

Lazarus who was sick.) So the sisters sent for [Jesus]: "Master, the one you love is sick."

But when Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not fatal; it is to show God's majesty, so God's son also will be honored by it."

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. When he heard that [Lazarus] was sick, he lingered two more days where he was; then he says to the disciples, "Let's go to Judea again."

The disciples say to him, "Rabbi, just now the Judeans were looking for the opportunity to stone you; are you really going back there?"

"Aren't there twelve hours in the day?" Jesus responded. "Those who walk during the day won't stumble; they can see by this world's light. But those who walk at night are going to stumble, because they have no light to go by."

He made these remarks, and then he tells them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him up."

"Master, if he's only fallen asleep," said the disciples, "he'll revive." (Jesus had been speaking of death but they thought that he meant [he was] only asleep.)

Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead; and I'm happy for you that I wasn't there, so you can believe. Now let's go to him."

Then Thomas, called "the Twin," said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go along too, so we can die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that [Lazarus] had been buried four days earlier. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away, and many of the Judeans had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; Mary stayed at home. "Master," said Martha, "if you'd been here, my brother wouldn't have died. Still I know that whatever you ask of God, God will grant you."

Jesus says to her, "Your brother will be resurrected."

Martha responds, "I know he'll be raised in the resurrection on the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am resurrection and life; those who believe in me, even if they die, will live; but everyone who is alive and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Master," she says, "I believe that you are the Anointed, God's son, who is to come to earth."

At this point she went to call her sister Mary, telling her privately, "The Teacher is here and is asking for you." When she heard that, she got up quickly and went to him.

Jesus hadn't yet arrived at the village; he was still where Martha had met him.

When the Judeans, who hovered about her in the house to console her, saw Mary get up and go out quickly, they followed her, thinking she was going to the tomb to grieve there. When Mary got to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet. "Master," she said, "if you'd been here, my brother wouldn't have died."

When Jesus saw her crying, and the Judeans who accompanied her crying too, he was agitated and deeply disturbed; he said, "Where have you put him?"

"Master," they say, "come and see."

Then Jesus cried.

So the Judeans observed, "Look how much he loved him." But some wondered: "He opened the blind man's eyes; couldn't he have kept this man from dying?"

Again greatly agitated, Jesus arrives at the tomb; it was a cave, and a stone lay up against the opening. Jesus says, "Take the stone away."

Martha, sister of the dead man, replies, "But Master, by this time the body will stink; it's been four days."

Jesus says to her, "Didn't I tell you, if you believed you'll see God's majesty?" So they took the stone away, and Jesus looked upwards and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. I know you always hear me, but I say this because of the people standing here, so they'll believe that you sent me." Then he shouted at the top of his voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in strips of burying cloth, and his face covered with a cloth. Jesus says to them, "Free him [from the burying cloth] and let him go."

As a result, many of the Judeans who had come to Mary and observed what Jesus had done came to believe in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and reported what Jesus had done.

So the ranking priests and Pharisees called the Council together and posed this question to them: "What are we going to do now that this fellow performs many miracles? If we let him go on like this, everybody will come to believe in him. Then the Romans will come and destroy our [holy] place and our nation."

Then one of them, Caiaphas, that year's high priest, addressed them as follows: "Don't you know anything? Don't you realize that it's to your advantage to have one person die for the people and not have the whole nation wiped out?"

(He didn't say this on his own authority, but since he was that year's high priest he could foresee that Jesus would die for the nation. In fact, [he would die] not only for the nation, but to gather together all God's dispersed children and make them one [people].)

Source: John 11:1-54, from *The Complete Gospels*.

JESUS' DEATH

LAST SUPPER

Jesus' final days took place in Jerusalem during the Jewish holiday of Passover. The four Gospels depict Jesus and his disciples gathering for a meal, known as the "Last Supper" (Luke describes this as the traditional meal of the Passover festival). At this meal, according to the synoptic Gospels, Jesus performed ritual acts with the bread and wine.

This event is the basis of the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist. In Christian doctrine, a sacrament is a visible religious rite that confers special grace. The number of sacraments has varied throughout Christian history; twelfth-century theologian Hugo of St. Victor listed thirty. Baptism and the Eucharist have always been the most important.

