conquerors are defined by three victories: over the beast, its image, and its number. The 'harps of God' (*kitharas tou theou*) are instruments belonging to God, given for worship.
3. Moses is called 'servant of God' (*doulou tou theou*), the same title given him in Joshua 1:1 (LXX). The SBLGNT reads 'King of the nations' (*basileus tōn ethnōn*), following Jeremiah 10:7, rather than the KJV's 'King of saints' (a variant reading). The hymn's content draws entirely from Old Testament praise: 'great and marvelous works' from Psalm 111:2, 'righteous and true ways' from Deuteronomy 32:4, and 'King of the nations' from Jeremiah 10:7.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 15:1-18 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Joshua 1:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 10:7 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Psalm 111:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 32:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The rhetorical question 'Who will not fear?' echoes Jeremiah 10:7. The declaration 'you alone are holy' (monos hosios) uses hosios rather than hagios — hosios emphasizes moral purity and faithfulness to covenant obligations, while hagios emphasizes separation and consecration. The prophecy that 'all nations will come and worship' draws on Psalm 86:9 and anticipates the universal worship described in the New Jerusalem (21:24-26). The word dikaiōmata ('righteous acts, just decrees') can refer to both God's judgments and his saving acts.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalms 86:9. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 10:7. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The unusual phrase 'sanctuary of the tent of testimony' (naos tēs skēnēs tou martyriou) combines temple and tabernacle language, echoing the wilderness tabernacle of Numbers 17:7 (LXX) — the 'tent of testimony' where God's covenant law was kept. The opening of this heavenly sanctuary signals that what follows comes directly from God's covenant faithfulness and justice.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Numbers 17:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The angels' attire — clean linen (linon katharon lampron) and golden sashes — matches the description of Christ in 1:13 and of the heavenly armies in 19:14. Some manuscripts read lithon ('stone') instead of linon ('linen'), which would suggest gemstone-like brilliance, but the SBLGNT follows the linen reading. The priestly vestments indicate that the bowl judgments are a liturgical act — God's justice administered as sacred duty.
7. The Greek phialē ('bowl') is a broad, shallow bowl used for libations in temple worship — the KJV's 'vials' is misleading. The bowls are golden, matching the heavenly furnishings (5:8, golden bowls of incense). That a living creature distributes them connects the judgments to the worship of the throne room. The title 'God who lives forever and ever' (tou theou tou zōntos eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn) contrasts sharply with the beast whose life is derivative and temporary.
8. The smoke (kapnos) from God's glory recalls Isaiah 6:4, where the temple fills with smoke during Isaiah's throne vision. The inability to enter the temple means that intercession is suspended — the time for mercy has passed and judgment must run its full course. The verb telesthōsin ('are completed') echoes verse 1's etelesthē — the plagues must reach their telos (completion/goal).
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 6:4 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

16

Summary: *Revelation 16 narrates the pouring out of the seven bowls of God's wrath in rapid succession. The plagues strike the earth (sores), the sea (blood), the rivers (blood), the sun (scorching heat), the beast's throne (darkness), the Euphrates (dried up, preparing for kings from the east), and finally the air (earthquake and hail). Two interludes punctuate the sequence: an affirmation of God's justice (vv. 5-7) and the gathering of kings at Armageddon (vv. 13-16). The chapter climaxes with 'It is done!' and catastrophic judgment on Babylon.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The seven bowls intensify the Egyptian plague pattern established in the trumpet sequence (chs. 8-9), but whereas the trumpets affected one-third of creation, the bowls are total. The bowl plagues correspond to the Exodus plagues: sores (sixth plague, Exodus 9:10), water to blood (first plague, Exodus 7:20), darkness (ninth plague, Exodus 10:22), frogs (second plague, Exodus 8:2), and hail (seventh plague, Exodus 9:23). The reference to Armageddon (Har-Magedon, v. 16) — the only occurrence of this word in the Bible — has become one of the most culturally influential terms in Revelation.*

Translation Friction: *The name 'Armageddon' (Harmagedon in Greek) is debated: it likely transliterates the Hebrew Har Megiddo ('Mountain of Megiddo'), though Megiddo is a plain, not a mountain. Some scholars connect it to Har Mo'ed ('Mountain of Assembly,' Isaiah 14:13) or other Hebrew constructions. We transliterate the Greek as given.*

Connections: The bowl sequence parallels the Exodus plagues and the trumpet judgments (chs. 8-11). The drying of the Euphrates (v. 12) recalls the parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14) and the Jordan (Joshua 3). The three unclean spirits like frogs echo the Egyptian frog plague. Armageddon connects to the Megiddo battlefield tradition (Judges 5:19, 2 Kings 23:29). 'It is done!' (v. 17) parallels 'It is finished' (John 19:30).

¹Then I heard a loud voice from the sanctuary saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the earth." ²So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and harmful and painful sores broke out on the people who bore the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. ³The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it became like the blood of a dead person, and every living creature in the sea died. ⁴The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. ⁵Then I heard the angel of the waters say, "You are righteous, the one who is and who was, the Holy One, because you have judged these things. ⁶Because they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, you have given them blood to drink. They deserve it." ⁷And I heard the altar say, "Yes, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are your judgments." ⁸The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire. ⁹People were scorched by the intense heat, and they blasphemed the name of God who has authority over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory. ¹⁰The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in anguish ¹¹Blasphemed the God of the heavens above on account of the fact that of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. ¹²The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the east. ¹³And out of the mouth of the false prophet, I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast. ¹⁴These are demonic spirits performing signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole inhabited world to gather them for the battle on the great day of God the Almighty. ¹⁵"Look, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps their clothes on, so that they will not walk around naked and their shame be exposed." ¹⁶And they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. ¹⁷The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came from the sanctuary, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" ¹⁸There were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a violent earthquake — such as had not occurred since people first appeared on the earth — so great was the earthquake. ¹⁹The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. God remembered Babylon the great and gave her the cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath. ²⁰Every island fled, and the mountains could no longer be found. ²¹Enormous hailstones, each weighing about a talent, fell from the sky on people, and they blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, for the plague was extremely severe.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. Since no one could enter the sanctuary (15:8), the voice must be God's own. The verb *ekcheete* ('pour out') is the standard term for pouring libations — the bowls of wrath are poured out as a liturgical act, an ironic inversion of the drink offering. The command is comprehensive: all seven bowls are to be poured in sequence.
2. The Greek *helkos kakon kai ponēron* ('harmful and painful sore') echoes the sixth Egyptian plague (Exodus 9:10-11, LXX). Notably, the plague targets only those with the beast's mark — there is discrimination in this judgment. The two adjectives (*kakon*, 'bad/harmful,' and *ponēron*, 'painful/evil') emphasize the severity.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 9:10-11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The sea turning to blood echoes the first Egyptian plague (Exodus 7:20-21) and the second trumpet (8:8-9), but is more intense — the second trumpet killed a third of sea life; here everything dies. The specification 'blood of a dead person' (*haima hōs nekrou*) indicates coagulated, putrid blood — not flowing life-blood but death-blood. The phrase 'every living soul' (*pasa psychē zōēs*) is total.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 7:20-21 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The third bowl extends the blood-water plague from the sea to freshwater sources — rivers and springs. This parallels the third trumpet (8:10-11) but goes further: the trumpet made water bitter; the bowl turns it to blood entirely. The brevity of 'and they became blood' (*kai egeneto haima*) emphasizes the immediate totality of the transformation.

5. The 'angel of the waters' (angelos tōn hydatōn) suggests angelic jurisdiction over natural elements (cf. 7:1, angels of the winds; 14:18, angel of fire). The divine title 'the one who is and who was' (ho ōn kai ho ēn) notably omits the usual third element 'and who is to come' (cf. 1:4, 8; 4:8) — perhaps because God has now arrived in judgment. The word hosios ('Holy One') emphasizes God's moral integrity and covenant faithfulness.
6. The principle of retributive justice is explicit: those who shed blood are given blood to drink. The verb exechesan ('they poured out') uses the same root as the pouring of the bowls (ekcheō) — a grim wordplay. The final phrase axioi eisin ('they are worthy/deserving') uses the same adjective applied to God and the Lamb in worship (4:11, 5:9, 12) — a dark inversion where 'worthiness' means deserving of judgment.
7. The altar itself speaks — personified as the voice of the martyrs whose souls rest beneath it (6:9-10). Their prayer for justice ('How long, Lord?') receives this answer. The SBLGNT reads 'the altar' (tou thusiastēriou) without 'another,' suggesting the altar itself speaks rather than an angel from it. The affirmation 'true and righteous' (alēthinai kai dikaiai) echoes 15:3 and confirms that God's judgments are both factually accurate and morally just.
8. The fourth trumpet darkened a third of the sun (8:12); the fourth bowl intensifies the sun instead. The divine passive edothē ('it was given/allowed') maintains the theme that even destructive forces operate under God's permission. The verb kaumatisai ('to burn, to scorch') appears in the New Testament only here and in verse 9.
9. The refusal to repent despite suffering is a recurring theme in the bowl sequence (vv. 9, 11, 21), echoing Pharaoh's hardened heart during the Exodus plagues. The people correctly identify God as the source of the plagues but respond with blasphemy rather than repentance. The phrase 'give him glory' (dounai autō doxan) is precisely what the first angel called for in 14:7 — the bowls vindicate that proclamation.
10. The fifth bowl strikes the beast's throne directly — the seat of its authority — and darkness spreads through its kingdom. This parallels the ninth Egyptian plague (Exodus 10:21-23) and the fifth trumpet (9:2). The verb emasōnto ('they gnawed, they chewed') conveys visceral, physical agony. The darkness is both literal and symbolic — the beast's kingdom is revealed as what it always was: darkness.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Exodus 10:21-23 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The sores from the first bowl (v. 2) are still active — the plagues are cumulative, not sequential. The title 'God of heaven' (ton theon tou ouranou) is used in Daniel 2:18-19, 44 and in the post-exilic books (Ezra 1:2, Nehemiah 1:4), emphasizing God's sovereign transcendence over the beast's earthly domain. The second refusal to repent (cf. v. 9) confirms the hardening pattern.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 2:18-19. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezra 1:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Nehemiah 1:4. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The Euphrates was the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire and the traditional barrier against invasion from Parthia and beyond. Its drying echoes the drying of the Red Sea (Exodus 14:21) and the Jordan (Joshua 3:14-17) — but here the way is prepared not for God's people but for hostile kings. The phrase 'kings from the rising of the sun' (basileōn tōn apo anatolēs hēliou) uses the full expression for 'east,' emphasizing the geographic direction. The sixth trumpet also featured the Euphrates (9:14).
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Exodus 14:21. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Joshua 3:14-17. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. This is the first explicit identification of the second beast (ch. 13) as 'the false prophet' (pseudoprophētou). The unholy trinity is now fully named: dragon, beast, and false prophet. The frog imagery recalls the second Egyptian plague (Exodus 8:1-15). Frogs emerging from mouths suggests deceptive speech — the counterfeit trinity wages war through propaganda and lies, not just military force. The three unclean spirits, one from each mouth, demonstrate coordinated deception.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Exodus 8:1-15 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. The spirits are identified as daimoniōn ('of demons') — their signs are real but their source is evil. The phrase 'the great day of God the Almighty' (tēs hēmeras tēs megalēs tou theou tou pantokratoros) echoes the Day of the LORD tradition in Joel 2:11, 31; Zephaniah 1:14; and Malachi 4:5. The gathering (synagagein) of kings for battle uses the same verb applied to gathering the grape harvest for the winepress of wrath (14:18-19).
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joel 2:11. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Zephaniah 1:14. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Malachi 4:5. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