Now it was two days until Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread. And the ranking priests and the scholars were looking for some way to arrest him by trickery and kill him. For their slogan was "Not during the festival, otherwise the people will riot."

When he was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, he was just reclining there, and a woman came in carrying an alabaster jar of myrrh, of pure and expensive nard. She broke the jar and poured [the myrrh] on his head.

Now some were annoyed [and thought] to themselves: "What good purpose is served by this waste of myrrh? For she could have sold the myrrh for more than three hundred silver coins and given [the money] to the poor." And they were angry with her.

Then Jesus said, "Let her alone! Why are you bothering her? She has done me a courtesy. Remember, there will always be poor around, and whenever you want you can do good for them, but I won't always be around. She did what she could—she anticipates in anointing my body for burial. So help me, wherever the good news is announced in all the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her!"

And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went off to the ranking priests to turn him over to them. When they heard, they were delighted, and promised to pay him in silver. And he started looking for some way to turn him in at the right moment.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they would sacrifice the Passover lamb, his disciples say to him, "Where do you want us to go and get things ready for you to celebrate Passover?"

He sends two of his disciples and says to them, "Go into the city, and someone carrying a waterpot will meet you. Follow him, and whatever place he enters say to the head of the house, 'The teacher asks, "Where is my guest room where I can celebrate Passover with my disciples?"' And he'll show you a large upstairs room that has been arranged. That's the place you're to get ready for us."

And the disciples left, went into the city, and found it exactly as he had told them; and they got things ready for Passover.

When evening comes, he arrives with the twelve. And as they reclined at tables and were eating, Jesus said, "So help me, one of you eating with me is going to turn me in!"

They began to fret and to say to him one after another, "I'm not the one, am I?"

But he said to them, "It's one of the twelve, the one who is dipping into the bowl with me. The son of Adam departs just as the scriptures predict, but damn the one responsible for turning the son of Adam in! It would be better for that man had he never been born!"

And as they were eating, he took a loaf, gave a blessing, broke it into pieces and offered it to them. And he said, "Take some; this is my body!" He also took a cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. And he said to them: "This is my blood of the covenant, which has been poured out for many! So help me, I certainly won't drink any of the fruit of the vine again until that day when I drink it for the first time in God's domain!"

Source: Mark 14:1–25, from *The Complete Gospels*.

FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT

In John's account of the Last Supper, Jesus gives a farewell discourse, presented here. Unlike the synoptic Gospels, in which Jesus speaks in short, crisp sayings and parables, in John Jesus speaks in extended discourses. The discourse topic here is the relation between God the Father and Jesus the Son. The doctrine of the Trinity, central to Christianity, holds that God is a unity of three persons: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Although the term "Trinity" and its technical meaning were developed by early Church Fathers, passages that associate the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the scriptural basis of the doctrine. The following account is particularly important in this regard. The Holy Spirit is only briefly mentioned at the end of this passage. In the Old Testament occasional references are made to a spirit of God, but John and other New Testament writers expand on this notion and see the Holy Spirit both as a divine presence and as an agent of guidance for the Church.

"Don't give in to your distress. You believe in God, then believe in me too. There are plenty of places to stay in my Father's house. If it weren't true, I would have told you; I'm on my way to make a place ready for you. And if I go to make a place ready for you, I'll return and embrace you. So where I am you can be too. You know where I'm going and you know the way."

Thomas says to him, "Master, we don't know where you're going. How can we possibly know the way?"

"I am the way, and I am truth, and I am life," replies Jesus. "No one gets to the Father unless it is through me. If you do recognize me, you will recognize my Father also. From this moment on you know him and you've even seen him."

"Let us see the Father," Philip says to him, "and we'll be satisfied."

"I've been around you all this time," Jesus replies, "and you still don't know me, do you, Philip? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. So how can you say, 'Let us see the Father'? Don't you believe that I'm in the Father and the Father is in me? I don't say what I say on my own. The Father is with me constantly, and I perform his labors. You ought to believe that I'm in the Father and the Father is in me. If not, at least you ought to believe these labors in and of themselves. I swear to God, anyone who believes in me will perform the works I perform and

will be able to perform even greater feats, because I'm on my way to the Father. In addition, I'll do whatever you request in my name, so the Father can be honored by means of the son. If you request anything using my name, I'll do it.

"If you love me, you'll obey my instructions. At my request the Father will provide you with yet another advocate, the authentic spirit, who will be with you forever. The world is unable to accept [this spirit] because it neither perceives nor recognizes it. You recognize it because it dwells in you and will remain in you.

"I won't abandon you as orphans; I'll come to you. In a little while the world won't see me any longer, but you'll see me because I'm alive as you will be alive. At the time you will come to know that I'm in my Father and that you're in me and I'm in you. Those who accept my instructions and obey them—they love me. And those who love me will be loved by my Father; moreover, I will love them and make myself known to them."

Judas (not Iscariot) says to him, "Master, what has happened that you are about to make yourself known to us but not to the world?"

Jesus replied to him, "Those who love me will heed what I tell them, and my Father will love them, and we'll come to them and make our home there. Those who don't love me won't follow my instructions. Of course, the things you heard me say are not mine but come from the Father who sent me.

"I have told you these things while I am still here with you. Yet the advocate, the holy spirit the Father will send in my stead, will teach you everything and remind you of everything I told you. Peace is what I leave behind for you; my peace is what I give you. What I give you is not a worldly gift. Don't give in to your distress or be overcome by terror. You heard me tell you, 'I'm going away and I'm going to return to you.' If you loved me, you'd be glad that I'm going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I am. So I have now told you all this ahead of time so you will believe when it happens.

"Time does not permit me to tell you much more; you see, the ruler of this world is already on the way. However, so the world may know I love the Father, I act exactly as my Father instructed me. Come on, let's get out of here."

Source: John 14:1–26, from *The Complete Gospels*.

TRIAL, CRUCIFIXION, RESURRECTION

After the Last Supper, Jesus went with his disciples to a hillside graveyard to pray. There he was arrested, brought before the Jewish legal council, and accused of blasphemy. Not empowered to perform criminal executions, the council brought Jesus to the Roman governor Pilate, where they made a case for treason based on Jesus' messianic claims. Pilate pronounced the desired verdict and sentence. All four Gospels place responsibility on the Jews, first the priests and then an angry mob, although the

ultimate decision rested with the governor. Jesus was then executed on a cross, in classic Roman fashion, and placed in the rock-hewn tomb of a wealthy follower. Mark's Gospel reports that after a few days the tomb was found empty, and a young man present at the tomb announced that Jesus was resurrected. The other Gospels report appearances of the resurrected Jesus.

14. And right away, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, shows up, and with him a crowd, dispatched by the ranking priests and the scholars and the elders, wielding swords and clubs. Now the one who was to turn him in had arranged a signal with them, saying, "The one I'm going to kiss is the one you want. Arrest him and escort him safely away!" And right away he arrives, comes up to him, and says, "Rabbi," and kisses him.

And they seized him and held him fast. One of those standing around drew his sword and struck the high priest's slave and cut off his ear. In response Jesus said to them, "Have you come out to take me with swords and clubs as though you were apprehending a rebel? I was with you in the temple area day after day teaching and you didn't lift a hand against me. But the scriptures must come true!"

And they all deserted him and ran away. And a young man was following him, wearing a shroud over his nude body, and they grabbed him. But he dropped the shroud and ran away naked.

And they brought Jesus before the high priest, and all the ranking priests and elders and scholars assemble.

Peter followed him at a distance until he was inside the courtyard of the high priest, and was sitting with the attendants and keeping warm by the fire.

The ranking priests and the whole Council were looking for evidence against Jesus in order to issue a death sentence, but they couldn't find any. Although many gave false evidence against him, their stories didn't agree. And some people stood up and testified falsely against him: "We have heard him saying, 'I'll destroy this temple made with hands and in three days I'll build another, not made with hands!'" Yet even then their stories did not agree.

And the high priest got up and questioned Jesus: "Don't you have some answer to give? Why do these people testify against you?"

But he was silent and refused to answer.

Once again the high priest questioned him and says to him, "Are you the Anointed, the son of the Blessed One?"