15. This parenthetical word from Christ himself interrupts the battle narrative — a sudden first-person address recalling 3:3 (to Sardis) and echoing 1 Thessalonians 5:2 and Matthew 24:43-44. It is the third beatitude in Revelation. The clothing metaphor draws on the shame of nakedness (Genesis 3:7, 10) and the white garments promised to the faithful (3:4-5, 18). The placement here — between the demonic gathering and the actual battle — serves as a pastoral aside to readers.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 3:7 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. Armageddon (Harmagedōn) is the only occurrence of this word in the Bible. The specification 'in Hebrew' (Hebraisti) signals a symbolic name requiring interpretation. The most common derivation is Har Megiddo ('Mountain of Megiddo'), referencing the site of numerous decisive battles in Israel's history (Judges 5:19, 2 Kings 9:27, 23:29). However, Megiddo is located on a plain, not a mountain, which has led to alternative proposals including Har Mo'ed ('Mountain of Assembly,' Isaiah 14:13). The text presents it as a symbolic gathering point, not necessarily a literal geographic prediction.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Judges 5:19. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 2 Kings 9:27. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 14:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The seventh bowl is poured on the air — the medium through which all previous plagues have traveled. The declaration gegonen ('It is done!' or 'It has happened!') is a perfect tense verb indicating a completed action with permanent results. It parallels Jesus's tetelestai ('It is finished,' John 19:30) and anticipates 21:6. The voice comes from both the sanctuary and the throne — the dual source emphasizes ultimate authority.
18. The theophanic signs (lightning, sounds, thunder, earthquake) have appeared at each major transition in Revelation (4:5, 8:5, 11:19), growing in intensity each time. The superlative description — unprecedented since humanity's existence on earth — echoes Daniel 12:1 ('a time of distress such as has not happened'). The fourfold repetition of forms of ginomai ('happened, occurred, appeared') emphasizes the overwhelming reality of the event.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Daniel 12:1 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The 'great city' (hē polis hē megalē) that splits may be distinct from Babylon or may be Babylon itself (cf. 11:8, 17:18). The phrase 'God remembered' (emnēsthē enōpion tou theou) echoes the Hebrew zikaron — when God 'remembers,' he acts on stored-up justice (cf. Genesis 8:1, Exodus 2:24). The triple genitive 'cup of the wine of the fury of his wrath' (to potērion tou oinou tou thymou tēs orgēs autou) piles up terms for judgment with overwhelming force.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 8:1. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 2:24. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The cosmic language of islands fleeing and mountains vanishing echoes 6:14 and draws on the prophetic tradition of creation undoing itself before God's judgment (Nahum 1:5, Jeremiah 4:24). This is de-creation language — the stable features of the earth dissolve before God's wrath.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Nahum 1:5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
20. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Jeremiah 4:24 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
21. A talent (talantiaios) weighed approximately 75 pounds (34 kg) — these are not meteorological hailstones but instruments of divine judgment on a scale beyond natural occurrence. The hail echoes the seventh Egyptian plague (Exodus 9:23-24) and Joshua 10:11, where God hurled hailstones on Israel's enemies. The third and final refusal to repent (cf. vv. 9, 11) completes the pattern of hardening — the response to every plague is blasphemy, never repentance.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 9:23-24. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Joshua 10:11. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.

17

Summary: *Revelation 17 reveals the identity and fate of Babylon through an extended vision. One of the bowl angels carries John into the wilderness, where he sees a woman — 'Babylon the great, the mother of prostitutes' — seated on a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns. She is drunk with the blood of the saints. The angel interprets the vision: the seven heads are seven mountains and seven kings, the ten horns are ten kings who will give their power to the beast, and together they will wage war against the Lamb — but the Lamb will conquer them. In a final ironic twist, the beast and its allied kings will turn on the prostitute and destroy her.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter provides the most sustained interpretive commentary in Revelation — the angel explains the symbolism explicitly. The woman-on-the-beast image inverts the woman of chapter 12: where that woman was clothed with the sun and persecuted, this woman is clothed in luxury and persecutes. The seven mountains (v. 9) were universally understood as a reference to Rome in the ancient world. The self-destructive nature of evil is a key theme: Babylon is ultimately destroyed not by God directly but by the very forces she rode — the beast turns on its rider.*

Translation Friction: *The identification of the seven kings (v. 10) has generated extensive historical speculation. Various counting systems for Roman emperors have been proposed, none conclusively. We render the Greek without identifying specific historical figures. The phrase 'an eighth who belongs to the seven' (v. 11) adds further complexity. The 'one hour' of the kings' reign (v. 12) is symbolic of brevity.*

Connections: *The chapter draws on Jeremiah 51 (Babylon's judgment), Ezekiel 16 and 23 (Jerusalem/Samaria as prostitutes), Nahum 3:1-4 (Nineveh as a prostitute), and Daniel 7 (the beast with horns). The Lamb's title 'Lord of lords and King of kings' (v. 14) echoes Deuteronomy 10:17 and Daniel 2:47.*

¹Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great prostitute who sits on many waters, ²With whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her sexual immorality. ³He carried me away in the Spirit to a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold, precious stones, and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations and the impurities of her sexual immorality. ⁵On her forehead a name was written, a mystery: "Babylon the Great, the Mother of Prostitutes and of the Abominations of the Earth." ⁶I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished. ⁷The angel said to me, "Why are you astonished? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her — the one with the seven heads and the ten horns. ⁸The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the abyss and go to destruction. The inhabitants of the earth — those whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world — will be astonished when they see the beast, because it was, and is not, and will be present. ⁹This calls for a mind with wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. ¹⁰There are also seven kings: five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come — and when he does come, he must remain only a little while. ¹¹The beast that was and is not — it is itself an eighth king, yet it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. ¹²The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they will receive authority as kings for one hour along with the beast. ¹³These are of one mind, and they give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful. ¹⁵Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. ¹⁶The ten horns you saw, along with the beast — these will hate the prostitute and make her desolate and naked. They will devour her flesh and burn her with fire. ¹⁷For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and handing over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled. ¹⁸The woman you saw is the great city that has sovereignty over the kings of the earth."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek pornē ('prostitute') is rendered directly rather than with the KJV's archaic 'whore.' The image of sitting on 'many waters' (hydatōn pollōn) comes from Jeremiah 51:13, where Babylon literally sat on the Euphrates and its canal system. Verse 15 will interpret the waters as 'peoples and multitudes and nations and languages' — Babylon's power rests on the populations she controls.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 51:13. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The Greek eporneusan ('committed sexual immorality') and porneias ('sexual immorality') use the porneia word group metaphorically for political and religious unfaithfulness — the kings have entered into illicit alliance with Babylon, trading their sovereignty for her wealth. The intoxication metaphor suggests willing participation: the earth's inhabitants are not merely victims but willing partners in Babylon's corruption.
3. The transport 'in the Spirit' (en pneumatī) parallels 1:10, 4:2, and 21:10 — the four visionary translocations in Revelation. The wilderness setting contrasts with the New Jerusalem vision, where John is carried to a great mountain (21:10). The scarlet (kokkinon) beast matches the dragon's fiery-red color (12:3, pyrrōs). The beast is 'covered with' (gemon, 'full of') blasphemous names — not just on its heads (13:1) but everywhere.
4. Purple and scarlet were the colors of royalty and extreme wealth in the ancient world. The external adornment contrasts with the cup's contents — outward splendor concealing inner corruption. The word bdelygmatōn ('abominations') is the term used in the Septuagint for idolatrous objects and practices (cf. Daniel 9:27, 11:31, 12:11, 'the abomination of desolation'). The woman's finery will be catalogued in detail in 18:12-13 and mourned in 18:16.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 9:27. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The word mystērion ('mystery') likely introduces the name as symbolic rather than being part of the name itself — 'Babylon' is a code name requiring interpretation. Roman prostitutes were known to wear headbands displaying their names, which may inform the imagery. The title 'Mother of Prostitutes' makes Babylon the source and origin of all corrupting influence, not merely one instance of it.
6. The woman is drunk not on wine but on blood — the blood of martyrs. The Greek martyrōn Iēsou ('witnesses/martyrs of Jesus') uses the word from which English derives 'martyr,' here carrying both senses simultaneously. John's astonishment (ethaumasa thauma mega, literally 'I marveled a great marvel') may reflect horror rather than admiration — the KJV's 'admiration' is misleading in modern English. The angel will rebuke his amazement in the next verse.
7. The angel's question implies that John should not be astonished — the mystery is about to be explained. The phrase 'the beast that carries her' (tou thēriou tou bastazontos autēn) emphasizes the parasitic relationship: Babylon rides the beast, dependent on its power. The interpretation that follows (vv. 8-18) is the longest angelic explanation in Revelation.
8. The formula 'was, and is not, and will be present' (ēn kai ouk estin kai parestai) is a deliberate parody of God's title 'who is and who was and who is to come' (1:4, 8). The beast's existence is a grotesque imitation of divine eternity. Its origin from the abyss (abyssou) identifies it with the demonic realm (cf. 9:1-2, 11:7). Its destination is apōleia ('destruction') — the beast's trajectory is the opposite of God's, who moves toward new creation.
9. The formula 'here is the mind with wisdom' parallels 13:18 ('here is wisdom'). The identification of seven mountains (hepta orē) with a city was unmistakable to ancient readers — Rome was universally known as the city on seven hills (Virgil, Martial, Cicero, and many others used this designation). The woman 'sits on' the mountains as she 'sits on' the waters (v. 1) and the beast (v. 3) — she derives power from all three.
10. The seven heads serve double duty: they are both seven mountains and seven kings. The temporal sequence (five fallen, one present, one future) has generated extensive debate about which Roman emperors are intended. The count depends on where one begins (Julius Caesar or Augustus?) and whether short-reigning emperors (Galba, Otho, Vitellius) are included. The text may be more interested in the symbolic pattern (the present moment within a sequence nearing its end) than in precise historical identification.
11. The beast is both distinct from the seven (an eighth) and part of them (from the seven) — it is the imperial system itself, which transcends any individual emperor. This likely reflects the Nero redivivus myth — the widespread belief that Nero would return from the dead — which the text co-opts for its own theological purposes. The repeated destination 'to destruction' (eis apōleian) confirms the beast's ultimate fate (cf. v. 8).
12. The ten kings echo Daniel 7:24, where ten horns represent ten kings. These are future rulers ('have not yet received a kingdom') whose reign is extremely brief ('one hour'). The phrase 'one hour' (mian hōran) symbolizes transient, negligible power compared to the eternal reign of God and the Lamb. They receive power 'with the beast' (meta tou thēriou) — their authority is derivative, not independent.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:24. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The Greek mian gnōmēn ('one mind, one purpose') indicates unified intent — the ten kings act in perfect concert. Their voluntary surrender of power and authority to the beast illustrates how totalitarian systems consolidate: subsidiary powers willingly cede their autonomy to the central authority.
14. The outcome of the cosmic war is stated with stunning brevity: the Lamb will conquer. No battle details are given — the result is a foregone conclusion. The title 'Lord of lords and King of kings' (kyrios kyriōn kai basileus basileōn) comes from Deuteronomy 10:17 and Daniel 2:47, and recurs in 19:16 in reverse order. The Lamb's army is described not by military qualifications but by three spiritual qualities: called (klētoi), chosen (eklektoi), and faithful (pistoi).

14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Deuteronomy 10:17. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Daniel 2:47. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The 'many waters' of verse 1 are now interpreted: they represent the global populations over which Babylon exercises dominion. The fourfold formula (peoples, multitudes, nations, languages) is another variation of Revelation's universal scope language (cf. 5:9, 7:9, 13:7, 14:6). Babylon's power base is human — she sits on people.
16. The self-destructive nature of evil is the key theological insight: the beast and its allied kings turn on the woman they once carried. The four punishments (desolation, nakedness, devouring, burning) echo the penalties for a priest's daughter who becomes a prostitute (Leviticus 21:9) and Ezekiel's description of Jerusalem's punishment (Ezekiel 16:37-41, 23:25-29). Evil eventually consumes itself.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Leviticus 21:9. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 16:37-41. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. This verse reveals the deepest irony of the chapter: even the beast's coalition serves God's purposes. God placed the intention (gnōmēn, 'purpose, resolve') in their hearts — their evil cooperation is unwittingly executing God's plan. The phrase 'until the words of God are fulfilled' (achri telesthēsontai hoi logoi tou theou) sets a divine terminus on the arrangement: it lasts only as long as God allows.
18. The final identification is explicit: the woman is a city (polis) that rules (echousa basileian, 'having kingdom/sovereignty') over the earth's kings. For the original audience, this could only mean Rome — the city that held dominion over the known world. However, Revelation's symbolic language allows the image to apply to any civilization that embodies Babylon's characteristics: imperial arrogance, economic exploitation, persecution of the faithful, and seductive luxury.

18

Summary: *Revelation 18 is an extended funeral dirge over Babylon's fall, modeled on the prophetic oracles against Tyre (Ezekiel 26-28) and historical Babylon (Jeremiah 50-51, Isaiah 13-14, 47). An angel of great authority announces Babylon's fall. A voice from heaven calls God's people to come out of her. Three groups mourn: kings who shared her luxury, merchants who grew rich from her trade, and sailors who carried her goods. The cargo list (vv. 12-13) catalogs Rome's extravagant trade, culminating shockingly in 'human souls.' A symbolic act closes the chapter: an angel hurls a great millstone into the sea, declaring that Babylon will be thrown down and found no more.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The cargo list in verses 12-13 is one of the most economically detailed passages in the Bible, cataloging twenty-eight trade items from luxury goods to basic commodities. The list follows the actual trade routes of the Roman Empire. Its final item — 'bodies and human souls' (sōmatōn kai psychas anthrōpōn) — exposes the slave trade as the foundation of Babylon's economy, placing human trafficking as the ultimate indictment. The threefold dirge structure (kings, merchants, sailors) mirrors Ezekiel's lament over Tyre but applies it to a city of far greater scope.*

Translation Friction: *The command 'Come out of her, my people' (v. 4) echoes Jeremiah 51:45 and Isaiah 48:20. Whether this calls for literal physical separation or spiritual/moral disengagement from corrupt systems has been debated. The text supports both readings. The 'double portion' punishment (v. 6) draws on the cup-of-wrath imagery found throughout the prophets.*

Connections: *The chapter is a dense tissue of Old Testament allusion: Jeremiah 50-51 (Babylon's fall), Isaiah 13-14, 47 (oracles against Babylon), Ezekiel 26-28 (lament over Tyre), Isaiah 21:9 ('Fallen, fallen is Babylon'), and Jeremiah 25:10 (sounds of joy silenced). The millstone casting (v. 21) echoes Jeremiah 51:63-64, where Seraiah throws a scroll into the Euphrates as a symbolic act of Babylon's sinking.*

1After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven with great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his glory. 2 He cried out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, and a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast, 3For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her sexual immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth are grew rich through the abundance of her delicacies. 4Then I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, so that you do not share in her sins and so that you do not receive any of

her plagues. ⁵For her sins have piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. ⁶Pay her back as she herself has paid out, and repay her double according to her deeds. In the cup she mixed, mix her a double portion. ⁷To the degree that she glorified herself and lived in luxury, give her that same measure of torment and grief. For in her heart she says, 'I sit as queen; I am no widow, and I will never see grief.' ⁸For this reason her plagues will come in a single day — death and grief and famine — and she will be consumed by fire, because the Lord God who judges her is mighty." ⁹The kings of the earth, who committed sexual immorality and shared her luxury, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke of her burning. ¹⁰They will stand far off in fear of her torment and say, "Woe, woe to the great city, Babylon the mighty city! For in a single hour your judgment has come." ¹¹The merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargo anymore — ¹²The cargo included gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine cloth, purple, silk, and scarlet, and all citron wood, and every kind of container made from ivory, and every kind of container made from the finest wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, ¹³Cinnamon, odours, ointments, and frankincense, wine, oil, and choice flour, wheat, beasts, and sheep, horses, chariots, and slaves, and souls of men. ¹⁴The fruit that your soul craved has gone from you, and all your luxury and splendor have vanished — never to be found again. ¹⁵The merchants who dealt in these things and grew rich from her will stand far off in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, ¹⁶Saying, Alas, alas, that remarkable city, that was clothed in fine cloth, purple, scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! ¹⁷For in a single hour all this wealth has been laid waste!" Every ship captain, every seafarer, sailors, and all who make their living from the sea stood far off ¹⁸Cried when they noticed the smoke of her burning and stated, What city is like to this remarkable city! ¹⁹They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and mourning, "Woe, woe to the great city, where all who had ships at sea grew rich from her wealth! For in a single hour she has been laid waste." ²⁰Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets! For God has pronounced judgment for you against her. ²¹Then a mighty angel picked up a stone like a great millstone and hurled it into the sea, saying, "With such violence Babylon the great city will be thrown down, and will never be found again. ²²The sound of harpists and musicians, flute players and trumpeters, will never be heard in you again. No craftsman of any craft will ever be found in you again. The sound of the mill will never be heard in you again. ²³The light of a lamp will never shine in you again, and the voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again. For your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery. ²⁴In her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who have been slaughtered on the earth."

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. This angel's glory (doxa) is so intense that the entire earth is lit up — a theophanic characteristic usually reserved for God himself (cf. Ezekiel 43:2, where God's glory illuminates the earth). The great authority (exousian megalēn) suggests this is an angel of the highest rank, perhaps the same one who earlier bound the dragon (20:1).
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 43:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The doubled 'Fallen, fallen' repeats 14:8 and Isaiah 21:9. The three 'haunts' (phylakē, literally 'prison, guard-post') describe Babylon's post-judgment state: the once-glorious city becomes a ghost town inhabited by demons and unclean creatures. The imagery echoes Isaiah 13:21-22 and 34:11-15, where ruined cities become dwelling places for desert creatures and wild animals. The SBLGNT includes 'every unclean and detestable beast,' which some manuscripts omit.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 21:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 13:21-22. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. Three groups are implicated in Babylon's corruption: nations (who drank her wine), kings (who partnered with her), and merchants (who profited from her). The Greek strēnous ('luxury, wantonness, sensuality') appears only here and in verse 7 in the New Testament — it connotes arrogant, self-indulgent excess. The verb eploutēsān ('grew rich') introduces the economic theme that will dominate the chapter.
4. The call 'Come out of her, my people' (exelthate ho laos mou) echoes Jeremiah 51:45 ('Come out of her, my people!'), Jeremiah 50:8, and Isaiah 48:20 and 52:11. The two purposes are moral (not sharing in sins) and protective (not sharing in plagues). The verb synkoinōnēsēte ('share in, participate with') suggests complicity — remaining in Babylon means becoming co-responsible for her crimes.

4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 51:45. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Jeremiah 50:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 48:20. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. The Greek *ekollēthēsan* ('have clung together, have been joined') literally means 'have been glued together' — her sins have accumulated into a mass reaching heaven. The image recalls the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:4), another human construction reaching toward heaven in defiance of God. When God 'remembers' (*emnēmoneusen*) crimes, it means the time for reckoning has arrived (cf. 16:19).
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 11:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The principle of reciprocal justice — measure for measure — is applied with intensification: not equal but double. The Greek *diplōsate ta dipla* ('double the double things') is emphatic. The cup imagery reverses the scenario: the cup Babylon used to intoxicate the nations (14:8, 17:2) is now filled double for her. This echoes Isaiah 40:2 (Jerusalem receiving 'double for all her sins') and Jeremiah 16:18.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 40:2. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 16:18. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. Babylon's inner monologue — 'I sit as queen, I am no widow' — quotes Isaiah 47:7-8, where historical Babylon made the same boast before her destruction. The Greek *estrēniasen* ('lived in luxury, lived wantonly') corresponds to the *strēnous* of verse 3. The punishment matches the crime exactly: glorification met with torment, luxury met with grief. The triple self-declaration (queen, not widow, no grief) expresses total self-assurance about to be completely overturned.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 47:7-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The suddenness — 'in a single day' (*en mia hēmera*) — contrasts with Babylon's assumption of permanence. The three plagues (death, grief, famine) systematically dismantle her boasts from verse 7. Fire as the instrument of final destruction recalls 17:16. The closing declaration 'the Lord God who judges her is mighty' (*ischyros kyrios ho theos ho krinas autēn*) answers the beast-worshippers' question 'Who can wage war against [the beast]?' (13:4) — God can.
9. The first of three laments begins: kings (vv. 9-10), merchants (vv. 11-17a), and sailors (vv. 17b-19). Each follows the same pattern: identification, mourning, and the cry 'Woe, woe!' The kings weep for a partner lost, not from repentance. The smoke of burning recalls the destruction of Sodom, which Abraham watched from a distance (Genesis 19:28).
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 19:28. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The kings stand 'far off' (*apo makrothen*) — close enough to see but too afraid to approach. The double 'Woe, woe' (*ouai ouai*) is the lament formula repeated by all three groups. The phrase 'in a single hour' (*mia hōra*) emphasizes the suddenness that punctuates all three dirges (vv. 10, 17, 19). The city that claimed eternal power fell in an hour.
11. The merchants' grief is explicitly economic: they mourn because 'no one buys their cargo' (*ton gomōn autōn oudeis agorazei ouketi*). Their relationship with Babylon was transactional — they mourn a lost market, not a lost friend. The word *gomōn* ('cargo, freight') introduces the detailed trade list that follows.
12. The cargo list moves from most to least valuable: precious metals and gems first, then luxury fabrics, then exotic woods and metals. The Greek *sirikon* ('silk') was an extraordinarily expensive import from China via the Silk Road. Citron wood (*xylon thuionon*) from North Africa was prized for furniture and could cost more than gold by weight. The list reflects actual Roman trade routes and consumer goods of the first century.
13. The list continues through aromatics, foodstuffs, and livestock, descending in value until it reaches its devastating climax: *sōmatōn kai psychas anthrōpōn* — literally 'bodies and souls of human beings.' The final item exposes the slave trade as the foundation of Babylon's economy. The Greek *sōma* ('body') was the standard commercial term for a slave in the ancient world. By adding *kai psychas anthrōpōn* ('and human souls'), John refuses to let the slave trade be sanitized by commercial language — these 'bodies' are human souls. The shift from genitive to accusative (*psychas*) in the Greek may emphasize the final item as a parenthetical outcry.
14. The Greek *opōra* ('ripe fruit, autumn fruit') represents the peak of enjoyment. The address shifts to second person, speaking directly to Babylon. The double negative *ou mē* ('never, not at all') with the emphatic *ouketi* ('no longer') creates a triple negation in Greek — the loss is absolute and irrecoverable. The word *lipara* ('rich, luxurious, oily') and *lampra* ('bright, splendid, gorgeous') capture the sensory appeal of Babylon's lifestyle.
15. Like the kings (v. 10), the merchants stand at a distance — close enough to grieve their lost profits but not close enough to share the destruction. The phrase 'merchants of these things' (*emporoi toutōn*) links back to the cargo list: they are defined by what they sold, including human souls.
16. The merchants describe Babylon in terms of her consumer goods — the same items from the cargo list now appear as her clothing and jewelry. This is the language of commerce applied to a city: Babylon is described the way a merchant would describe inventory. Her identity is reduced to the luxury goods she consumed. The description parallels 17:4.