Jesus replied, "I am! And you will see the son of Adam sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of the sky!"

Then the high priest tore his vestments and says, "Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And they all concurred in the death penalty.

And some began to spit on him, and to put a blindfold on him, and punch him, and say to him, "Prophecy!" And the guards abused him as they took him into custody.

And while Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the high priest's slave women comes over, and sees Peter warming himself; she looks at him closely, then speaks up: "You too were with that Nazarene, Jesus!"

But he denied it, saying, "I haven't the slightest idea what you're talking about!" And he went outside into the forecourt.

And when the slave woman saw him, she once again began to say to those standing nearby, "This fellow is one of them!"

But once again he denied it.

And a little later, those standing nearby would again say to Peter, "You really are one of them, since you also are a Galilean!"

But he began to curse and swear, "I don't know the fellow you're talking about!" And just then a rooster crowed a second time, and Peter remembered what Jesus had told him: "Before a rooster crows twice you will disown me three times!" And he broke down and started to cry.

15. And right away, at daybreak, the ranking priests, after consulting with the elders and scholars and the whole Council, bound Jesus and led him away and turned him over to Pilate. And Pilate questioned him: "You are 'the King of the Judeans'?"

And in response he says to him, "If you say so."

And the ranking priests started a long list of accusations against him. Again Pilate tried questioning him: "Don't you have some answer to give? You see what a long list of charges they bring against you!"

But Jesus still did not respond, so Pilate was baffled.

At each festival it was the custom for him to set one prisoner free for them, whichever one they requested. And one called Barabbas was being held with the insurgents who had committed murder during the uprising. And when the crowd arrived, they began to demand that he do what he usually did for them.

And in response Pilate said to them, "Do you want me to set 'the King of the Judeans' free for you?" After all, he realized that the ranking priests had turned him over out of envy.

But the ranking priests incited the crowd to get Barabbas set free for them instead.

But in response [to their request] Pilate would again say to them, "What do you want me to do with the fellow you call 'the King of the Judeans'?"

And they in turn shouted, "Crucify him!"

Pilate kept saying to them, "Why? What has he done wrong?"

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!" And because Pilate was always looking to satisfy the crowd, he set Barabbas free for them, had Jesus flogged, and then turned him over to be crucified.

And the soldiers led him away to the courtyard of the governor's residence, and they called the whole company together. And they dressed him in purple and crowned him with a garland woven of thorns.

And they began to salute him: "Greetings, 'King of the Judeans'!" And they kept striking him on the head with a staff, and spitting or him; and they would get down on their knees and bow down to him. And when they had made fun of him, they stripped off the purple and put his own clothes back on him. And they led him out to crucify him.

And they conscript someone named Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

And they bring him to the place Golgotha (which means "Place of the Skull"). And they tried to give him wine mixed with myrrh, but he didn't take it. And they crucify him, and they divide up his garments, casting lots to see who would get what. It was 9 o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. And the inscription, which identified his crime, read, "The King of the Judeans." And with him they crucify two rebels, one on his right and one on his left.

Those passing by kept taunting him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Ha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself and come down from the cross!"

Likewise the ranking priests had made fun of him to one another, along with the scholars; they would say, "He saved others, but he can't save himself! 'The Anointed,' 'the King of Israel,' should come down from the cross here and now, so that we can see and trust for ourselves!"

Even those being crucified along with him would abuse him.

And when noon came, darkness blanketed the whole land until mid-afternoon. And at 3 o'clock in the afternoon Jesus shouted at the top of his voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani" (which means "My God, my God, why did you abandon me?").

And when some of those standing nearby heard, they would say, "Listen, he's calling Elijah!" And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, stuck it on a pole, and offered him a drink, saying, "Let's see if Elijah comes to rescue him!"

But Jesus let out a great shout and breathed his last.

And the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom! When the Roman officer standing opposite him saw that he had died like this, he said, "This man really was God's son!"

Now some women were observing this from a distance, among whom were Mary of Magdala, and Mary the mother of James the younger and Joses, and Salome. [These women] had regularly followed and assisted him when he was in Galilee, along with many other women who had come up to Jerusalem in his company.