17. The second 'single hour' (mia hōra) refrain reinforces the theme of sudden destruction. The Greek ērēmōthē ('has been laid waste, has been made desolate') is related to erēmos ('wilderness, desolate place') — Babylon's wealth becomes a wasteland. The third mourning group (seafarers) includes four categories: ship captains (kybernētēs), seafarers (ho epi topon pleōn), sailors (nautai), and sea-traders — representing the entire maritime economy.
18. The sailors' cry 'What city was ever like the great city?' echoes Ezekiel 27:32, the lament over Tyre: 'Who was ever destroyed like Tyre in the midst of the sea?' It also darkly mirrors the beast-worshippers' cry 'Who is like the beast?' (13:4). In all these cases, the answer that Revelation presses is: God alone is incomparable.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 27:32 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. Throwing dust on the head is an ancient Near Eastern mourning gesture (Joshua 7:6, Job 2:12, Ezekiel 27:30). The third and final 'single hour' (mia hōra) refrain completes the pattern. The Greek timiotētos ('wealth, preciousness, costliness') derives from timē ('honor, price, value') — Babylon's value was entirely material, and now it is gone. All three laments follow the same structure: identification of the mourners, the double 'woe,' the description of what was lost, and the 'single hour' refrain.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Joshua 7:6. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Job 2:12. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ezekiel 27:30. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. This call to heavenly rejoicing contrasts sharply with the earthly mourning that precedes it. While kings, merchants, and sailors weep, heaven is told to rejoice. The Greek ekrinen ho theos to krima hymōn ex autēs literally means 'God has judged your judgment out of her' — God has taken up the saints' cause and rendered the verdict they were owed. This answers the cry of the martyrs in 6:10: 'How long before you judge and avenge our blood?'
21. The symbolic act directly echoes Jeremiah 51:63-64, where Seraiah ties a stone to a scroll and throws it into the Euphrates, declaring 'So shall Babylon sink.' The Greek hormēmāti ('with violence, with a rush') conveys sudden, forceful, irreversible destruction. Jesus used the millstone image for judgment (Matthew 18:6, Mark 9:42), but here the scale is cosmic — the entire city-system sinks like a stone.
21. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Jeremiah 51:63-64. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
22. The sixfold 'never again' (ou mē ... eti) refrain catalogs the sounds and activities of a living city being silenced forever. The list moves from entertainment (music) to industry (crafts) to daily life (milling grain). This passage closely follows Jeremiah 25:10, which lists the sounds that will cease from Jerusalem. The progressive silencing — from the cultural to the mundane — paints a picture of total civilizational collapse.
22. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Jeremiah 25:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
23. The silencing continues: lamplight (domestic life) and wedding celebrations (the continuation of community) cease. The charges then shift from lament to indictment: Babylon's merchants were 'the great ones' (megistanes, 'grandees, nobles') of the earth, and her 'sorcery' (pharmakeia, from which English derives 'pharmacy') deceived all nations. The word pharmakeia can mean literal drug-based sorcery or metaphorical enchantment — Babylon's seductive power operated like a drug.
24. The final indictment is the most sweeping: Babylon is responsible not only for the deaths of prophets and saints but for 'all who have been slaughtered on the earth' (pantōn tōn esphagmenōn epi tēs gēs). The verb esphagmenōn ('slaughtered') is the same word used for the Lamb in 5:6 — Babylon slaughters; the Lamb was slaughtered. This echoes Jesus's indictment of Jerusalem in Matthew 23:35 ('all the righteous blood shed on earth'). Babylon's guilt is comprehensive and systemic.

19

Summary: Revelation 19 moves from the fall of Babylon to the triumph of Christ in two dramatic movements. The first half (vv. 1-10) is a scene of heavenly worship: four 'Hallelujah' choruses celebrate God's just judgment of Babylon and announce the marriage supper of the Lamb. The second half (vv. 11-21) presents the rider on the white horse — identified as 'Faithful and True,' 'The Word of God,' and 'King of kings and Lord of lords' — who descends from heaven with his armies to defeat the beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth. The beast and false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire.

What Makes This Remarkable: *The fourfold 'Hallelujah' (vv. 1, 3, 4, 6) represents the only occurrences of this Hebrew word in the New Testament — it was reserved for this moment of ultimate triumph. The marriage supper of the Lamb (v. 9) draws on the ancient Near Eastern covenant-banquet tradition and the prophetic vision of the messianic banquet (Isaiah 25:6-8). The rider on the white horse conquers with a sword from his mouth (v. 15), not a sword in his hand — his weapon is his word. The name 'that no one knows except himself' (v. 12) preserves mystery even at the moment of revelation.*

Translation Friction: *The identity of the rider has been debated, though most interpreters identify him as Christ. The 'robe dipped in blood' (v. 13) could be his own blood (sacrificial) or his enemies' blood (drawing on Isaiah 63:1-6). The SBLGNT reading is 'dipped' (bebammenon), not 'sprinkled' (a variant). We render the Greek as given.*

Connections: *The Hallelujah chorus echoes Psalms 104-106, 111-113, 115-117, 135, 146-150. The marriage supper draws on Isaiah 25:6-8, Matthew 22:1-14, and 25:1-13. The rider on the white horse fulfills Psalm 45:3-5 (the warrior king) and Isaiah 11:4 (ruling with the rod of his mouth). The winepress imagery recalls Isaiah 63:1-6 and Revelation 14:19-20.*

¹After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, ²For true and righteous are his judgments — since he has judged the remarkable whore, which did corrupt the earth with her sexual immorality, and has avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. ³And a second time they said, "Hallelujah! Her smoke rises forever and ever." ⁴The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who is seated on the throne, saying, "Amen! Hallelujah!" ⁵Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all his servants, you who fear him, small and great!" ⁶Then I heard what sounded like the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns! ⁷Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory! For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ⁸She has been given fine linen to wear, bright and pure" — for the fine linen represents the righteous deeds of the saints. ⁹Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God." ¹⁰I fell at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Do not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!" For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. ¹¹Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and wages war. ¹²His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems. He has a name written that no one knows except himself. ¹³He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴The armies of heaven were following him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and pure. ¹⁵From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. He will shepherd them with an iron rod, and he treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed: King of kings and Lord of lords. ¹⁷Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice to all the birds flying in midheaven, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, ¹⁸That you may consume the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and remarkable. ¹⁹Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to wage war against the rider on the horse and against his army. ²⁰The beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed signs on its behalf — the signs by which he had deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹The rest were killed by the sword that came from the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek Hallēlouia transliterates the Hebrew hallelu-Yah ('Praise the LORD'). This is the first of only four occurrences in the New Testament, all in this chapter. The threefold attribution (salvation, glory, power) echoes the doxologies of 4:11, 5:12-13, and 7:12. The SBLGNT does not include 'honor' (timē) found in some manuscripts and the KJV.
2. The affirmation 'true and righteous are his judgments' (alēthinai kai dikaiai hai kriseis autou) echoes 15:3 and 16:7, creating a liturgical refrain across the judgment sequence. The verb ephtheiren ('corrupted, destroyed') is stronger than mere moral influence — Babylon actively ruined the earth. The

avenging of blood answers the martyrs' cry from 6:10.

3. The second Hallelujah celebrates the permanence of Babylon's destruction — her smoke 'rises forever and ever' (anabainei eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn). This echoes Isaiah 34:10, where Edom's smoke rises perpetually, and Revelation 14:11, where the smoke of torment rises for those who worship the beast. The present tense 'rises' (anabainei) makes the destruction an ongoing reality in the heavenly perspective.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 34:10 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. The throne-room figures from chapters 4-5 reappear for the last time. The twenty-four elders and four living creatures have not been seen since 14:3. Their response — 'Amen! Hallelujah!' — combines Hebrew (Hallelujah) and Hebrew-via-Greek (Amēn, from Hebrew amen, 'truly, so be it') into the shortest and most complete act of worship in the book. This is the third Hallelujah.
5. The voice from the throne (not identified — possibly an angel near the throne, since it says 'our God' rather than 'me') issues a call to universal worship. The phrase 'small and great' (hoi mikroi kai hoi megaloi) encompasses the entire range of humanity, echoing Psalm 115:13 ('He will bless those who fear the LORD, small and great'). This sets up the great multitude response in verse 6.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 115:13 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The fourth and climactic Hallelujah is delivered by a voice of overwhelming scale — multitude, waters, thunder. The declaration ebasileusen ('has begun to reign, reigns') is an ingressive aorist — it marks the beginning of God's unchallenged reign, not merely its continuation. This echoes the seventh trumpet's proclamation in 11:15 ('The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ'). The Almighty (pantokratōr) title here carries the full weight of its Revelation usage.
7. The shift from judgment (Babylon the prostitute destroyed) to celebration (the Lamb's bride prepared) is abrupt and deliberate — the fall of the false woman makes way for the true. The marriage metaphor for God's covenant with his people runs throughout the Old Testament (Hosea 2:14-20, Isaiah 54:5-8, Ezekiel 16). The bride 'has made herself ready' (hētoimasen heautēn) — preparation is active, not passive. The Greek gynē can mean 'wife' or 'woman'; here 'bride' captures the wedding context.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Hosea 2:14-20. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 54:5-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 16. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The fine linen (byssinon) contrasts with Babylon's fine linen in 18:12, 16 — same fabric, entirely different significance. The bride's clothing 'was given' (edothē) to her — grace provides what the bride wears. Yet the linen represents 'the righteous deeds' (dikaiōmata) of the saints — human obedience is real but enabled by grace. The word dikaiōmata means 'righteous acts, just requirements fulfilled,' not merely imputed righteousness but lived faithfulness.
9. This is the fourth beatitude in Revelation (cf. 1:3, 14:13, 16:15). The 'marriage supper' (deipnon tou gamou) draws on the messianic banquet tradition (Isaiah 25:6-8) and Jesus's banquet parables (Matthew 22:1-14, Luke 14:15-24). The solemn authentication 'These are the true words of God' (houtoi hoi logoi alēthinoi tou theou eisin) emphasizes the reliability of the promise — this is not wishful thinking but divine declaration.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 25:6-8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. John's impulse to worship the angel (repeated in 22:8-9) underscores Revelation's insistence that worship belongs to God alone — the central issue of the entire book. The angel's self-designation as syndoulos ('fellow servant') places angels and human believers on the same level: both are servants. The closing statement 'the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy' (hē martyria Iēsou estin to pneuma tēs prophēteias) can mean either 'testimony about Jesus' or 'testimony from Jesus' — both are valid. All true prophecy points to and comes from Jesus.
11. Heaven 'opened' (ēneōgmenon, perfect passive — standing open) indicates a permanent opening, not a momentary glimpse. The white horse contrasts with the white horse of 6:2 (the first seal), though whether that earlier rider is the same figure or a counterfeit is debated. The name 'Faithful and True' (pistos kai alēthinos) was first applied to Christ in 3:14. He wages war 'in righteousness' (en dikaiosynē) — unlike all earthly warfare, this military action is entirely just.
12. The fiery eyes recall 1:14 and 2:18, identifying the rider with the exalted Christ of the opening vision. The 'many diadems' (diademata polla) — royal crowns — surpass the dragon's seven (12:3) and the beast's ten (13:1), signaling supreme sovereignty. The unknown name preserves an element of mystery even in this moment of full revelation: Christ possesses a dimension of identity that transcends all human comprehension (cf. Judges 13:18, Isaiah 9:6).
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Judges 13:18. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 9:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.

- 13.** The Greek *bebammenon* ('dipped, dyed') indicates the robe was immersed in blood before the battle begins. This most likely alludes to Isaiah 63:1-3, where God treads the winepress of nations and his garments are stained with their lifeblood. Alternatively, the blood may be his own sacrificial blood. The title 'The Word of God' (*ho logos tou theou*) connects to John 1:1 ('In the beginning was the Word') and to the sword from his mouth (v. 15) — this warrior's weapon is God's spoken word.
- 13.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 63:1-3 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 14.** The heavenly armies wear fine linen (*byssinon leukon katharon*), not armor — the same clothing as the Lamb's bride (v. 8). They carry no weapons. This is not a battle where the armies fight; the rider alone wages war with the sword of his mouth. The armies are present as witnesses and companions, not combatants. Their white horses match their leader's, symbolizing victory already won.
- 15.** Three Old Testament texts converge: the sword from the mouth (Isaiah 11:4, 'he will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth'), the iron rod (Psalm 2:9, 'you will break them with a rod of iron'), and the winepress (Isaiah 63:3, 'I have trodden the winepress alone'). The weapon is speech, not steel — the sword proceeds from his mouth, meaning his word is the instrument of judgment. The Greek *poimanei* ('will shepherd') again carries both pastoral and governing senses (cf. 12:5). The quadruple genitive 'the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty' is the most intensely concentrated expression of divine judgment in Revelation.
- 15.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 63:3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 15.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 11:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 15.** [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Psalm 2:9 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
- 16.** The name is written on both robe and thigh — the thigh was where a sword hung, and the inscription would be visible where the robe fell open over the thigh. The title reverses the order from 17:14 ('Lord of lords and King of kings'), perhaps for climactic effect — 'King of kings' now comes first. This superlative title, drawn from Deuteronomy 10:17 and Daniel 2:47, makes the supreme claim: every other sovereign, human or demonic, is subordinate to this rider.
- 16.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Deuteronomy 10:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 16.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Daniel 2:47. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
- 17.** The 'great supper of God' (*to deipnon to mega tou theou*) is a grotesque counterpart to the 'marriage supper of the Lamb' (v. 9) — one is a feast of celebration, the other a feast of carrion. The imagery comes from Ezekiel 39:4, 17-20, where God invites the birds and beasts to a sacrificial feast on the mountains of Israel. The angel 'standing in the sun' (*hestōta en tō hēliō*) occupies a position of maximum cosmic visibility.
- 17.** [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 39:4. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
- 18.** The fivefold repetition of 'flesh' (*sarkas*) is grim and relentless. The social categories (kings, commanders, mighty, free/slave, small/great) match the universal categories of 6:15 — those who once hid from God's wrath now become a feast for birds. The leveling is total: king and slave are equal as carrion. This directly echoes Ezekiel 39:18-20.
- 18.** [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 39:18-20 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
- 19.** The gathering anticipated in 16:14, 16 (Armageddon) now takes place. The beast and earth's kings assemble their armies against the rider — an act of supreme futility already declared hopeless in 17:14. The brevity of the 'battle' (described in only two verses, 20-21) underscores how one-sided the conflict is.
- 20.** No battle is described — the beast is simply captured (*epiasthē*, 'was seized'). The false prophet (the second beast of ch. 13) is identified by his deceptive signs. The 'lake of fire' (*limnē tou pyros*) is introduced here for the first time and will become the final destination of death, Hades, and the wicked (20:10, 14-15). The phrase 'thrown alive' (*zōntes eblēthēsan*) emphasizes the immediacy — no trial, no appeal, no delay.
- 21.** The text emphasizes once more that the sword comes 'from his mouth' (*tē exelthousē ek tou stomatos autou*) — this is victory through the spoken word of God, not through military violence. The verb *echortasthēsan* ('were filled, gorged themselves') brings the grim 'great supper' of verses 17-18 to completion. The entire cosmic conflict — dragon, beast, false prophet, kings of the earth, their armies — is resolved in just three verses (19-21). The Word prevails.

20

Summary: *Revelation 20 describes three decisive events. First, an angel binds Satan in the abyss for a thousand years while the martyrs are resurrected to reign with Christ (the 'first resurrection'). Second, after the thousand years, Satan is released, deceives the nations (Gog and Magog), and leads a final assault on 'the beloved city' — only to be consumed by fire from heaven and thrown into the lake of fire forever. Third, the Great White Throne judgment: the dead are raised, the books are opened, and everyone is judged according to their deeds. Death and Hades themselves are thrown into the lake of fire, and anyone not found in the book of life joins them.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The millennium (thousand-year reign) of Revelation 20 has generated three major interpretive traditions: premillennialism (Christ returns before the thousand years), postmillennialism (Christ returns after), and amillennialism (the thousand years are symbolic of the present age). The text uses *chilia etē* ('a thousand years') six times in seven verses (vv. 2-7), making it the defining concept of the chapter. The Gog and Magog reference (v. 8) draws on Ezekiel 38-39 but transposes it to a post-millennial context. The Great White Throne (v. 11) is one of the most solemn images in all of scripture — earth and heaven flee from the presence of the one seated on it.*

Translation Friction: *The sequence and nature of the millennium have been debated throughout church history. We render the Greek text without advocating for any millennial position. The relationship between the 'first resurrection' (v. 5) and the general resurrection (vv. 12-13) is also debated. The phrase 'the rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended' (v. 5) is textually secure but interpretively complex.*

Connections: *The binding of Satan echoes Isaiah 24:21-22 (imprisoned host of heaven). Gog and Magog come from Ezekiel 38-39. The Great White Throne draws on Daniel 7:9-10 (the Ancient of Days and the opening of books). The book of life appears in Exodus 32:32-33, Psalm 69:28, Daniel 12:1, and throughout Revelation. The second death (v. 14) connects to 2:11 and 21:8.*