And when it had already grown dark, since it was preparation day (the day before the sabbath), Joseph of Arimathea, a respected council member, who himself was anticipating God's imperial rule, appeared on the scene, and dared to go to Pilate to request the body of Jesus.

And Pilate was surprised that he had died so soon. He summoned the Roman officer and asked him whether he had been dead for long. And when he had been briefed by the Roman officer, he granted the body to Joseph. And he brought a shroud and took him down and wrapped him in the shroud, and placed him in a tomb that had been hewn out of rock, and rolled a stone up against the opening of the tomb. And Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of Jesus noted where he had been laid to rest.

16. And when the sabbath day was over, Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of James and Salome brought spices so they could go and embalm him. And very early on Sunday they got to the tomb just as the sun was coming up. And they had been asking themselves, "Who will help us roll the stone away from the opening of the tomb?" Then they look up and discover that the stone has been rolled away! (For in fact the stone was very large.)

And when they went into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right, wearing a white robe, and they grew apprehensive.

He says to them, "Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene who was crucified. He was raised, he is not here! Look at the spot where they put him! But go and tell his disciples, including 'Rock,' 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee! There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

And once they got outside, they ran away from the tomb, because great fear and excitement got the better of them. And they didn't breathe a word of it to anyone: talk about terrified. . . .

Source: Mark 14:43-16:8, from *The Complete Gospels*.

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

ASCENSION, PENTECOST

The book of the Acts of the Apostles, written about 85 C.E., chronicles the events of the early Church after Jesus' resurrection. The book is sometimes termed the Gospel of the Holy Spirit, because the author depicts the expansion of the early Church as being guided by the Holy Spirit. The opening of Acts, presented here, recounts Jesus' ascension into heaven and the arrival of the Holy Spirit a few days later, during the Jewish agricultural festival of Pentecost. The believers are directly affected by the presence of the Holy Spirit, as evidenced by their speaking in foreign tongues. Peter emerges as the leader of the Church, and thousands of believers are baptized.

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

promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

2. When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be

turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. . . ."

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Source: Acts 1:3–11, 2:1–24, 40–47, from *The Holy Bible, New International Version*. Reprinted by permission.

PAUL ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM

After a dramatic conversion experience and a period of indoctrination, Paul soon rose in the leadership to the status of an Apostle. During three missionary journeys in non-Jewish territories throughout the Mediterranean region, he established dozens of churches and corresponded with many of them. Written about 55 C.E., Paul's letter to the Church of Galatia is a pivotal text in the development of early Christianity. Shortly after his visit, Church members in Galatia were persuaded by Christian Judaizers that adherence to Jewish law was a prerequisite for becoming a Christian. Paul argues vehemently that obedience to Jewish law will not absolve our sins. Righteousness comes about only through faith in Christ, and this is open to Jews and non-Jews alike. The larger issue in the debate was whether Christianity was merely a Jewish sect or a distinct religion; in the first two chapters presented here, Paul describes his efforts to set Christianity apart from its Jewish framework. His account is important for its autobiographical content, and also because it is the earliest written discussion of first-century Church politics.

1. I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother. I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie. Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy."

2. Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. [This matter arose] because some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you.

As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance—those men added nothing to my message. On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in

my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. James, Peter and John, those reputed to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the Jews. All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do.

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

"We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

"If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a law-breaker. For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Source: Galatians 1:6–23, 2:1–21, from *The Holy Bible, New International Version*.

PAUL ON LIFE AFTER DEATH

An immediate theological difficulty faced by Paul was the question of how Jesus could be divine despite his criminal execution. Paul's solution was to see Jesus' death on the cross and subsequent resurrection as the end of the old Jewish law and the beginning of a new era of divine grace. Through baptism, Christians symbolically participate in the cross by dying to their old lives and reemerging anew. The crucifixion and resurrection are so central to Paul's teaching that they are the only features of the life of Jesus with which he is concerned. In the following discussion from Paul's first letter to the church of Corinth, written about 55 C.E., life after death is also linked to the resurrection. Because Christ resurrected, we are assured that we too will be. Unlike Greek

writers, who construe life after death as the continuation of a bodiless, immortal soul, Christian doctrine holds to the bodily resurrection of the dead as found in post-exilic Jewish writings. Paul teaches that our new bodies will be heavenly and imperishable in nature, rather than earthly and perishable, and that all those who belong to Christ will be simultaneously resurrected when he returns.