¹Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key to the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ²He seized the dragon — that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan — and bound him for a thousand years. ³He threw him into the abyss, shut it, and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed. After that he must be released for a short time. ⁴Then I saw thrones, and those seated on them were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony about Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received the mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is the one who has a share in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years. ⁷When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison. ⁸He will go out to deceive the nations at the four corners of the earth — Gog and Magog — to gather them for battle. Their number is like the sand of the sea. ⁹They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. But fire came down from heaven and consumed them. ¹⁰The devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet already are. They will be tormented day and night forever and ever. ¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and the one seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. ¹²I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what was written in the books, according to their deeds. ¹³The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to their deeds. ¹⁴Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death — the lake of fire. ¹⁵If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, that person was thrown into the lake of fire.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The key to the abyss was previously given to the fallen star in 9:1. Now it is in the hand of a heavenly angel, indicating God's sovereign control over access to the abyss. The 'great chain' (halysin megalēn) is symbolic of binding power. The angel is not identified — notably, it is not Christ but a single unnamed angel who is sufficient to bind the dragon.
2. The fourfold identification repeats 12:9: dragon, ancient serpent, Devil, Satan. The binding (edēsen, 'bound, tied up') restricts Satan's activity for a defined period. The phrase 'a thousand years' (chilia etē) appears for the first time, and will be repeated five more times through verse 7. Whether the number is literal or symbolic (representing a complete, long period) has been debated since the early church.
3. Three actions secure the binding: thrown in, shut, sealed. The purpose of the binding is specifically to prevent deception (mē planēsē, 'might not deceive') — Satan's primary weapon throughout Revelation. The phrase 'he must be released' (dei lythēnai auton, literally 'it is necessary for him to be loosed') uses the divine dei ('it is necessary') — even Satan's release serves God's purposes. The 'short time' (mikron chronon) echoes 12:12.
4. The Greek pepelekismenōn ('beheaded, executed with an axe') is specific but may represent all forms of martyrdom by synecdoche. Two groups appear to be described: the martyred and those who refused the beast's mark. The verb ezēsan ('they came to life, they lived') in the aorist tense suggests a definitive event — a resurrection. The phrase 'reigned with Christ' (ebasileusan meta tou Christou) fulfills the promise of 3:21 and 5:10.
5. The phrase 'first resurrection' (anastasis hē prōtē) implies a second resurrection (described in vv. 12-13). Whether 'first' refers to chronological sequence (a bodily resurrection before the general resurrection) or to a spiritual reality (new life in Christ that precedes physical resurrection) is the central interpretive divide between premillennial and amillennial readings. The text itself uses the same verb ezēsan ('came to life') for both the first (v. 4) and second (implied in v. 5) groups.
6. This is the fifth beatitude in Revelation (cf. 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9). The 'second death' (ho deuterios thanatos) is defined in verse 14 as the lake of fire. The dual role — priests and kings (hierēis tou theou kai tou Christou) — fulfills the promise of 1:6 and 5:10 and echoes Exodus 19:6 ('a kingdom of priests'). The phrase 'of God and of Christ' places God and Christ on the same level as objects of priestly service.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Exodus 19:6. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The sixth and final occurrence of 'the thousand years' (ta chilia etē). Satan's release is described with the passive lythēsetai ('will be released') — he does not escape; he is let out. The abyss is now called his 'prison' (phylakēs), the same word used for Babylon's post-destruction state in 18:2 ('a haunt/prison for every unclean spirit').
8. Satan's first act upon release is deception (planēsai) — his essential nature unchanged. Gog and Magog come from Ezekiel 38-39, where Gog is the ruler of Magog who leads a massive invasion of Israel in the last days. Here both names represent all hostile nations. 'The four corners of the earth' indicates universal scope. The comparison to 'sand of the sea' (hē ammos tēs thalassēs) recalls the Abrahamic promise (Genesis 22:17) — the enemies' number ironically echoes the blessing given to Abraham's descendants.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 38-39 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
8. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 22:17 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
9. The 'beloved city' (tēn polin tēn ēgapēmenēn) is Jerusalem — the city God loves (Psalm 78:68, 87:2). The 'camp of the saints' (parembolēn tōn hagiōn) uses military language for the gathered people of God, echoing Israel's wilderness encampment. The fire from heaven recalls Ezekiel 38:22 and 39:6, where God destroys Gog with fire. As in chapter 19, no battle is narrated — God's intervention is immediate and total.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Ezekiel 38:22. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
9. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Psalm 78:68. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
10. The unholy trinity is now complete in the lake of fire: dragon (thrown in here), beast and false prophet (thrown in at 19:20). The phrase 'where the beast and the false prophet already are' (hopou kai to thērion kai ho pseudoprophētēs) indicates they have been there since 19:20 — throughout the entire millennium. The duration 'day and night forever and ever' (hēmeras kai nyktos eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn) uses the strongest possible expression of unending duration.
11. The 'great white throne' (thronon megan leukon) is the seat of final judgment — white signifying purity and absolute justice. The one seated is not explicitly identified (God or Christ), preserving the unity of divine judgment. The flight of earth and heaven (ephygen hē gē kai ho ouranos) is cosmic dissolution — the old creation cannot stand before the Judge's face. The phrase 'no place was found for them' (topos ouch heurethē autois) echoes 12:8 (no place for the dragon) — now creation itself finds no place to exist.
12. Two kinds of books are opened: plural 'books' (biblia) — records of deeds — and the singular 'book of life' (biblion tēs zōēs). Judgment is 'according to their deeds' (kata ta erga autōn), a principle stated three times in the chapter (vv. 12, 13). The scene draws directly on Daniel 7:10 ('The court sat in judgment, and the books were opened'). The phrase 'great and small' (megalous kai mikrous) is reversed from the usual order, perhaps emphasizing that even the great must stand before this throne.

12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Daniel 7:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Three realms surrender their dead: the sea (those lost at sea, without proper burial), Death (the state of being dead), and Hades (the realm of the dead, Greek equivalent of Hebrew Sheol). The personification of Death and Hades as entities who 'give up' their dead suggests they are reluctant captors forced to release their prisoners. The Greek hekastos ('each one') emphasizes individual accountability — judgment is personal, not merely collective.
14. Death itself dies — Death and Hades, personified as the last enemies, are destroyed in the lake of fire. This fulfills Isaiah 25:8 ('He will swallow up death forever') and 1 Corinthians 15:26 ('The last enemy to be destroyed is death'). The 'second death' (ho thanatos ho deuterios) is defined: it is the lake of fire. The first death is physical; the second death is final separation from God. After this verse, death does not appear again in Revelation — it is gone.
14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 25:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The final criterion is not deeds alone (though deeds are judged in vv. 12-13) but inclusion in the book of life. The conditional 'if anyone' (ei tis) is stark and individual. The passive 'was not found written' (ouch heurethē gegrammenos) implies a search — the book is examined, and the name is either there or it is not. This is the last verse before the new creation vision of chapter 21. The chapter ends not with hope but with the sober reality of final judgment, making the transition to chapter 21 all the more dramatic.

21

Summary: *Revelation 21 is the climax of the entire biblical narrative: the new heaven and new earth appear, the New Jerusalem descends from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband, and God declares that he will dwell with his people. Death, mourning, crying, and pain are gone forever. The chapter then provides an extended description of the holy city: its walls, gates, foundations, and dimensions are measured by an angel. The city is a perfect cube of gold, with gates of pearl and foundations of precious stones. There is no temple, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. There is no sun or moon, for God's glory and the Lamb's light illuminate it. The nations will walk by its light, and nothing unclean will ever enter it.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *The New Jerusalem descending 'from heaven from God' represents not human achievement but divine gift — the city comes down, it is not built up. The declaration 'Look, the dwelling of God is with humanity' (v. 3) uses the Greek skēnē ('tent, tabernacle'), fulfilling the entire tabernacle/temple trajectory of scripture. The city's cubic dimensions (v. 16) match the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:20) — the entire city is now the innermost sanctuary. The absence of a temple (v. 22) is the most radical transformation: in a city that is entirely God's dwelling, a separate sacred space is unnecessary. The river and tree of life in chapter 22 will complete the reversal of Eden's loss.*

Translation Friction: *The measurements of the city (12,000 stadia per side, approximately 1,400 miles) are clearly symbolic rather than literal — a cube of that size would extend beyond the earth's atmosphere. The number 12,000 combines 12 (tribes/apostles) with 1,000 (divine completeness). We render the measurements as given without literalizing or spiritualizing them.*

Connections: *The chapter draws on Isaiah 65:17-25 (new heavens and new earth), Isaiah 25:8 (death swallowed up, tears wiped away), Ezekiel 40-48 (the measured city and temple), Isaiah 60 (the glory of the new Jerusalem), Genesis 2 (Eden restored), and Exodus 25-40 (the tabernacle). The twelve gates inscribed with tribal names and twelve foundations inscribed with apostolic names unite Israel and the Church in one city.*

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. ³I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! The dwelling of God is with humanity, and he will dwell with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the former things have passed away." ⁵The one seated on the throne said, "Look! I am making all things new." He also said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give freely from the spring of the water of life. ⁷The one who conquers will inherit these things. I will be their

God and they will be my son. ⁸But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars — their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." ⁹ Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰He carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, ¹¹After the splendor of God — and her light was like to a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;. ¹²It had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names were inscribed on the gates — the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel: ¹³There were three gates on the east side, three on the north, three on the south, and three on the west. ¹⁴The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ¹⁵The angel who spoke with me had a golden measuring rod to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶The city is laid out as a square; its length is the same as its width. He measured the city with the rod: twelve thousand stadia in length, width, and height — its dimensions are equal. ¹⁷ He also measured its wall: one hundred forty-four cubits by human measurement, which the angel was using. ¹⁸The wall was built of jasper, and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. ¹⁹The foundations of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, ²⁰The fifth was sardonyx. The sixth sardius. The seventh chrysolite. The eighth beryl. The ninth topaz. The tenth chrysoprase. The eleventh jacinth. And the twelfth amethyst. ²¹The twelve gates were twelve pearls — each gate made from a single pearl. And the main street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass. ²²I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³The city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵Its gates will never be shut by day — and there will be no night there. ²⁶They will bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. ²⁷Nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The phrase 'new heaven and new earth' (ouranon kainon kai gēn kainēn) quotes Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22. The adjective kainos (qualitatively new) rather than neos (chronologically new) suggests renewal and transformation rather than replacement. The absence of the sea (hē thalassa ouk estin eti) would have been striking to a first-century audience living in a maritime world — the sea was both a source of livelihood and a symbol of chaos and danger in ancient thought.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 65:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The city descends — it is not built by human effort but given by God. The double origin ('out of heaven, from God') emphasizes divine initiative. The bridal imagery connects to 19:7-8 (the Lamb's bride) and to the Old Testament prophetic tradition of Zion as God's bride (Isaiah 54:5-8, 62:5). The verb kekosmēmenēn ('adorned, decorated') gives English the word 'cosmetic' — the city is beautifully prepared.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 54:5-8. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The word skēnē ('dwelling, tabernacle') and the verb skēnōsei ('will dwell, will tabernacle') share the same root. The SBLGNT reads laoi ('peoples,' plural) rather than laos ('people,' singular) — a significant variant suggesting that the covenant community includes multiple nations, not just one. The covenant formula 'they will be his people, and he will be their God' echoes Leviticus 26:11-12, Jeremiah 31:33, Ezekiel 37:27, and Zechariah 8:8 — it is the Old Testament's most repeated promise, here fulfilled definitively.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 37:27 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Leviticus 26:11-12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Jeremiah 31:33 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 8:8 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

4. The wiping away of tears quotes Isaiah 25:8 ('He will swallow up death forever; the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces'). The fourfold negation — no death, no mourning, no crying, no pain — systematically reverses the conditions of the fallen world. The phrase 'the former things have passed away' (ta prōta apēlthan) declares the old order completely gone. This verse has provided comfort to grieving believers for two millennia and stands as one of the most beloved promises in scripture.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 25:8. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
5. This is one of only two times in Revelation that God speaks directly from the throne (the other is v. 6). The present tense 'I am making' (poiō) indicates an ongoing creative act, not merely a future promise. The order is 'all things new' (kaina poiō panta), not 'all new things' — the emphasis is on renewal of existing creation, not replacement. The command to write and the authentication 'trustworthy and true' (pistoī kai alēthinoi) mark this as solemn divine declaration.
6. The declaration 'It is done!' (gegonan, literally 'they have come to be') echoes 16:17 but now signals completion of creation rather than completion of judgment. The self-identification 'Alpha and Omega' (first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) was used in 1:8 — God's first and last self-identifications in Revelation bookend the entire work. The gift of living water 'freely' (dōrean, 'as a gift, without cost') echoes Isaiah 55:1 ('Come, all you who are thirsty...without cost') and Jesus's words in John 7:37-38.
6. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 55:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
7. The verb nikōn ('conquering, overcoming') is the same word used in the promises to the seven churches (2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21) — those promises are now fulfilled. The inheritance language (klēronomēsei) echoes the Old Testament land promises. The covenant formula 'I will be their God, they will be my son' (esomai autō theos kai autos estai moi huīos) combines the covenant promise of verse 3 with an adoption declaration drawn from 2 Samuel 7:14 (the Davidic covenant). The singular 'son' (huīos) is striking — each overcomer receives the same status as Christ the Son.
7. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on 2 Samuel 7:14. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
8. The vice list contains eight categories, beginning with 'cowardly' (deilois) and 'faithless' (apistois) — the first two are not dramatic sins but failures of courage and trust under pressure. In the context of Revelation, cowardice means capitulating to the beast's demands rather than enduring. The word pharmakois ('sorcerers') is related to pharmakeia (18:23) and may include drug-based magical practices. The list ends with 'all liars' (pasin tois pseudēsīn), connecting to the dragon's identity as the deceiver. The second death is again identified as the lake of fire (cf. 20:14).
9. The structural parallel with 17:1 is deliberate: the same kind of angel (one of the seven bowl angels) offers to show John a woman/city. In chapter 17, it was the prostitute Babylon; here, it is the bride, the New Jerusalem. The two women represent two cities, two destinies, two possible allegiances. The designation 'the bride, the wife of the Lamb' (tēn nymphēn tēn gynaika tou arniou) combines betrothal and marriage — the wedding of 19:7 has been consummated.
10. The fourth and final visionary transport 'in the Spirit' (en pneumatī; cf. 1:10, 4:2, 17:3). The contrast with 17:3 is again deliberate: Babylon was seen from a wilderness; the New Jerusalem is seen from a high mountain. The mountain setting echoes Ezekiel 40:2, where the prophet is set on a high mountain to view the restored temple. The city is still 'coming down' (katabainousan, present participle) — its descent continues throughout the vision.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ezekiel 40:2 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. The city's defining characteristic is that it possesses 'the glory of God' (tēn doxan tou theou) — God's kavod, his weighty, luminous presence, fills the entire city. The Greek phōstēr ('radiance, luminary, light-bearer') is used in the Septuagint for the heavenly bodies (Genesis 1:14-16). The jasper (iaspis) described as 'clear as crystal' (krystallizontō) does not match modern jasper (which is opaque); it likely refers to a translucent gemstone, perhaps diamond or clear quartz.
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 1:14-16. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The twelve gates inscribed with Israel's tribal names draw on Ezekiel 48:30-35, where the restored city has gates named for the twelve tribes. The twelve angels at the gates serve as sentinels (cf. Isaiah 62:6, where watchmen guard Jerusalem's walls). The wall is 'great and high' (mega kai hypsēlon) — not for defense (the city has no enemies) but as a symbol of definition and security.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 48:30-35. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 62:6. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. The symmetrical arrangement — three gates on each of four sides — matches Ezekiel 48:31-34 exactly. The gates face all four directions, indicating universal access: the city welcomes people from every direction. The sequence (east, north, south, west) begins with the east, the direction of sunrise and of the temple's main entrance.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Ezekiel 48:31-34 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.

14. The twelve foundations inscribed with apostolic names complement the twelve gates inscribed with tribal names — Israel and the Church are united in one structure. The 'apostles of the Lamb' (apostolōn tou arniou) is a distinctive phrase identifying them as belonging to and sent by Christ. Ephesians 2:20 similarly speaks of the church 'built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets.' The twelve-plus-twelve architecture (24 total) may connect to the twenty-four elders of chapters 4-5.
15. The measuring of the city parallels Ezekiel 40-42, where an angel measures the restored temple with a measuring rod. The rod is golden (chrysoun), befitting the heavenly city. Measuring in prophetic literature signifies divine ownership and protection (cf. Zechariah 2:1-5). Three things are measured: the city itself, its gates, and its wall.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Ezekiel 40-42 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
15. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Zechariah 2:1-5 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
16. The equal dimensions (length, width, height) make the city a perfect cube — the same shape as the Holy of Holies in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6:20, a cube of twenty cubits). The entire city is the Holy of Holies: what was once the most restricted space in the world, entered by one person once a year, now encompasses the entire dwelling of God's people. Twelve thousand stadia (approximately 1,400 miles or 2,200 km) is a symbolic measurement: 12 x 1,000. A stadion is approximately 607 feet (185 meters).
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes 1 Kings 6:20. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The wall measures 144 cubits (approximately 216 feet or 66 meters) — strikingly small compared to the city's enormous dimensions. The number 144 = 12 x 12, combining the twelve tribes and twelve apostles. The phrase 'human measurement, which the angel was using' (metron anthrōpou ho estin angelou) clarifies that the angel uses standard human units, making the measurements comprehensible. A cubit is approximately 18 inches (45 cm).
18. The wall material (jasper) matches the description of God's appearance in 4:3 — the city's very walls reflect God's character. The gold of the city is described as 'like clear glass' (homoion hyalō katharō) — transparent gold, a material that does not exist in the natural world. The vision transcends physical reality: this is gold you can see through, suggesting a city where nothing is hidden and light permeates everything.
19. The twelve foundation stones correspond broadly to the twelve stones on the high priest's breastplate (Exodus 28:17-20), which bore the names of the twelve tribes. The city itself functions as a priestly garment — the entire community is a 'kingdom of priests' (1:6, 5:10). The list begins with jasper, which also forms the wall (v. 18), creating continuity between foundation and superstructure.
19. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 28:17-20. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
20. The exact identification of ancient gemstones with modern equivalents is uncertain in several cases. Sardion (KJV 'sardius') is likely carnelian, a red stone. The twelve stones represent a spectrum of colors, creating a vision of extraordinary beauty. Together with the gold streets, pearl gates, and jasper walls, the city is a vision of a world where beauty is not scarce but structural — woven into the very fabric of reality.
21. Each gate is a single pearl of unimaginable size — the image defies natural possibility and signals that the New Jerusalem transcends the physical world entirely. The 'street' (plateia, singular) suggests one main thoroughfare rather than a complex street system. Again the gold is 'transparent as glass' (hōs hyalos diaugēs) — the material of ultimate value (gold) has the quality of ultimate visibility (transparency). Nothing in this city is opaque.
22. This is one of the most radical declarations in Revelation. After the entire biblical narrative has centered on God's temple — the tabernacle, Solomon's temple, the second temple, Ezekiel's visionary temple — John announces that the New Jerusalem has no temple. The reason is not absence but superabundance: God's presence is not localized in a building because it fills everything. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb together constitute the temple — divine presence is the sacred space itself.
23. This echoes Isaiah 60:19-20 ('The sun will no more be your light by day...for the LORD will be your everlasting light'). The sun and moon are not destroyed — they are simply unnecessary. God's glory (doxa, the Greek equivalent of Hebrew kavod) provides all the light the city needs. The Lamb is the city's 'lamp' (lychnos) — Christ mediates God's glory to the city, just as a lamp mediates fire's light to a room.
23. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 60:19-20 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
24. The SBLGNT omits 'of those who are saved' (tōn sōzomenōn) found in some manuscripts and the KJV — the nations walk by the city's light without restriction. This fulfills Isaiah 60:3 ('Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn'). The kings who once served the beast (17:2, 18:3, 9) are replaced by kings who bring their glory into God's city. The vision is one of cultural richness, not cultural erasure — the nations bring their distinct contributions.
24. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Isaiah 60:3. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
25. Open gates signal both security (no enemy to fear) and welcome (perpetual access). In the ancient world, city gates were closed at night for protection; these are never closed because there is no night and no threat. This echoes Isaiah 60:11 ('Your gates will always stand open, they will never be shut, day or night'). The parenthetical 'there will be no night' explains why 'by day' is not restrictive — it is always day.

25. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 60:11 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
26. The 'glory and honor of the nations' (tēn doxan kai tēn timēn tōn ethnōn) suggests that the best of human culture, creativity, and achievement is not destroyed but redeemed — brought into the New Jerusalem and consecrated. This is not the obliteration of human civilization but its purification and fulfillment.
27. The threefold exclusion (unclean, abomination, falsehood) echoes the vice list of verse 8 and connects to the Old Testament purity laws governing access to the temple. The distinction is that this is not ethnic or ritual purity but moral and spiritual: those excluded are characterized by corruption and deception. The criterion for inclusion is the same as in 20:15 — inscription in the Lamb's book of life. The chapter ends not with exclusion but with belonging: those written in the book have a permanent home.

22

Summary: *Revelation 22 is the final chapter of the Christian Bible, completing the vision of the new creation that began in chapter 21. The chapter opens with the river of the water of life flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the city, with the tree of life on either side bearing twelve kinds of fruit and leaves for the healing of the nations. There will be no more night, for the Lord God will be their light, and his servants will reign forever. The chapter then shifts to a series of closing declarations: the angel affirms the trustworthiness of the vision, Jesus announces his imminent return three times, a solemn warning is issued against adding to or removing from the words of this prophecy, and the book closes with the cry 'Come, Lord Jesus!' and a benediction of grace.*

What Makes This Remarkable: *This chapter deliberately echoes Genesis 2-3, closing the biblical narrative in a ring structure. The river of life recalls the river flowing from Eden (Genesis 2:10); the tree of life, barred to humanity after the fall (Genesis 3:24), now stands accessible in the city with no angel barring the way. The curse of Genesis 3:17-19 is explicitly undone: 'No longer will there be any curse' (v. 3). What was lost in a garden is restored in a city — not a return to innocence but a consummation of all history. The repeated 'I am coming soon' (erchomai tachy) uses the present tense, conveying imminence and certainty rather than a timetable. The final words of Scripture are not a theological statement but a prayer and a blessing — the church crying 'Come!' and Jesus extending grace.*

Translation Friction: *The SBLGNT text of this chapter contains several textual variants, particularly in the closing verses (vv. 19-21), where manuscript traditions diverge on whether 'tree of life' or 'book of life' is original. We follow the SBLGNT reading throughout. The warning in verses 18-19 against adding to or removing from 'this book' originally referred to the book of Revelation specifically, not the entire biblical canon, though later reception history extended its scope. The phrase 'the Spirit and the bride say Come' (v. 17) is grammatically ambiguous — it may be an invitation to Christ to return, an invitation to the thirsty to drink, or both simultaneously.*

Connections: *The river of life connects to Ezekiel 47:1-12, where water flows from the temple and heals the Dead Sea, and to Zechariah 14:8, where living waters flow from Jerusalem. The tree of life with twelve fruits echoes Ezekiel 47:12, where trees along the river bear fruit monthly with leaves for healing. The entire scene reverses the curse of Genesis 3 and fulfills the promise of Genesis 3:15 — the serpent's work is undone. The threefold 'I am coming soon' connects to Jesus's promise in John 14:3. The Alpha and Omega title (v. 13) reaches back to Revelation 1:8 and Isaiah 44:6. The closing benediction of grace echoes the Pauline epistolary tradition (cf. Romans 16:20, 1 Corinthians 16:23), grounding the apocalyptic vision in the worshipping life of real congregations.*

¹Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the middle of its main street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, producing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵There will be no more night. They will have no need for the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will shine on them, and they will reign forever and ever. ⁶And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place." ⁷"A

and look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book." ⁸I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had shown them to me. ⁹But he said to me, "Do not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!" ¹⁰Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near." ¹¹Let the one doing wrong continue to do wrong, and let the filthy one continue to be filthy, and let the righteous one continue to practice righteousness, and let the holy one continue to be holy." ¹²"Look, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me, to repay each one according to their work. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. ¹⁴Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by its gates. ¹⁵Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the sexually immoral and the murderers and the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. ¹⁶"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the Root and the Descendant of David, the bright morning star." ¹⁷The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" And let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life as a gift. ¹⁸I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. ²⁰The one who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! ²¹The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