15. But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. . . .

But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?" How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. All flesh is not the same: Men have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the star another; and star differs from star in splendor.

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

"Where, O death, is your victory?

"Where, O death, is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Source: 1 Corinthians 15:12–28, 35–57, from *The Holy Bible, New International Version*.

NONCANONICAL GOSPELS

INFANCY GOSPEL OF JAMES

Early Christians were interested in accounts of Jesus' childhood, which filled the gaps in the four Gospel narratives. Many childhood gospels circulated, but most of the information in these derive from two texts written about 150 C.E.: the Infancy Gospel of James and the Infancy Gospel of Thomas. The Infancy Gospel of James, also called the Protoevangelium, or first gospel, is pseudonomously ascribed to James, the brother of Jesus, and scholars believe that its author was a non-Jewish Christian from outside Palestine. The text presents the oldest account of the early life of Mary, including her espousal to Joseph, and describes the virgin birth of Jesus. The tradition of Mary's lifelong virginity runs counter to statements in the gospels referring to Jesus' brothers. The Infancy Gospel of James reconciles these two traditions by presenting Joseph as a widower with children from his previous marriage. The feast of Mary's presentation in the temple (November 21) in Catholic and Orthodox traditions is based on events in the following selection.

7. Many months passed, but when the child reached two years of age, Joachim said, "Let's take her up to the temple of the Lord, so that we can keep the promise we made, or else the Lord will be angry with us and our gift will be unacceptable."

And Anna said, "Let's wait until she is three, so she won't miss her father or mother."

And Joachim agreed: "Let's wait."

When the child turned three years of age, Joachim said, "Let's send for the undefiled Hebrew daughters. Let them each take a lamp and light it, so the child won't turn back and have her heart captivated by things outside the Lord's temple." And this is what they did until the time they ascended to the Lord's temple.

The priest welcomed her, kissed her, and blessed her: "The Lord God has exalted your name among all generations. In you the Lord will disclose his redemption to the people of Israel during the last days."

And he sat her down on the third step of the altar, and the Lord showered favor on her. And she danced, and the whole house of Israel loved her.

8. Her parents left for home marveling and praising and glorifying the Lord God because the child did not look back at them. And Mary lived in the temple of the Lord. She was fed there like a dove, receiving her food from the hand of a heavenly messenger.

When she turned twelve, however, there was a meeting of the priests. "Look," they said, "Mary has turned twelve in the temple of the Lord. What should we do with her so she won't pollute the sanctuary of the Lord our God?" And they said to the high priest, "You stand at the altar of the Lord. Enter and pray about her, and we'll do whatever the Lord God discloses to you."

And so the high priest took the vestment with the twelve bells, entered the Holy of Holies, and began to pray about her. And suddenly a messenger of the Lord appeared: "Zechariah, Zechariah, go out and assemble the widowers of the people and have them each bring a staff. She will become the wife of the one to whom the Lord God shows a sign." And so heralds covered the surrounding territory of Judea. The trumpet of the Lord sounded and all the widowers came running.

9. And Joseph, too, threw down his carpenter's axe and left for the meeting. When they had all gathered, they went to the high priest with their staffs. After the high priest had collected everyone's staff, he entered the temple and began to pray. When he had finished his prayer, he took the staffs and went out and began to give them back to each man. But there was no sign of any of them. Joseph got the last staff. Suddenly a dove came out of this staff and perched on Joseph's head. "Joseph, Joseph," the high priest said, "you've been chosen by lot to take the virgin of the Lord into your care and protection."

But Joseph objected: "I already have sons and I'm an old man; she's only a young woman. I'm afraid that I'll become the butt of jokes among the people of Israel." . . .

13. She was in her sixth month when one day Joseph came home from his building projects, entered the house, and found her pregnant. He struck himself in the face, threw himself to the ground on sackcloth, and began to cry bitterly: "What sort of face should I present to the