TRANSLATOR NOTES

1. The Greek lampron ('bright, radiant') is rendered 'bright' rather than the KJV's 'pure,' which more accurately captures the visual quality described. The single throne shared by God and the Lamb (tou thronou tou theou kai tou arniou) uses one article governing both nouns, indicating a shared sovereignty. The river echoes both Eden's river (Genesis 2:10) and Ezekiel's temple river (Ezekiel 47:1-12), but here the source is not a garden or a temple — it is the throne itself.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 47:1-12. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
1. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Genesis 2:10. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
2. The syntax is notoriously difficult: how can the tree be both 'in the middle of the street' and 'on either side of the river'? The image may depict a single great tree straddling the river (as in Ezekiel 47:7, 12, where trees line both banks), or a collective singular referring to multiple trees. The Greek xylon ('wood, tree') is the same word used for the cross in Acts 5:30 and 1 Peter 2:24. Twelve kinds of fruit (karpous dodeka) — one for each month — suggest perpetual abundance with no season of barrenness. The word therapeia ('healing, service, care') gives us the English word 'therapy.' That the nations (ethne) still need healing in the new creation is a striking detail, suggesting the new Jerusalem is not static perfection but ongoing restoration.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Genesis 2:9. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
2. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Ezekiel 47:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
3. The Greek katathema ('curse, accursed thing') directly reverses the curse pronounced in Genesis 3:17 ('cursed is the ground because of you'). The entire weight of the fall — thorns, toil, pain, death — is undone in this single declaration. The verb latreuo ('to serve, to worship') carries both senses simultaneously: the servants both worship and serve. In the new creation, the distinction between sacred service and daily life collapses.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Zechariah 14:11 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
3. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Genesis 3:17 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
4. To see God's face (opsontai to prosopon autou) is the ultimate promise of Scripture. Moses was told 'you cannot see my face, for no one can see me and live' (Exodus 33:20). The beatific vision — direct, unmediated communion with God — is here declared possible. The name on the forehead contrasts with the mark of the beast (Revelation 13:16-17); God's people bear his name as a mark of belonging, not as a brand of ownership.
4. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Exodus 33:20. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.

5. The phrase *eis tous aionas ton aionon* ('into the ages of ages') is the strongest Greek expression for unending duration — literally 'forever and ever.' The reign promised here is not temporary or conditional but eternal. The abolition of night recalls Isaiah 60:19-20 ('the LORD will be your everlasting light') and completes the creation theme: God who said 'Let there be light' (Genesis 1:3) now becomes the light himself, making sun and lamp unnecessary.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Isaiah 60:19 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
5. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Genesis 1:3 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
6. The phrase *pistoi kai aleethinoi* ('trustworthy and true') echoes Revelation 21:5 and 19:11, where Christ himself is called 'Faithful and True.' The description 'the God of the spirits of the prophets' (*ho theos ton pneumatōn ton prophetōn*) identifies God as the one who inspires prophetic speech — the same Spirit who spoke through the Old Testament prophets now validates this final revelation. The phrase *en tachei* ('soon, quickly, without delay') maintains the tension of imminence that characterizes the entire book.
7. This is the first of three 'I am coming soon' declarations in this chapter (see also vv. 12, 20). The Greek *erchomai tachy* uses the present tense ('I am coming') with the adverb *tachy* ('soon, quickly'), conveying both certainty and imminence. This is the sixth of seven beatitudes in Revelation (cf. 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14). The verb *tereo* ('to keep, to guard, to observe') implies not merely reading but obeying and treasuring.
8. John's attempt to worship the angel repeats the same error from Revelation 19:10. The repetition is not carelessness — it dramatizes how overwhelming the visions are and how instinctive the impulse to worship the messenger rather than the sender. The emphatic *Kago Ioannes* ('And I, John') reasserts the human eyewitness behind the apocalyptic visions.
9. The angel's refusal is emphatic: *Hora me* ('See that you do not!' or 'Stop!'). The angel identifies himself as a *syndoulos* ('fellow servant, co-slave') — placing himself in the same category as John, the prophets, and all who keep the book's words. The command to *proskyneō* ('worship') God alone echoes the first commandment and Jesus's response to Satan in Matthew 4:10.
10. This command directly contrasts with Daniel 12:4 ('seal up the book until the time of the end'). Daniel's prophecy was sealed because its fulfillment was distant; John's is unsealed because the time (*kairos*, 'appointed time, decisive moment') is near (*engys*). The shift from sealed to unsealed marks the transition from prophetic anticipation to imminent fulfillment.
10. [TCR Cross-Reference] This verse quotes Daniel 12:4 — see the TCR rendering of that passage for the Hebrew source text and translation decisions.
11. This jarring declaration does not encourage evil but announces the finality of moral choice. When the end comes, character is fixed — there is no more time for change. The fourfold structure creates two pairs: the unjust and filthy on one side, the righteous and holy on the other. The Greek imperative forms (*adikesato*, *rhypantetho*, *poiesato*, *hagiastheto*) function as prophetic declarations of what will be, not as commands to sin. Compare Ezekiel 3:27: 'Whoever will listen, let them listen; whoever will refuse, let them refuse.'
11. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Ezekiel 3:27. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
12. The second 'I am coming soon' declaration. The language of bringing a reward (*misthos*) echoes Isaiah 40:10 ('his reward is with him') and Isaiah 62:11 ('his recompense accompanies him'). The principle of repayment according to works (*kata to ergon*) runs throughout Scripture (Psalm 62:12, Proverbs 24:12, Romans 2:6) and does not contradict grace — it affirms that faith produces fruit and that God takes human action seriously.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 40:10. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 62:11. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Psalm 62:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
12. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Proverbs 24:12. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
13. Three titles are combined here, each drawn from different parts of Revelation and Isaiah. 'Alpha and Omega' appeared in Revelation 1:8 on the lips of God; 'the First and the Last' in Revelation 1:17 and 2:8 on the lips of Christ. Their merger here makes the highest christological claim in the book: Christ shares the identity of God. The titles also echo Isaiah 44:6 ('I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God') and Isaiah 48:12. Alpha is the first letter and Omega the last letter of the Greek alphabet — together they encompass all reality.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 44:6 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
13. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Isaiah 48:12 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
14. This is the seventh and final beatitude in Revelation. The SBLGNT reads 'those who wash their robes' (*hoi plynontes tas stolas auton*) rather than the KJV's 'they that do his commandments' (*hoi poiountes tas entolas autou*), which reflects a different textual tradition. The image of washed robes connects to Revelation 7:14 ('they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb'). Access to the tree of life — denied since

Genesis 3:24 — is now the reward of the faithful.

14. [TCR Cross-Reference] Echoes Genesis 3:24. See the TCR's OT rendering for the Hebrew behind this passage and the translation rationale.
15. The term 'dogs' (kynes) was used in the ancient world for the morally impure and for those outside the covenant community (cf. Philippians 3:2, Matthew 7:6). The Greek pharmakoi ('sorcerers') is related to pharmakon ('drug, potion'), referring to those who practice occult arts, often involving potions. The list echoes Revelation 21:8 and functions as a vice list defining who remains outside the city — not as a physical geography but as a moral reality. The final phrase 'loves and practices falsehood' (philon kai poion pseudos) describes those whose fundamental orientation is toward deception.
16. Jesus speaks in his own name — one of the few times in Revelation where the speaker is explicitly identified as 'I, Jesus' (Ego Iesous). The dual title 'Root and Descendant of David' (he rhiza kai to genos Daidid) is paradoxical: Jesus is both David's ancestor ('Root,' as in Isaiah 11:1, 10) and David's descendant ('Offspring'). He is the source and the product of the Davidic line. The 'bright morning star' (ho aster ho lampros ho proinos) recalls Numbers 24:17 ('a star shall come out of Jacob') and connects to Revelation 2:28, where Christ promises to give the morning star to the faithful.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Isaiah 11:1. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
16. [TCR Cross-Reference] Quotes Numbers 24:17. The TCR rendering of that OT passage preserves the Hebrew source text and documents the translation decisions behind it.
17. The invitation cascades outward: the Spirit and the bride (the church) cry 'Come!' to Christ, then invite the hearer to join the cry, then extend the invitation to anyone who thirsts. The word dorean ('freely, as a gift, without cost') is emphatic — the water of life cannot be purchased or earned. This echoes Isaiah 55:1 ('Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!'). The verse functions simultaneously as a prayer for Christ's return and as an evangelistic invitation — the last great altar call of Scripture.
17. [TCR Cross-Reference] Draws on Isaiah 55:1. Consult the TCR rendering of that passage for the underlying Hebrew and the rationale for key translation choices.
18. This solemn warning echoes Deuteronomy 4:2 ('Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it') and Deuteronomy 12:32. The verb martyro ('I testify, I bear witness') places this under oath. Originally this referred specifically to the book of Revelation, not to the entire biblical canon — the 'canon' as a concept did not yet exist when this was written. However, the placement of Revelation at the end of the Christian Bible has given these words a broader canonical resonance in the history of reception.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 4:2 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
18. [TCR Cross-Reference] References Deuteronomy 12:32 — the TCR OT rendering of that text provides the Hebrew source and explains the translation decisions involved.
19. The SBLGNT reads 'tree of life' (xylou tes zoes) rather than the KJV's 'book of life' (bibliou tes zoes). The 'book of life' reading likely arose from a scribal confusion of xylou ('tree') with bibliou ('book') — an easy error in manuscript transmission. We follow the SBLGNT critical text. The penalty mirrors the offense with poetic precision: those who take away from the book will have their share taken away from the tree and the city just described. The warning protects the integrity of the prophetic message.
20. The third and final 'I am coming soon' — and this time it receives a response. The exchange is the heart of early Christian worship: Christ promises his return, and the church answers with the prayer 'Come, Lord Jesus!' (Erchou kyrie Iesou). This is the Greek equivalent of the Aramaic Maranatha ('Our Lord, come!') preserved in 1 Corinthians 16:22. The single word Amen bridges the two speakers — it may be John's affirmation of Christ's promise, or the congregation's liturgical response, or both. These are among the most intimate words in the New Testament: a direct, personal exchange between the Lord and his people.
21. The final words of the Christian Bible are a benediction of grace. The SBLGNT reads simply 'with all' (meta panton) without 'you' (hymon) or the closing 'Amen,' both of which appear in some manuscript traditions and are reflected in the KJV. The simplicity is striking: not 'with the saints' or 'with the churches' but 'with all' — the widest possible scope. That the Bible ends not with a warning, not with a doctrine, not with a command, but with grace is itself a theological statement. The epistolary closing (typical of Paul's letters: Romans 16:20, 1 Corinthians 16:23, Galatians 6:18) grounds this cosmic apocalypse in the life of actual congregations who would hear it read aloud in worship.